THE CENTRAL ORGAN
OF THE INTERNATIONAL
UNION
OF REVOLUTIONARY
WRITERS

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE

1931

NO. 3

LITERATURE of the WORLD REVOLUTION

THE STATE
PUBLISHING HOUSE
MOSCOW

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NOMADS

SOMETHING ABOUT THE BASSMACHI

In the North it is often asked: "What are these bassmachi? Robbers? But if they are robbers, why are there so many of them and why are they all different?"

At first I shall tell you why they are all different. They are sharply divided into Bokhara Bassmachi and Turkoman Bassmachi. The first are grouped around the former Emir of Bokhara who emigrated to Afghanistan, — Ibrahim-Bek and Feisul Maxum and other bassmachian leaders from Eastern Bokhara, Lokai and Ferghana. The second recognise Djunaid Khan, and his myrmidons, as their chosen leader. The ishan Mazari Sherifa is probably the spiritual father of both.

The composition of the bassmachian bands is various — shading down from the runaway upper strata of the Bokhara bureaucracy and officials to simple professional bandits and misguided peasants. Their work is also extremely varied, ranging from premeditated wrecking to the casual night-raids of bandits on herds of Astrakhan sheep, on a cooperative store for cotton goods, and to revengeful and always unsuccessful attacks on the frontier posts. The British Intelligence Service uses them sometimes for its own especial purposes. Somewhere in the far, remote borderlands of Tashauz Djunaid-Khan has warm little nests of sympathisers. The venerable "elder" himself, the unsuccessful king of Tomudistan lives near Herat, driven out of the boundaries of Turkmenistan.

There are, perhaps, dozens of books written about the struggle with the bassmachi. They include documents, diaries, reminiscences.

A modern Pushkin desirous of writing the "History of the Bassmachi" would have to know the Uzbek and Turkoman languages. Then he would be able to write a book, that would astonish the world, because the most interesting material can only be obtained through personal conversation with eye-witnesses of the bassmachi raids, or by reading authentic documents. What a gem for instance one of Djunaid's proclamations is, where he promises, among other blessings to be bestowed on those killed in the fight with the Bolsheviks (djadidi) to give every man killed the position of a president of a District Committee in Paradise. The struggle against Djunaid called for great efforts, since it took place in the desert, where infantry could not act, motor-cars were useless and only the cavalry and part of the air force could rival the quick, elusive, deft movements of the enemy, who knew the local conditions so well.

The recent bloody raid made by Feisul Maxum on Garm and Kalai Vamar, and another by the son of Djunaid on one of our posts, show

that the enemy has not yet laid down his arms. It is very difficult to deal with the separate gangs appearing from time to time in the desert, the frontier stretches for thousands of kilometres along the desert, the enemy has mostly British arms, while their horses, which they never spare in the slightest, they sometimes dose with teriak (opium), so that the animals go like arrows. To aim at them or follow them on their mad career is impossible.

Sometimes the bassmachi are quite original.

For instance, once they took an ambulance man prisoner. They kept him about a year, took him with them everywhere and made him treat them and bandage their wounded. After eight or nine months they gave him a camel and about a thousand roubles in Soviet money and led him to our post. This peaceful and wholly unexpected end to his captivity astonished the ambulance man, who never dreamed of escaping with a whole skin from the midst of his wild patients.

The family of Djunaid's brother was taken after a battle. One of the members, a six-year-old boy, sitting on a camel, turned away his face whenever any of the Red Army men came up to speak to him. He would clench his little fists and refuse to utter a word. When his mother got tired walking alongside the camel (it was very hot and there were not enough animals) he gave up his place to her and got down. He trotted along in silence, a small, pitiful, obstinate figure beside the great shaggy beast.

The other boy was the son of Kurbash Annabal. When Annabal was wounded seriously in the desert and the bassmachi were on the point of running away, they decided that Annabal would probably die soon, in any case, and that it was not worth while to try and save him. In order to ensure that his end would be quiet and peaceful, they carried him behind a sand hill and left a little food and water beside him. They also left his son, a boy of twelve, with him, and then made away.

The boy dressed his father's wounds as best he could, and walked, like a Spartan, eight kilometres to the village, situated on a clay outcrop, for water. He brought back food, water and bread. He did this tramp every day, sixteen kilometers under a scorching son, until his father was better and it appeared that his wound was not a mortal one.

Here they were taken by our patrol and the old man was carried to the hospital in Ashqabad. The boy could not be persuaded to leave his father's bedside. He sat there without taking his eyes off the sick man.

"Go away and play", he was told. "Your father is asleep, he doesn't need you. He will be given food and drink here and cured."

"I won't go", answered the boy. "If I went", he added naively, "you would kill him, you'd poison him."

The child was as pitiless as a grown-up bassmach.

The bassmachi never spare either themselves or their enemy. If a band of them is surprised in one of the narrow streets those at the rear pass up their arms to those in front, so that the Red Army men will not get them. The foremost save themselves by running away and the hindmost, unarmed except for knives, throw themselves on the pursuers so as to hold them back and die.

Once, by accident, one of our aeroplanes fell into the hands of Djunaid. He burned the aviators together with the plane. A bassmach who had been taken said that the aviators had been closely interrogated, but that they were wounded.

"What do you mean by "well" interrogated?"

"I don't know", he replied.

"But your people burnt them, didn't they? The shepherd told us, he saw it all."

"They were already dead then", said the bassmach, "People said so — but how am I to know?"

And as a matter of fact, who does really know? The bassmach is cruel by nature, as cruel as his protector of the moment, whose name is — Great Britain.

FIVE PER CENT OF GOOD LIVING

Ninety-five percent of Turkmen territory is unirrigated land, unfit for a settled life. Only five per cent can support the population and the crops of today. The land reforms did away with the bey or landlord, with the feudal and clan system, and distributed the land, first of all among the landless, secondly, among those who had not enough land, and lastly among those dekkhan, or peasants, who not having farms of their own were desirous of settling on the land. By this means 2,259 holdings were wiped out and 15,271 cut up. Almost all the new *biednak* (poor) farmers received one head of working cattle and one set of implements each.

According to local evidence, the land reforms did not root out the "kulak" or rich farmer. He retained his place, although robbed of his former glory, in the network of clan relations. His poor relations have saved him. In connection with collectivisation, it should be taken into consideration that up to 70% of the peasantry possess only one dessiatin (2.70 acres) of arable land. It would be impossible to improve the methods of agriculture on these holdings without uniting them into collective farms, and replacing the primitive implements, the *omacha* and *"azala"*, by European ploughs. The introduction of European methods can only be achieved by collectivisation, by doing away with the *"duvala"* (clay walls dividing the fields), by ploughing large blocks of territory at once, and by the regulation and development of irrigation.

The control figures provide for the development of cultivation on irrigated land, from 327,000 hectares in 1927 to 402,000 in 1933. This increase of area is possible, but the area cannot grow indefinitely, even in case of the most satisfactory development of Turkmenistan. It has nowhere to spread. The most daring minds foresee growth until 1950. After that there will be no more land, only desert. A tremendous risk may be undertaken — the construction of a dam on the Amu-Darye. This would be an even greater dam than the Dnieprostroi, but offers no guarantee of success in the long run.

The figures strike one as simple and terrible at once: one hectare of arable land requires 1,800 cubometres of water, and there is nowhere to get it from. Questions connected with tractorisation are also decided in various ways. In some places, due to the land being broken up into very small holdings and the surprising hardness of the soil, the tractor is useless or terribly dear, a hectare of land working out at from 33 Rbls. to 48. Rbls. This, of course, is beyond the reach of the poorer unions. Further, the heavy tractor cannot even turn in this labyrinth of *duvalas*

ditches and pits, and it often crushes the fragile bridges with its weight. The complexity of the farming problem calls for the indispensable and indivisible triumvirate. Three forces — the irrigation expert, the engineer and the agronomist — can solve the problem of the fields. The tractor mechanic is hindered by the division of the land into small-holdings, canals, the irrigation system, bad roads and bad fields. The irrigation expert is hindered by the inconstancy of the Amu-Darye, which washes away dams and other structures, by the necessity for the careful creation of a too minute system of canals. The agronomist is hindered by the variation, the slope of the fields, by the different degrees of hardness of the soil, by peculiarities of climate, by the entire absence of water or else an unexpected abundance of it, by terrible unexpected rains, and the unequal drying of the fields.

It seems then, that even five per cent of good living must be won by unremitting toil. There is no doubt that at one time the population of the present territory of Turkmenistan was tremendous. Ancient Mern had up to a million inhabitants, and the system of irrigation was highly developed. The wonderful dam of Sultan-Benda may be quoted as an instance. But centuries of warfare systematically destroyed all life on the earth, and the desert was a natural sequence. It came at last with its sands and aridity. The strip of cultivated land is very narrow, even at Amu-Darye it does not exceed twenty kilometres. The only way of improving farming is collectivisation and irrigation, and still more irrigation. The collective farm means an improvement in agricultural methods, the extending of the area under cultivation and the appearance of the three forces — the irrigation expert, the engineer and the agronomist — at one and the same time, in the agricultural arena.

The irrigation expert stands out among these three, as the most important.

The question of water is the most terrible of all. If it is left unattended to, the land turns into a desert again. Salt comes out of the earth, and the fields become salt marshes. The white and glistening salt marshes bear not only a resemblance but even a relationship to the white bones scattered over the desert, for both are signs of death. I can understand the Turkoman who in olden times regarded water with prayer and reverence. Now they may leave out the prayers, since the water belongs to the Soviet Republic, and turn to the irrigation expert, but the reverence has remained with them. So there is nothing more to do about that.

Five per cent of good living is better than nothing, but it is not so much, after all.

GUARD.ANS OF THE FRONTIER

"The commander of the patrol from the Kara-tep Gate, in the Khotab garrison, Comrade Stepanov, showed his companion soft foot-prints made by a camel and the deep pits made by horses' hoofs.

"We'll catch them up', he said. 'Come on!'

"They examined their arms and rode off. They followed the track for thirty kilometres. The hills betrayed no one. Among the saxaul bushes

little lizards ran briskly about, hissing and bubbling. They rode thirty more kilometres and — nobody. The sweat had already ceased to trickle. It came out and stuck like gum, like a heavy net on the face and body. They rode still another fifteen kilometres — and drew in their horses. On a sandy hillock some people were sitting resting. Their turbans looked like flowers of Paradise to the frontier guards, and their camels and horses like the beasts in a fairy tale. The people took the frontiermen for demons of the desert. They opened their mouths, let out a bitter cry, and raised the wasted arms of people unaccustomed to manual labour. Comrade Stepanov collected their goods and chattels and, like a tutor, urging them with the necessary words, brought them to the gate. Here he added up the kilometres he had made — a hundred-and-fifty in twenty-two hours."

"Ha!" said the soldier from the south-west, as he listened to the letter. "We've got smugglers in Tedjen, older and craftier ones. It was once reported that four bags of pearls were carried over the frontier. And devil knows what the price of them was. We went to the place, and got hold of the sacks. Brought them back to the customs-house — 'be good enough, be pleased to take these as a souvenir', — and sealed up the pearls.

"In the evening as I was sitting alone, a bearded sort of devil belonging to the places round about came up, a merchant, — they're not a bit frightened — spoke Russian. Says he,'can I speak to you alone for a minute?' 'Al lright', I says. He comes right in and keeps looking at the door. 'Tomorrow', says he, 'I'll bring you those four bags of pearls at four thousand roubles.'

" 'Have you forgotten where you are?' 'Eh, I remember, remember everything. You're the chief here — a grown man. Eh? Now, decide, quick!'

"I am silent, thinking how to pluck him, the devil. 'Well' he says, 'what? You think it won't come off? Decide quickly! Yes, you think it won't come off, eh?'

" 'It won't come off', I say to him, 'and you can get out'. 'Well, forgive me, I'm an old man, but you're a fool?' 'What did you say? Ah, you dirty old devil, you — repeat what you said!' 'Don't get excited, — after all, why get excited? You heard me quite well: I said, you were a fool, chief?'

"He turned and went out. I spat after him, and in the morning I got to know at the customs what sort of pearls they were. They were priced at fourteen thousand roubles. Things like that— — —."

"Our frontier's a difficult one, a wild one", said a third man. "You go along the line where the wire's broken, you want to mend it, you can't do anything — there's no way of diverting the current into the earth, even if you burst, you can't do it. There's no moisture in the earth whatever. Well, you make a little pit with a ramrod, make water and get the horse to do the same, then you can manage, otherwise it's no good, the dust is dry as dry can be, not earth at all. Some of us live in caves round about, some in tents. One of our fellows got lost, wandered from post to post for sixty kilometres; he was a Ukranian, they gave him a compass and he took it, so soft-like, and didn't understand a thing about it. He went wandering on and on, rode and rode, — couldn't find the way. He dismounted, showed his compass to his horse. and said 'Mishka, just look at that now'. Mishka looked, pricked up his ears as much as to say, I'll see what I can do with that and

brought him home towards evening. We laughed at him — even now we often say, 'Mishka, look at that now!''

"We once had a battle", broke in a Tartar cavalry-man, "heavy battle with the Bassmachi. A hundred and thirty-eight Bassmachi there were. We drove them all back and counted our casualties — three horses killed" — he was silent for a minute, let the smoke out of his mouth and then added "and the company commander was killed too — a good company commander."

"They say the Afghans sell a sheep for ten cartridges", I asked, "is it true?"

"Sometimes they do", said a man sitting near where the horses were tethered. "They like nothing better than arms — they shoot badly, though. Their soldiers stand on sentry-duty in nothing but drawers. The chief at the gate, you saw yourself, goes in a woman's coat. The Persians are dressed cleaner, but as regards pluck they're no heroes. Once bandits appeared on their frontier, so the Persians came from their posts to ours and said: 'If they fall on us, don't drive us away, we'll run over to you?"

" 'Alright', we said, 'come along. We'll hide you somewhere, preserve your existence, so to speak.' "

THE STRUGGLE FOR RUBBER

The reddish evening light fell on tumblers made of paper placed in a shallow box. From out of these tumblers small pale-green plants peeped out at the world peacefully, without stirring. The plant had long leaves, the ends of which resembled spears with a tiny hook at the very point. The plants were feeble and anemic, and it would have seemed that they would soon die off had it not been for the sharp, almost proud bravery of their leaves, straining towards the evening sun.

We gazed with particular attention at this infant species, isolated in a special dwelling, tended so carefully and lovingly, though at times the love was mingled with hate.

But what was our attention, the attention of casual travellers and admirers of the unusual, when such leaders of science as Edison, and such masters of the leaders as Ford, have made it their life-work to subdue this small plant with the sharp leaves to their own needs or to invent and create something resembling it.

"We've got to find a plant" said Edison, "that will yield rubber at the cost of up to two dollars a pound.

"We won't even stick at the price. We've got to have rubber".

What is the reason for this extravagance, and what is the connection between the experimental station at Kara-Kala and Detroit? Why does our guide repeat the words of the Great Master, with only a slight variation?

"We must grow this plant. We'll fix it up in ten or twenty places in Turkmenistan and keep an eye on it, and I should think that after five or six years we'll be able to say something positive, without any boasting. It's quite a usual thing to demand the unusual from people. But to take up seriously the search for a method of cultivating a plant

of this kind, and on a huge area straight away — this is a very unusual and serious business".

Yes, I quite agreed with this evening voice explaining, in the heart of what was lately the wilds of Turkmenistan, new truths of an extremely authoritative and bold science. There was no other way out.

We import yearly fifteen thousand tons of rubber and guttapercha valued at twenty-four-and-a-half million roubles. What has this to do with the pale-green plant? In a huge volume, published at the centenary of the discovery of America, one can see pictures of Indians playing with little soft black balls that bounced off the ground. These balls and Edison and Ford and our Foreign Trade Department, which spends millions on guttapercha and rubber, have the most direct relation possible to these paper-tumblers, since this modest plant, guayule is the all-powerful provider of rubber.

Now it has been transplanted from the tumblers to specially-prepared soil. The ground in Kara-Kala is very hard, cracked from the combined action of the sun and irrigation. It must be mixed with manure and sand. In the field the rubber-plant is already taller. It reminds one vaguely of our wormwood or sunflower. The strange plant looks like a guest that is just waiting to see what will happen next. It has forgotten that at its home in Mexico it was often used to heat stoves, since the full-grown rubber-plant is a resinous shrub one metre high and burns as well as saxaul or teresken.

It would appear, then, that all one had to do was to get hold of some American seeds, and the particular kind of soil that the plant thrives in, select a suitable climatic region in the sub-tropical zone of the Union, (something like the table-lands of Chihuahua) and all would be well. Alas, it is by no means so simple. Ernest Lloyd, the first scientific godfather of the rubber-bearing plant — the guayule, spent years in studying it and passed on the work to the botanist McCallum. The latter studied the plant for sixteen long years and finally learned its secret. But he or rather the Intercontinental Rubber Company for which he worked, does not seem to want to share his discoveries with the world in general, and there are, therefore many passages as dark as Egyptian hieroglyphics in McCallum's books, many intentional lacunae. For instance, the most important facts about the fertilisation of the plant, and how the Americans were able to raise the percentage of reproductive seed up to 90% and more, are unfortunately not revealed. The methods by which such a complete fertilisation was attained are left to be discovered by those who wish to do so.

Then the struggle for the rubber-plant began on our soil.

The guayule plant yields up to a ton of rubber to a hectare. This is something worth striving for. But it is still a long way off. The experimental station is as yet at the stage of description and investigation, if one might say so. It might of course have busied itself with sesame, lufa or bomia, which gives seeds that resemble coffee-seed of an even better quality, when roasted, than the famous Mocha. Or it might have taken up the cultivation of the soya-bean, a very interesting plant, almost philosophic in its way, — but the problem of freeing the Soviet market from foreign rubber was too profitable and curious — and it gained the day.

The first seeds of the guayule were received from abroad with a mixture of weeds. They were sorted. The application of infiltration when the guayule began to sprout did not produce any positive results.

The guayule is capricious, a real Mexican belle. It may be injured by a superfluity of moisture in the soil, it is afraid of the wind, of cold, of unequal rainfall. The seeds are tiny, they sprout very low down as if extreme cautiousness holds them on a string. Authorities say that the propagation of guayule may be attained only by sowing the seed. Part, therefore, of the guayule at Kara-Kala is turned into seed by causing repeated flowerings when watered. Last year, according to the published report the seed nursery yielded a harvest of four thousand grammes of seed. Ten thousand seedlings reared during the winter, and ten thousand seedlings from the tree nursery of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture, and five thousand from Tashkent — this created a good stock of seed for the development of the campaign for guayule on a large plantation scale.

The plant requires very careful attention. Once the seed Lloyd was experimenting with lay for seven months in manured soil without showing any signs of life, and then sprouted abundantly. All organic manure, with the exception of Chilian saltpetre, kills guayule. So do ashes. Besides this, it lives according to peculiar laws. The less water there is, the thicker the bark, and vice versa. The guayule bush reaches maturity, McCallum avers, towards the end of the fifth or maybe the seventh year. The Americans, however, have found a way to produce a mature plant towards the end of the fourth year. Guayule is harvested from the plantation bodily plucked up by the roots. In America everything connected with it has been mechanised, and it is said that work is being carried out on the planting of six hundred and fifty thousand acres of land in the Southern States. It is hoped by this means to supply in the near future a fourth part of the demands of the rubber industry by home production.

All this I learned as I stood gazing at the pale guayule, which seemed as if it would never change its colour. It had grown out of the feebleness of its tumbler days into a tall plant, its shoots covered with paper bags, this time from the top, so as to shield it from the rays of a too ardent sun, and from irregular pollination. The latter is carried on artifically.

The plants that have lived through the winter here seem very sprightly, like their planters, who believe that a selection from this sort of "wintered" seed will be the foundation for the rubber plantations of Turkmenistan.

The selected seedlings are sown in ten different places, in various soils, in various climatic conditions and are under constant supervision. There is a special instructor, constantly travelling about the guayule domain from the village of Kesh to the Gorge of Upper Sumbar. He makes notes of all the changes in the plant, not, it may be presumed, without a tremor.

Besides this, correspondence with Sukhoum, Tashkent, Azerbeidjan, makes it possible to follow the experiments being carried out in those parts, where interest is also taken in guayule. During our trip through Turkmenistan, we became accustomed to unexpected people and contrasts, of which no one in the north has the slightest idea. In the north, generally speaking, we have a very poor idea of what the Soviet East is like today.

It should be understood that the modest, quiet people in the silence of the sub-tropic station, who are following every stir of the wild and important plant entrusted to their care, are no less heroic than the explorers of the desert, who remain with only a few bottles of water in an arid

plain, or the frontier guards keeping back an enemy force six times greater than their own.

The initial attempts at transplanting the guayule plant to Soviet soil were marked by failures alone. We know from history how often great failures have tormented people who had set themselves to win the truth, no matter what stood in the way. To get the guayule to such a point that, as in America, it would not behave like a guest, but as a permanent resident of thousands of hectares, meant that one could neither eat nor drink, nor even sleep, without a peculiar anxiety about the poor little shrub. Sometimes it suffers from heat, sometimes it is choked with superfluous moisture, sometimes frozen in the capricious local winter, which this year, in spite of the fact that the region is supposed to enjoy the same climate as Southern Spain, showed a temperature of 25° (C) below zero.

I passed once more around these silent fields, between which, just as on tennis courts, stood white posts with ladders. Only in place of the referee, meteorological instruments have been set up — rain-gauges, weather-vanes, thermometers. The fields where the guayule had been destroyed by frost looked like the long dark strips of razed burial ground beside the rest of the earth.

The guayule bushes that had borne the winter well, seemed to raise themselves slowly out of the earth as if astonished at the unfamiliar landscape. No matter how long I gazed at them and examined their prickly clothing, they seemed to convey nothing familiar to me. I might even say that there was an atmosphere of enmity about them.

I think, although maybe this will seem ridiculous from a scientific point of view, that we must re-model this foreign guayule so that, without losing its characteristics, it would become a plant of a Soviet standard, differing both from the rubber-plant of Chihuahua and that of Texas. It maybe that after seven years I shall see somewhere near Ashqabad great evening fields, striped by the straight lines of the guayule bush, avenues of future Soviet tyres, or, on the contrary, in the wilds of Kara-Kala, I shall one day come across the last remaining, degenerated plant, neglected by all.

Near the public lavatories of Khost and Gagri in the Caucasus stand great unnecessary agaves, with indecent things written on them. But it seems to me somehow that the struggle for guayule begun with such intensity will end with the picture described in the first instance and that the new word guayule will enter into our lives along with other meritable words of the industrial age.

THE GENERAL GOES A HUNTING

The white heron could not bring herself to believe that it was her last evening on earth. And after all, she proved to be right. All in vain we crawled up to her, hid behind the banks of the dry irrigation canals and sprawled about in the high grass. She hopped as if dancing from place to place and glanced about to estimate the distance that separated her from the suspicious rustlings, with a most uncommon quickness.

At last we got sick of this useless pursuit. We stood up and walked along the raised edge of the reservoir. Below at the waterside grew ordinary reeds and thickets of giant reeds, and snakes rustled about. At times (never at the proper time) geese and partridges and ducks flew out.

We came out at a clear spot and saw the Afghan general. The reservoir curved to the right and cut far into Afghan territory, and right opposite us, along the edge of the reservoir, stalked the Afghan general. He was hunting. As he walked he swung his long arms. He held nothing in his hands except a handkerchief which he sometimes fanned himself with. Behind him walked two menials. One carried a gun, and ducked every moment with unusual reverence. The other carried nothing. It may be that he simply took the place generally taken by a dog and secured the game from the reservoir into which it would fall when hit. The general had no dog with him.

At times the whole group halted. The general had observed a bird. The group stood stock still. It appeared that the general had been mistaken and had taken af reakish shadow for a goose. Then they moved further along on their difficult hunting expedition.

At last a real goose appeared before the eyes of the noble huntsman. He stopped and stretched his hand out behind him without looking round. One of the menials put the gun into his hand and the second deftly caught the cloak thrown with a single movement from the general's shoulders. The general shot, without taking aim. The goose sailed insolently over his head. The general stretched out the gun behind-him. The servant took it, and re-loaded it, while the other put back the cloak on the general's shoulders, and the group moved on again. Then they startled a duck, then a flock of teal. Suddenly our white heron started towards the reservoir. Our hearts beat fast. Until this moment the general had been shooting, keeping up the ritual of the cloak and the gun and missing every time. The whole group moved in an unnatural silence. It was obvious that the general was devilishly pleased with this ceremonial of hunting. Perhaps in Europe, in Amanullah's suite, in the English parks, he had learned to hit tame pigeons, but in Asia—we were witnesses—nothing came of that. Our heron flew right at the general. If he put up his gun in time — that evening would have been the last for the heron. But the general gazed — fascinated — with lifted head and so did his menials. They were evidently making up their mind whether it was worth while shooting or not. They decided — not. Too near — easy to miss. And when the heron flew over their heads, flapping her wings venomously above them, we also waved our hands from afar to the lordly hunter and went on our way.

WHAT THE DESERT IS REALLY LIKE

In the yard right before my eyes, stood a pile of bluish-white things. I thought they were sticks or broken and sun-dried trees, stripped of their bark. I went nearer. They proved to be the skeletons of hundreds of camels, sheep and horses. The moonlight played about them, stole into the skulls, searching among them.

"Scrap — for factories"! said my host carelessly. "Collected in the desert."

For a long time I could not tear my eyes from this bluish heap, from the remains of those herds that had wandered the length and breadth of the sands, to come in the end to the factory of the State Trading Company, to a general meeting of bones on that moonlight April night.

I left the factory and strolled about a hundred yards. The contours of the first line of *barkhans* (sand-hills) stood out against the horizon. Beyond them stretched the desert. Next day we rode into the *barkhans* on excellent horses that I cannot praise too much. They went at a yurga, a peculiar gait, something like a broad trot. The *barkhans* towered above us on both sides. It was only possible to ride in the narrow corridor between them. On either side rose great walls of sand of which the upper edge seemed to smoke. The snake-like shadow from the countless crawling sand-belts wearied the eye. We led the horses to the top. As far as the eye could reach stretched the monotonous yellow *barkhans*. In a storm they all shift, but even without the storm it is quite easy to get lost among them.

Hiroshige, the Japanese artist, said once: "In my pictures even dots live." The people scattered about the desert are just so many dots. A woman-doctor near Palvarta admitted frankly: "I cried when I came to the sands for the first time. I got so sorry for myself and my life, and for the children I'd left in Russia, and such a fog came down over my mind that I sobbed, like a lunatic, for hours."

My host, a hardened desert explorer, told us how, the first time he crossed the sands to the Shiram Well, he could not overcome his fear. It got hold of him, he said, of his whole being. " 'You'll never get back', I said to myself. 'Well, maybe you'll live through today but before tomorrow night you'll be a dead man for sure. You don't really think you could remain alive in such a place. And what a death — without food or water.' And it's already five years since I came here. I've wandered alone at night in the desert. It's all right, but every time I come back from the *barkhans* and get a sight of the cultivated zone I somehow seem to breathe easier."

Shepherds pass their whole lives in the desert. Perhaps, from loneliness and monotony they have got into the habit of being surprised at nothing and desiring nothing? Hardly. Their desires are no fewer than those of a town-dweller. But the saying: "The devil you know is better than the man you don't" is, undoubtedly, theirs.

Let only one European exclaim: "The desert is terrible!" — another will immediately shout from his corner: "Don't lie! There are few places more beautiful than the desert." I know people who are in love with desert nights, with the saxaul thickets, with the camp-fires, with roaming among the *barkhans*, and I know others whose hair has gone white in the desert, whiter than the salt marshes. Experiences, then, would seem to be varied and contradictory.

In some places the path by which you reached the well no longer exists the morning after. The sands have swallowed it up. To dig a well twelve metres deep costs about two hundred roubles. There are places where the wells are as far apart as thirty kilometres. There are wells a hundred feet deep.

When one has passed the gloomy walls of the barkhans, the steppe becomes visible, slightly hilly, naive and coarse. Beyond it stretch occasional pastures, salt marshes, saxaul thickets and takiri: — outcrops

of clay. The sheep eat the soft grass, not sparing even the tiniest blade. The camel prefers thistles, and grazes without supervision, going where he wills, sometimes wandering far from the nomad camp. In winter-time when water is plentiful everywhere, he specially loves to roam about and disappears for months at a time. He returns in the spring to his own well, even if he has to run a hundred kilometres. For one thing, all the water disappears from the surface of the desert and nobody lets him drink from the other wells. As a rule, wandering camels are not given water by those who find them, so as they will return, willy-nilly, to their own masters.

The camel-herds live themselves like quiet animals. All that has been said about their complete independence, about their life, in which they are supposed to gain wonderful health and wisdom, is a fairy-tale. The desert gives them scant nourishment. They usually eat yag-shurpu—water covered with fat into which they break a little of their dry bread, and drink green tea without sugar, with little cakes. The desert also gives them scurvy and tuberculosis, their children are rickety, and almost everybody suffers from catarrh.

The children are black like devils and thin like matchstalks. Owing to the terrible weight of their head-dress many of the nomad women suffer from tuberculosis of the spinal column. The dirt in the yurts is indescribable. The people eat, sleep and sit about all day on the same felt. Animals run in and out of the yurt. Burns are cured as follows: they boil urine with rice, tamarisk bark and salt and cover the burn with this mixture. If they have abscesses on the fingers they slit a live lizard and put it round the sore. Colds are cured with camel's milk mixed with red pepper. Diseases of women are not treated at all, since the women, either from pride or modesty, or maybe fear, never admit to them. If a child cries a great deal, they come to the conclusion that the cause of the cry is in the navel, so they begin to twist it round until navel rupture forms. Mournful folk live in the sands, and the desert itself, dominating their lives, is mournful.

In springtime, during the "lambing" season of the caracul sheep, bassmachi (bandits) make their appearance, take away the young lambs and make their escape across the frontier. The herds have greatly diminshed since the Revolution. Lastly, the government has no clear methods of re-forming the stockraising-business, and it maybe that only the complete nationalisation of the pastures and wells and their transference to cattle-breeding unions will lead to the development of this business in the desert.

In the desert just now we have the only "Revolutionary Committees" in the Union: those of northern and southern Kara-Kum. The northern committee is at the sulphur works (Chemerli Hills) and the southern — at the Shiram Well (forty kilometres from Andkhoi in Afghanistan).

Kara-Kum is in no way to be compared with Sahara. There are neither oases, nor palms, nor the cool waters of Paradise. The air is very clear, it is true, — one could grow to love the desert perhaps: so many men — so many minds, and so many kinds of love in the world, but the legend about the fatal fascination of the sand, and of the charms of life there should be contradicted once and for all time.

The sands are for the Turkoman what the woods are for the Northerner. The unfamiliar traveller in the forest would be just as uncomfortable as in the sands. Sand storms are just as bad as forest fires. The chimneyless hut of the peasant is just as bad as the yurt. The deserts and

the forests are full of their own solemnity, and the sun sets among the barkhans as if in love with itself. The wolf, coming from behind the hill, moves slowly over the sandy projection, not in the least afraid of being shot at, and the spectacle-snake lying across the path, from which the horse shies in fright — all these are primitive and curious things.

One can get used to the desert, to constant wanderings in it, and to nights spent at the foot of the *barkhans* and to the almost invisible paths. Amongst these paths are some over which caravans passed from the XIII to the XIX centuries, as they went from Bagdad to Khiva. The desert has its own codes of manners and morals, its own court of honour. It has also some peculiarties: a persian silver coin is, in some places, preferred to the Soviet *chervonetz,* because some of the nomads do not understand paper money and prefer ringing gold or silver. The desert has its own bankers, heroes and experts. The best of these in Kara-Kum is Inshikhov Yashausky, who was awarded the Order of the Red Banner for his exploits when fighting against Djunaid. He never loses his way in the desert, day or night. He needs no compass or map. His astonished tribesmen say that he leads the caravans so surely because a devil goes before him always: a devil to whom he has sold his soul, they say, who carries a candle of which the flame burns red at night-time and white in daytime. Be that as it may — "The devil you know is better than the man you don't" — was not said only yesterday. The words contain all the wisdom of the desert. I only think, though, that the devil does not precede the old man, but lives in him. Whoever has trodden a hundred times the road from Tashauz to Merv and Ashqabad and back, will not lose his way at the hundred-and-first time.

THE GORGE OF AI-DERE

If only the mountain gorges of Kopet-Dag could have been transformed, as the old tales tell us, into some kind of *bogatirs* (rich-men) or shepherds — it doesn't matter which — into something that could move and speak, and look like a human being, they would have come to Ashqabad and burst out like loudspeakers.

"What the devil do you mean by not paying any attention to us? Don't you need us? Have you grown proud? Or so rich that you don't want to know us? Well, in about ten years there'll be nothing to do in Kopet-dag as regards timber and the rest of the vegetation. The herds will have eaten the last young bushes and shoots, and the nomads will have cut down the last remnants of those great world-famous stocks of wild copses and fruit trees, eulogised by many botanists. If you want to save us, hurry, comrades, hurry to the copses and woods of the Dordj-Peninsula, to the saxaul woods between Anau and Ashqabad, to the mountain maples and saddle-trees of Kyzil-Dag and to what is left of the pistachio groves near Kushk! Here's a bit of history for you: in 1879 a stranger came to Khadja Kala and left these lines for future generations—'After the deserted steppe, the valley of Khadja Kala seemed to us like a Garden of Eden. Here we found marvellous cold spring-water, such as we had not tasted since we left the Caucasus. Here we found shade and coolness and woods and grass, and if you add to this, an abundance of fire wood,

game, melons and grapes, it will not be difficult to imagine with what satisfaction our party settled down here to rest and enjoy all these earthly blessings'.

"Where are now the earthly blessings of Khadja Kala? Where the woods with their pheasants and partridges? They are no more, and the same fate awaits the unprotected copses and woods of Kopet-Dag in the near future."

Thus would the gorges have spoken if they had had voices that would reach to Ashqabad. It is true, that in Ashqabad they would have been answered with the quiet explanations of people who have lived in capitals and are accustomed to clearing up the doubts of provincials.

"We know all this, so don't worry, citizens. We have marked out a programme of work for 1930 in the Kara-Kala regions.

"In the Porkhaya Valley: a) to plant local varieties of cork-oak, pomegranates, figs, vines and sumach over an area of 10 hectares; b) to lay out an experimental garden of 1 hectare, for acclimatisation of other sub-tropical plants; c) to lay out a nursery garden of 0.5 hectare, d) to carry out the re-forestation of the hills with the more valuable varieties of local trees (pistachio, almond, pomegranate unabi,) over an area of 10 hectares. In the Ai-Dere Gorge: to sow and plant along the slopes cork-oak, almond, pistachio, juniper and pine, over an area of $3^1/_2$ hectares. To plant cork-oak, and juniper over I hectar in the Kol-Dere Gorge, Guzi, etc."

"Well, better late than never", our giants would have said, and turned themselves back again into silent dark-green woods like those in Ai-Dere. When you pass through this gorge in the evening and cross its numberless streams and springs, you feel that ordinary prose is inadequate. Only verse, very simple and naive verse, will do. The grass is like a kinsman, the glossy dark-veined stones reflect the tremulous springs,— finer woods, suppler waters, and more valuable stones you will not find in all Turkmenistan.

The gorge is involuntarily associated in one's mind with the trivial expression frequently used in literature to describe such places — a veritable "Eldorado". The wealth concentrated here surges, lapping the feet of the traveller, as the gold fever surged around the Spaniards, and drove them mad in the mountain provinces of Mexico and Peru long, long ago. Yes, you would have to be as blind as a bat not to see that here is the site for a wonderful natural garden of the rarest trees and plants, the only garden of its kind. I am not speaking now of the beauty of the gorge, of its romantic attractions, of the great rock at the entrance that resembles a dead shepherd, around whom, like sheep, the trees graze on the mountain side. I am not speaking of the glittering, delicate foam of the blue-green waters of the gorge, the picturesque crags, still awaiting the photographer and the tourist, the fields where, according to Jack London, one should set up one's tent and live alone with a rifle, a mule, and, perhaps, a girl. I am sure his Valley of the Moon was no better, probably much less beautiful than the gorge of Ai-Dere. I'm not speaking about all this or about the strange road along which I got many impressions, over the Moon Mountains, the Valley of Death, Arpaklen and the Duzlutep Range, the dazzling luxuriance of the gardens of Kurudjei, Midji and Durdikhan. Let us leave all this for the present and take the gorge itself. Without attempting literary pictorial writing and impressionism, I want to describe as dispassionately as possible the economic and practical landscape of the gorge, so that the reader might understand that I am not trying to

A Caravan leader in the Kara-Kum desert.

The Women of Asia help to make the Soviet Union Independent of foreign cotton.

Turkoman peasants make the acquaintance of leather footwear in the local cooperative.

A meeting of the Aul Soviet listens to a report on the advantages of collectivisation.

A Handicraftsman ornaments a cradle.

A new visitor to the Aul—a newspaper in the native language.

feed him with a species of lyrical salad alone. No, I shall give him honest nourishing broth, with some figures floating about in it. They won't look like flies, and there'll be no need to fish them out with disgust, but they should be swallowed, because they are highly nourishing for the economist and extremely good for the social organism.

Here you will find pistachio, wild pistachio; this tree has been pleading for human friendship for a long time, and has always been refused it and submitted to pitiless extermination. And, meanwhile, like an experienced inhabitant of these parts, it has grown in places where no other tree is able to live without being watered. It yields lovely fruit. Every two years the ends of the boughs are weighed down with clusters of this marvellous yellow fruit flushed with pink. Besides the fruit there are nuts that form on the underside of the leaves and resemble in colour the real fresh pistachio and its fruit. The Turkomans say that one year the pistachio tree bears edible fruit on its branches and the next year — inedible fruit on its leaves. These nuts are very much used in the dyeing industry. A decoction of these, mixed with one of madder or cochineal is responsible for the marvellous deep crimson and raspberry tones that we so much admire in old Tekin carpets and silks. They keep their colour till the end of the world. Compared with these, aniline dyes are like colours daubed by children.

If you remember that Kopet-Dag occupies first place as regards the variety of its fruit trees — it boasts of no fewer than eleven kinds of wild fruit trees peculiar to this region only — even such rich districts like Tianshan and the Tadjik mountains in Eastern Bokhara are inferior to it — you will acquire great respect for this gorge, heroically standing out against the thoughtless axe of the nomad and the immoderate appetites of animals.

We import many tons of bitter-almond oil yearly, unaware, apparantly, of the fact that in the Ai-Dere Gorge stand twelve thousand almond trees, that ten tons of almonds were gathered along the first five kilometres alone, and that the gorge stretches for twenty more.

We had to pay gold for 200 tons of volatile oils that came to us from Europe, while there are great stretches in these gorges covered with valuable volatile-oilbearing plants like sumbul.

The biologist Schon recently discovered that an excess of ultraviolet rays stunt the growth of plants. I do not know if this superfluity exists in Kopet-Dag, but there where people and cattle and have not yet had time to do their work of destruction, the thicket is full of wonderful plants, our supporters and friends in the struggle for existence.

I shall mention one more good figure. Do you want to export a hundred-and-fifty tons of walnuts, and what nuts? The best export kind, the sort of nut called Karakos, that measures five centimetres. Its thin shell is not inferior to the American and French sorts. Go to Ai-Dere, drive the herds of three villages out of the gorge, forbid the cutting down of trees and you will get the hundred-and-fifty tons without making any special effort. If you chose to make an effort, then the harvest would be incomparably greater.

The wild vine, twining around the archa tree, would, if sorted, show that it included some of the best wine and table varieties. Up to three tons can easily be gathered in this lovely, half-forgotten gorge.

Then there are huge quantities of Turkoman blackberries, that nobody here heeds or gathers, and wild pears, and pomegranates, which are

N. Tikhonov
The gorge of Ai-dere

valued not so much for their taste, as for their rind, from which dyes and tanning materials are obtained.

In fact, it would be difficult to recount all the wealth of this gorge. Djid, ash, maple, dwarf bird-cherry, mountain-ash, quinces that grow only in the Ai-Dere Gorge and at the bridge of Pulissang on the R. Vakhsh, and the hawthorn. The modest grey leaves of the latter tree, velvety and soft, are maybe worth nothing, but its berries are sold sometimes in the Ashqabad bazaar for sixty kopecks a kilo. Then there are kizil, wild alicha, used for making jams, the prickly, spongy-leaved barbarisse, wild plums on the rugged slopes of the Shalkoc Defile, the black mulberry (shakhtut), and on the very edge of the precipice, the fig-tree spreads its crisp rustling leaves, glorying in the fruits that excel all other varieties of wild figs, discovered in Central Asia at one time or another.

Over all this abundance the dry slopes of the half-steppe hang like a warning, and the hard sceptical plant—tragonite astragal. The wormwood steppe above these slopes is so burnt out and dried up that the soil has turned into light, lifeless dust.

Along the gorge wander cows and goats and sheep, greedily munching the shrubs and trees. Drive them to the devil, dear comrades, before they've chewed up everything.

It is possible that all these luxuriant fruit-trees are a heritage left by some unknown settlers, long vanished from the gorge. There are the ruined foundations of some ancient structures here, but the oldest inhabitant of the neighbourhood, a Turkoman called Sabar Bakhar, who is a hundred-and-fifteen, told me in a melancholy tone, as he sat in the shade of a two hundred-year-old mulberry tree, that he remembered well how even his father and grandfather said they did not know of any one who had lived in the gorge before them. It means then, he said, that they must have lived before this—and he touched the venerable wrinkled chest of the mulberry with his old hand, that looks like a saxaul root. Comrade Bessonov, the caretaker of the gorge, lives now in the yurt at the entry to Ai-Dere. When we approached his dwelling-place, he was busy catching snakes. Catching snakes, by the way, is quite a usual occupation in this place. The inhabitants burnt down the thick blackberry bushes, since it was impossible to go near them on acount of the huge number of snakes that found shelter in their comfortable shade. The bushes are full of snakes. They lie between the stones, they crawl into the brooks, they wriggle along the fields. The housewife's terror was so great that she was afraid to sit in the dark on the stones that walled off the little place from the road.

"But you're a relation of theirs", said one of those present. "You come from snakes just like all people, like monkeys. It's on the way from the mollusc to the reptile and from the replite to the mammal."

The housewife stared at him in fright. "What are you talking about, saying that I come from snakes? Ah, you just want to frighten me — I see. And how can I come from a snake? And if we're related why should it bite me and I die from it?" "Well, and if you bit the snake, we don't know but maybe it wouldn't live, either", said the other. "There's poison in your saliva, too. That's been proved by scholars". "Well", said the woman, quite upset, and spat on her palm, "Now tell us, how can that be poison?" And she examined her palm carefully. Everybody laughed.

It was cool and clean in the yurt. The yellow samovar shone. A blue gramophone stuck out its great horn into the gorge. Old letters lay inside it. The host spoke the Turkoman tongue better than any Turkoman. He

understood all the dialects and when it was necessary, he admitted, he could turn himself into a Turkoman so that it would be impossible to know that he was a Russian. He was born in the neighbourhood of Ai-Dere, and his father had been a forester there.

"They wouldn't build me a house, although there's money and land", he said. "If they'd only give me permission to do it myself — and the winter coming, what shall I do with this yurt? I've got a family to think of. Last winter was a hard one, the pomegranates got frozen, in some places they didn't hold out. They didn't take away the almonds in time. The field-mice ate them, left only the rinds. The State Trading Company paid three rubles a pood for nuts gathered in the gorge and the private traders offered six rubles in the market. Well, and of course people stole them, you can't watch them, you know. A Soviet farm should be organised here as soon as possible and everything taken stock of. It's a fine place but neglected. You can see for yourself."

WAY FOR THE WOMAN

The first and only statue in the world of a Turkoman woman stands in the entrance hall of the Turkoman Culture Institute. The woman is engaged in an incredible species of work — she is reading a book. On a level with her, on the opposite side of the stairs, sits a Turkoman.

The Turkoman woman in real life has not often seen books or been placed on the same level as men. But she will win freedom for herself very soon, it appears, and quite an unexpected type of Turkoman woman will be the result.

She has had many a heroic kinswoman in the past history of her folk. We must recall the women who fought on the walls of Geok-Tepe or the well-known Khelei-bakshi — the woman-musician who defeated all the bakshi. The famous Ker-Kedjali was one of them.

"Let's see what kind of a mare is running in this race," — he said, before the competitions began.

Khelei-bakshi was pregnant, and her time had almost come. She accepted the challenge.

This extraordinary competition lasted a long time, and about midnight Khela asked her husband:

"Which do you want: victory or a child?" "Victory", replied the husband, who had a direct way of looking at things.

Then Khelei-bakshi left the competitions for a while, gave birth to a son, left him to her relatives and returned to win. And she defeated the old and famous Ker-Kedjali, and he left dishonoured.

I thought of this heroine as I listened to a dispute between a woman-judge and a peasant. She won, and completely crushed her opponent.

This woman was a modern Khelei-bakshi. She was not a musician but an orator and a thoroughly business-like woman; she was beautiful, and spared no one. She beat the stubborn peasants with a kamcha and swore by the rudiments of politics. Everybody was afraid of her. Her high position as miraba-controller of irrigation — was respected by all.

She was rarely opposed. She was a real, modern worker in the village.

The natural grace of the Turkoman women is seen to advantage in European dress. In Ak-tere, in a remote place, we suddenly came across a foreign woman. This French or American woman was walking slowly across the dusty deserted square of Ak-tere, in the shadow cast by the karagachi trees, that looked like gigantic green sponges. How had she come here, this pretty woman, this European, and what was she doing here.

Our companion laughed.

— "This is the local organiser of the women's department."

The woman turned. We caught a glimpse of a dark, delicate Turkoman face with long fine black brows. We realised at once this woman would rather die than put on again the robes and long ugly trousers of the old-style Turkoman woman.

THE CLASS ENEMY

The Jemshidi are, as a rule, illiterate. There are a number of small khans among them and there is also an ishan. The latter lives somewhere about Islim-Cheshme and decides the most complicated patriarchal questions without much delay, the weight of the decision being greatly added to by the significant tone of voice in which it is pronounced, and the frowning severity of the face.

The Soviet law courts are far away. It's a long camel-ride to the Soviet court, a long ride on the train, before your business can be settled. The Jemshid isn't likely to urge his camel so far for a trifle, and he doesn't quite trust the train — besides, this box on wheels is too dear for the penniless nomad.

The justice of the sands is so simple that even a camel could understand it. Wolves seize the last sheep by the throat, and the sheep must be hidden from wolves in a pit. Swift judgment overtakes the wolves. Here stands a Jemshid hunter, a member of the cooperative society. In winter-time he takes the herds to water on the R. Kushk. Here the wolves gather. He will kill as many as ten in a night, and bring their skins to the State Trading Company. The Company likes the grey wool of these beasts of prey, and the more wool, the better. As a result, there are no sheep, but on the other hand, no wolves. The law of the deserts is a plain law.

There are some wolves, however, not so easy to catch at the cattle-watering. In a street in Merv a tall Jemshid stands between two militia-men. He is a bey, and has just been sentenced to three years in a reformatory. When he came to the court from the nomad camp, he firmly believed that he had had a perfect right to do what he did. How dared the poor shepherd boy raise his eyes to his, the bey's, only daughter? For some years this shepherd had worked for him, and received for his labours thirty sheep a year. These thirty sheep he gave back to his master, without murmuring, as "kalim", or part of the price of the girl. The master laughed to himself, but continued to take kalim in whatever form it was offered. All the shepherd earned he gave back to his master, even what he managed to earn in other ways, or got hold of by accident, he carried to the father of his bride. Thus he toiled for several

years for his master's profit, as Jacob toiled to win Rachel in the sweat of his brow. When, at last, he desired to convince himself that his labors were not in vain and approached the bey with the request to see the girl and take her to wife, the bey laughed and led him to an empty yurt. The girl had disappeared.

Here the shepherd learned that the daughter of his master was not a suitable match for him, that her father despised his modest kalim, and had sold the girl for four times as much to the son of a bey like himself, from some far-off *aul* or village.

The father of the girl informed the shepherd of all this in a paternal and instructive tone. After this he took the boy by the back of the neck and pushed him out of the yurt, showing him a path, a short cut back to the bey's herds, left without a shepherd. The young man took another path, however, the one that led to Chimin-i-bit. It began in the desert, where in places it disappeared under the blown sand, and continued along the monotonous roaring railroad for a good two hundred versts northwards, finishing up at last at the house known as the Soviet Court of Law.

Before going to the court the shepherd went to the ishan. He walked for a long time, brooding over the complexity and hopelessness of his position. He came to the ishan, and the latter, blinking at him with his foxy old eyes hidden behind spectacles, declared that he was not in the right. A simple shepherd from the desert, was certainly wrong when he, a beggar, had decided to take the daughter of a bey to wife. The bey had wisely given him to understand that it does not do to be so proud, to try the conscience of people stronger than oneself. As to the money he had lost, what did that matter — had he not received a lesson in wisdom, he, a low fellow from the sands?

Then the young man left the ishan and came to Chimin-i-bit and asked at the Soviet where the Soviet courts were. They were, it appeared, a long way off, but the shepherd listened carefully to the directions given, and choking and swallowing hard, told the woeful story of his love.

"It's sometimes worse than that", said Jemshids of wider experience who listened to his tale. "Once a bey promised his three daughters to three shepherds and squeezed all he could out of them. Then, on the eve of the day fixed for the weddings he sent his cursed djigits riding into the desert, and they cut the throats of the three shepherds and threw their bodies to the jackals. That's the only sort of justice you can expect from such people. You were a fool to believe your bey, but anyhow, that's your business."

So that's what his countrymen said to him. The militia, however, took his statement and said plainly, paying no heed to the desert: "There are three charges that we're going to look into, one, concerning the illegal kalim, one concerning the defrauding and exploiting of the shepherd, and one concerning the sale of women as if they were cattle".

It appears that in these three points there was a much more powerful wisdom than that of the ishan, since the bey, after a short time, stood among the militia-men of Merv, having earned for himself a sentence of three years in the reformatory. The Jemshid shepherd returned to his desert with a document giving him the right to claim the kalim that had been taken from him.

As he was getting down from his mule at the yurt of Azis-Mamedov, a man came up to him and said: "The bey sent you greetings, and asked me to tell you that you'll end up badly!"

The shepherd laughed as the Jemshids do, showing his gums swollen with scurvy. Then he struck the fellow a blow in the chest and pushing past him, went into the president's yurt.

BALUCHIS, THE BORDER-FOLK

"They are a beautiful people, well built and unusually strong. Their skins are dark, faces severe but noble, noses broad and powerful. Their foreheads are low but strong, and the hair thick and coarse, a distinguishing feature of warrior tribes. Their legs and feet are extremely large and powerful. When they go out on a raid they sit two on a camel, back to back, so as to have a full view of their surroundings. They regard Pirra Kishri as higher than Mahomet, and the almighty Allah as greater than all. They swear by Allah when they speak the truth, which, by the way, happens very seldom."

Here my expert paused and pointed below the hill. A crowd of Baluchis had collected there and were engaged in hurriedly and clumsily ladling out clay with ketmens or native buckets, so as to fill a gap in the canal. Their wasted arms flew up and down with the unconvincing swiftness of people who easily get out of breath. Black faces wet with perspiration, bent backs. Their toil seemed to have nothing in common with the warlike description given by my companion. The work was evidently too hard for them. They were no good even as navvies.

"It seems to me they work much worse than Europeans", I said politely. "They are physically much weaker, and the noble leanness they are supposed to have is simply due to hunger."

"There's no way out for them", said the expert. "Remember what Bonvalot said about the people of Samarkand in his time: 'The inhabitants are incapable of building any more. They are dull and lazy. Their learning consists in developing the memory, and their science in the play of words.' The Baluchis were in a still worse case. The whole system of internomadic relations must be revised. They had at one time one great and proven trade — robbery. This fed them until 1922. Well, you know, following them into Persia and fetching them back every time soon got everybody fed-up, including the Baluchis. They were then transferred to a quiet, settled kind of life, and this is rather dull and for them, trying. Heroism went out of fashion, and on the collective farms people believe more in work in the fields than in looking beautiful and powerful in front of a tent. They are not used to toil, and only three days ago, when I made a tour of the neighbourhood in the one rotten phaeton the region boasts, I heard them refuse to mend the wretched little bridges. They said to my driver 'You're using the bridges, and you're the one that's getting paid, so you can do the mending. We aren't going to get anything for that? 'The good harvest of 1927 pleased them, however, and they took up cotton-growing seriously this year, under the supervision of their representatives in the village Soviets. To tell you the truth, they were helped a lot by the tractors and ploughs, though at the sight of them the camels sat down from fright at first, and the Baluchis from astonishment.

"'We spring from Amir-Saat,' they said, 'but who does this spring from?' 'What is Amir-Saat?' we retorted, 'a legend, that's all, but the tractor — that sprang out of the Workers' Revolution.' The Baluchis themselves understand very little about cotton. The eye of the supervisor must be always on them. The agricultural experience of the nomad is negligible. And their fate sent these novices at agriculture to a region that possesses the most powerful irrigation system in all Turkmenistan. Why, the Sultan-Bent Dam — it's so ancient and the same time such a fine one that only the Assuan Dam on the Nile in Egypt — John Aird's work — rivals it. I'm not speaking, of course, of the new Soviet dams. Then a dam has been constructed here across the bed of the Murgab, with a shield waste-weir, on the Poiret system, — a hundred and eight cubic metres of water per second. Thanks to this dam, the waters of the river can be raised by six metres above the average level. The water is let out of this weir, through the shield-dam, along the canal and into a special reservoir, formed by the old bed of the Murgab and an earth dike connected with the gully of the Hindu Kush, along which the Murgab ran in ancient times. The water between the two shield dams of this gully, which is divided into two parts, fills to three million cubic metres. And then, above this place, by the Bender-i-Narir dam, there is another basin up to twenty kilometres long. You'd get muddled really, in all these structures, and just here, among all these complexities of engineering, they put the Baluchis. Well, they're here to stay, anyhow."

A monotonous rattle reached our ears from the black tents of the nomads of yesterday. It was the women grinding wheat in hand-mills. Handful after handful was ground small and the sound would wear out the soul. It was even worse than the piercing shriek of the watering-pump, for after all, the pump is worked by a camel — and here — after two hours of uninterrupted labour the women could scarcely collect two to three kilos of flour.

An old Baluchi detached himself from the crowd of workers. He moved like a patriarch against the background of a yellowish, Biblical landscape, a ketmen over his shoulder. A huge turban covered his shaven head. His black cheeks glistened above the white beard, full of dust. Only the eyes burned youthfully, while the sinewy hands grasped wearily the thick stick of the ketmen, like a staff. He could not be Moses, because the commandments were already given. They have been typewritten and hang now in the village soviet, in Yoloton, in the district Soviet, and they are known to the president of the collective farm. They tell one about the land, and about the harvest, and of the measures for raising the quality of cotton, and of the work of tractors, and of the punishment to be meted out to the negligent, and about shock-brigade work, of tractor "sins", large and small, and of many other things of which Moses never dreamed.

Alongside the old man walked another with his hand wrapped up in a fresh sheep-skin. The hand was incredibly swollen. A snake had bitten him in the palm, and in cases like this the Baluchis instantly thrust the hand into a fresh sheep-skin, with the wool outside, for several weeks. I should think that after this the hand would become one great wound. Of course, when you think that the Baluchi only uses water for drinking and preparing food, all his life, this method of healing does not seem very surprising after all.

"They've got really attached just now to the tractor", said my expert. "It's because the thing is stronger than they and frees them from work,

brings the harvest nearer. They hardly ever eat meat, and by no means all drink tea. Their only property is a couple of stones, to grind corn, a pitcher, a sheepskin for water and two basins, out of which they all eat with their hands. Their poetic black tents are simply breeding-grounds for disease. Consumption reaps many of these "mighty heads" as history calls them. Their herds are very poor, about twent *bogatirs* to each. In winter-time they can't stand the cold in the torn tent. They dig graves inside it, real earthy graves, spread straw there, and then the husband and wife get into this straw, into this grave, that is too narrow to move in. Cold drives them into dog's holes."

"What sort of a future have they?" I asked. The Baluchis had finished work and, tattered, sun-scorched, and exhausted, they quietly mounted from the gully, making remarks in their guttural voices to each other. "What do they mean to Socialism and what does Socialism mean to them?"

My expert replied immediately.

"Socialism is the only way out. If you're a bandit, there'll soon be an end of you. Can't live long that way. They've either got to be like everybody else, learn to work (and work a lot, with interest, with zeal, even beyond what's asked of them), to scent the earth, as it's called, — or else die out. Of course they'd be all right as partisans in the future Red Baluchistan, but I can tell you, we can find any number of those when we want them, and we are sick of the endless poverty of these people. Let the devils get enough to eat now through their own labour".

The old partiarch came up to us and asked for a cigarette. He was not, after all, an old man. He was simply overgrown with hair and lean, like Jove. He was a man of middle age, grown old before his time.

THE UNWANTED LEADER

Socialism came to the Kushk River with collective farms and tractors; socialism came as decisively and irrevocably as the steam-engine came to the prairies of the Wild West in the America of long ago. Socialism strode boldly into the desert, where it found the Jemshidi, a wandering tribe, driven by fate from one country to another. Savants are somehow not very communicative about this tribe; we shall try to do without them now. The Jemshidi have measured the immense deserts of Asia from end to end. Once they settled for a long time in Afghanistan, but after a hundred years or so they quarrelled bitterly with the Afghans and unexpectedly folded their tents and left. The last time it was to the land of Turkmenistan the Jemshidi came and they came with the most warlike and bloody of pomp.

In 1908 the commandant of the forces at Kushk was alarmed by a sudden burst of firing along the whole horizon and reports of the frontier guards to the effect that a mob of riders, pursued, by the Afghans, had broken through to Russian territory. These were the Jemshidi, who retreated, while surrounding their yurts, wives, children, old men and cattle with a wall of warriers three deep; the Jemshidi, who were leaving for ever the inhospitable land of Afghanistan.

A delegation came and threw themselves at the mercy of the commandant with a tearful petition not to give them up to the Afghans. The Afghans were still in pursuit, seizing cattle, goods, and women as they went. The flames from innumerable camp fires could be seen at night time around Kushk, and frequent firing prevented the commandant from digesting his food in peace and quietness. The commandant sent an urgent wire to St. Petersburg.

The reply was — to permit the Jemshidi to settle on Russian soil, but to deprive them of all power. It was feared that in some mysterious way Great Britain might be behind this. The commandant admitted the Jemshidi and made them settle along the banks of the Kushk, where the land was bare and burnt up, and he forbade them to move away from that region. He refused them provisions. Hunger soon enfeebled the Jemshidi. They sold their horses, carpets, valuables and herds for a song. Others, desperate at being deprived of their property by the Afghans, hired themselves as labourers to the colonists of the Russian Morgunov settlement. Some united around the small khans, and became their slaves, trusting them blindly as their only protectors in a foreign land. The Tsarist government had only one name for the tribe — robbers. Friendly relations were unknown. In 1918 Kushk was deserted. The Tsarist officers fled through Persia and Afganistan to the Trans-Caucasian front; the Cossacks went back to Russia — and the fortress awaited its new masters, whoever they might be. At that time the Afghans stole a narrow-guage railway from the frontier, together with two engines and several cars. To these they harnessed elephants, and the elephants dragged this load to Herat and from thence to Kabul. Then the Afghans found that they had not stolen enough rails, only sufficient for a few kilometres. The Afghans could not master up the courage to enter the fort.

Then the leader of the Jemshidi, Said Batir, advanced on Kushk. The Jemshidi remembered Tash-Kepri — "To arms for the glory of God!" and sprang to horse. When they came to empty, silent Kushk, where the richest stores of arms and provisions lay, through the narrow valley of the river a shot resounded, a shot so terrible, so tremendous, so thick, and isolated that the horses stood still. It was the first and the last time that the six-inch gun in one of the Kushk forts had gone off in a warlike, but quite accidental, way. And this is how it happened. The inhabitants of the Morgunov settlement, who secretly took part from time to time in the business of war, decided to keep the fortress for themselves. They entered it and shut themselves up. The more daring made some attempts to fire the cannon, but without success. One amateur who had managed to pick up something about artillery, loaded the six-inch cannon according to the dimly-remembered directions of his former gunnery officer and fired it. The echo of that shot saved Kushk from Said Batir.

That day saw the end of Said as a commander. He remained an unimportant leader, without much influence. After that he often galloped up, his horse in a lather, to Islim-Cheshme or some other post and begged for cartridges, in order to win back the Jemshid herds seized by the Afghans. As a rule he was given nothing and thereupon he would gallop away to Kushk. From this point he would fall on the Afghans at night and managed to seize fifteen hundred sheep in place of the seven hundred stolen. Then the Afghans would come to Islim-Cheshme or some other post and among the black masses of sheep a general sorting-out, exchange, sale and dispute would go on.

And that is how Said Batir taught the Afghans to manage the ticklish business of robbery and plunder cleanly.

Now he sits, of evenings, on the threshold of the Kushk garrison offices (he does odd jobs here in a quiet way) and gazes dreamily at the big stars above the river, where the first Jemshid collective farm has grown up. Naturally, the beys are not particularly pleased either with the fact that Said is working, or that the "Kolkhoz" has been started. They were not admitted to the collective farm, and so they went away into the mountains, taking their flocks with them. Of course, the poorer Jemshidi know their leaders very well and remember how they stripped them of everything and led them into affairs of the most tragic and bloody kind. In spite of these tragic experiences, however, they cannot give up their faith in leaders such as Said Batir, but — times have changed.

And the leaders of the nomads, these proud sons of the desert raiders, can even go into the cooperative store and see how their once warlike companions buy kerosene for lamps and dream fondly of buying a kerosene stove or *primus*, as it is called. Or they can watch how the tractor cuts quietly through layers of earth that lay undisturbed for centuries, while the desert horses prick their ears in fright before this strange all-powerful beast.

THE DEATH OF ANNA DJAMAL

Anna Djamal was from the village of Yangalak and like all Turkoman women, worked until she was numb at threshing grain in a stone hand-mill, and besides this spun, wove, pulled down and put up the yurt, carried water and worked in the field. A shawl covered her mouth always, for like a good wife she had to work and be silent. A heavy sammok weighed down her head; clumsy garments hid and distorted her figure. She passed through life like a ghost.

She saw how nine-year-old girls were sold as wives, how seven-year-olds, instead of playing with dolls, sat like little slaves bent over the loom, or were taught to full the felt for the tents, rubbing their small hands till the blood came, on the coarse wool. A similar fate hung over her children also.

This was during the first period of Soviet Government, when old Turkoman women let themselves be persuaded to become members of the village soviet only if they were given five roubles each. Even so, only three of these old ones could be got because it was so difficult for the women to understand the new Soviet order, and they were so mistrustful of anything new, and did not expect any good to come of it.

Anna Djamal thought many days and nights of this eternal gloom in which she and others of her tribe were placed and which was called life. After a long time of turning things over in her mind she went to town and signed up in the Party.

After some time there was a congress in Asqabad, the first congress of the women of Turkmenistan. At this congress a Turkoman woman

Ene Kulieva, spoke great words, and many women saw the truth in her words. In far-off yurts they began the struggle, sometimes with the whole village against them, for a free existence.

Anna Djamal was one of the first. She went about the village and talked to the women, only the women. She spoke to them like a friend and an agitator. How did the words come to her? The things themselves agitated for her. She only pointed them out. The unsuitable clothes, the hand-mills, the dirty cradles, the slave shawls, the heavy *omacha* (primeval ploughs) the sight of these alone said more than words. The village folk began to hiss behind Djamal's back. They called her *Kapir*, sneeringly and insultingly. She betrayed her faith before them all, betrayed her adat, she insulted her own clan, she went to the town to the *Djin* department (department of devils), a devil had entered into her. Keep away from her, women!

But the women did not keep away from her. They came secretly to the yurt where she sat and listened to her. Djamal spoke quickly and brokenly, but it was clear enough even so. She said just the words that the Turkoman women had awaited so long. She had not thrown over her home and children. The daily work did not suffer from her journeys and speeches.

Kecheli, her sister's husband, proved to be a bad fellow. She went to console her sister three times. Kechili looked suspiciously upon her visits. Once he sent her sister out for water. The woman slipped on the wet clay by the well, fell and broke her leg. Anna Djamal came to see her. Kecheli this time lost all patience. He seized his dagger and shouted *Git* (which means "Clear out".). He turned the dogs on her. With tears in her eyes Anna returned to her yurt, and there her brother was waiting for her. Looking at her with heavy eyes, he said:

"Leave the *Djin* department, leave it at once else you can't live with us. You won't live anyhow. We must put a stop to this disgrace!"

She looked at him in such a way that he went out with an ashen face. Then her husband's brother came up to her and said: "You've turned Oraza Veli away, but, I'll tell you this, you're a godless woman. You know very well that its according to the law we've been buying girls for wives for such a long time. Why do you keep talking about it in your *Djin* department? Be careful!"

The stillness of night lay about the yurts. The moon came up. The great sands whitened. The old woman Pukhta Khanan heard the sound of horses' hoofs. The riders called to Khadje Kuli and when she came out of the yurt to them, they asked for fodder for the horses. There were four of them, and the lower part of their faces was covered.

"Where are you going at night-time, like this?" asked Pukhta Khanau.

"We are going to kill the wife of Ak Mamed Burunov", they answered. "Why, what harm has she done you?" said Pukhta, and was suddenly terrified of the night and the riders.

"Hold your tongue", they shouted and struck the horses.

Little Kichi, Anna Djamal's daughter, was aroused by the sound of a bucket falling in the yurt. She opened her eyes and saw some people entering the yurt, heard horses crowding at the door. One of those who entered put out the night-lamp, and it was dark.

The people bumped about in the tent and bent over the sleepers, trying to feel the head-dress of the woman in the dark. They could not

make out which was Djamal because, contrary to custom, she slept without the head-dress. Then Kichi shrieked aloud in terror and woke her mother. "What's happened?" cried Djamal, springing out of bed. The side flap of the tent was thrown back. The black beard of Oraza Veil hung in the gap made. The moon shone into the yurt. One of the Turkomans seized the little girl by the shoulders, set her on her feet and with his dagger made an incision on her forehead. The blood ran down into Kichi's eyes and she couldn't see very well what was happening. They held Ak Mamed down in his bed and would not let him rise. Kichi's brother wept loudly because blood was flowing into his eyes too, just like it was with his sister, but he was younger and only cried from pain, and did not understand what was going on.

The riders killed Anna Djamal with their daggers and galloped away. The children lay on their mother's body till morning. Then neighbours came from all sides, and the men went out to find the tracks of the riders.

Trodden barley, horse manure and hoof-prints led from well to well. Then they called many people belonging to one clan together and held a conference. The relatives of the murderers offered Djamal's husband money and cattle, and wanted to come to a peaceful arrangement. Kecheli, Djemal, Shagan, Kurban-Shagan and others tried to persuade Ak Mamed to do this, but he sat gloomy, and his eyes did not meet those of the others.

Nari came and Ovsar-Ogli with the old woman Toidje. He said: "My brother may kill me also", and insisted on making peace. Ak Mamed looked at little Kichi and she said: "Father, I know all those who murdered Mother and you know them, too, don't you?" Then Ak Mamed's mouth twisted, and he said: "Yes", and refused to make peace.

The murderers were tried at Ashqabad and shot. When the tria was on, all the town came to gaze at these black night-riders of the desert, who had killed a rebellious woman. The murderers sat quietly, thinking that they had done a great thing and that all the Turkoman women would be terrified for the rest of their lives. So many women came to Anna Djemal's funeral, however, that the village Turkomans were disturbed. And when they heard what the women said over the grave, they felt ashamed of themselves. They went back to the yurts, leaving the women to themselves. Then the women cried over Anna Djemal and made speeches such as she had made. Her death became known all around. Then a long time went by.

Comrade Kalinin, Michael Ivanitch, the president of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, came toTurkmenistan. The Turkoman woman presented him with a woman's costume, — the heavy sammok, the yashmak or veil covering the mouth, the coarse gown, slavish slippers, long chemise and wide trousers, tied below the waist.

Kalinin was astonished and said: "But I'm not thinking of marrying a Turkoman woman, I'm married as it is, and polygamy isn't allowed! What shall I do with these things? And anyhow my salary isn't enough to pay for a bride out of"!

Then the Turkoman women said: "Take these clothes, and may they always be a reminder to you of the slavery of the Turkoman women and that the Soviet Government should put down this slavery and make our women free."

THE JEMSHID COLLECTIVE FARM

A woman is cheerfully shaking out old pieces of tattered felt, parts of the yurt or tent. They make one think of spotted typhus. She shakes her own garments, full of dust and dirt, and points to the interior of the hut, where half-naked children sit on the ground around a heap of dying embers.

"See! how poor we are, see, what a state we're in, eh. Is there anybody in the world poorer than us, eh? Tell me that!"

Her eyes are dim, half-blinded by that terrible Eastern disease, trachoma: her cheerful throaty shout comes out in sharp contrast to the sick, wasted face. The wind plays about the pitiful dwellings of the Jemshidi, the cold of night twists and pierces the bodies of the nomads, yellow dogs howl from hunger and ferocity as they run round the cheerless heaps of the nomads' huts.

Sunlight. The Jemshids come out of their torpor of sleep. They laugh, they jump about, they are almost children again.

This is their nature, a happy one, indeed. They move in a crowd towards Chimin-i-bit. Azis Mamedov, the head of the Jemshid Collective Farm, goes in front. He is the man who shakes hands with all Europeans when he meets them. He is asked: "And what are you going to do in Chimin-i-bit?" He laughs, showing large, strong teeth: "Thanks, thanks!" he says, without in the least understanding the question, for he speaks no language but his own.

Today the Jemshids, these children, strange and unknowing like the desert, these queer folks, are going to try and get a firm grip of the ground. They have brought with them from the desert a host of peculiar habits. For instance, they love to beg. The word in most frequent use is "give". They crowd into the cooperative store — "Give us nails! give us bread! give us kerosene! The Soviet Government gives everything! Give! Give!"

Today they are in the collective farm (Kolkhoz). Little white houses have been built for them on the banks of the R. Kushk, but they still live in their age-old huts and small yurts, where the ground is seething with parasites. Their garments are dark and dirty.

There is one thing about a Jemshid of a startling whiteness, the turban on his head. The Jemshid women wash their husbands' turbans twice a week. The turban serves as a shroud in time. When a Jemshid dies, his narrow body, reduced at last by poverty and labour to ashes, is wrapped in this long piece of freshly-washed material. There are no rich people in the Jemshid collective-farm settlement. The rich have driven their flocks far away into the desert.

The Present has found its way to the Jemshids and has made a thorough examination of their goods and chattels. There is nothing in the world more convincing than that which can be touched. Beside the primitive *ketmen* stands a kerosene can, a zinc bucket clinks alongside the camel-saddle, calico from the cooperative store is stretched over the nomad's shoulders under an old waistcoat of Afghan origin, now burst at the seams.

Jolly faces, with misty eyes smitten by trachoma, light up with surprise and pleasure: a tractor is moving over the field with the assured roar of a machine, reproaching folk with their backwardness. The people run after it. What terrifies them is that not one of them can compete

N. Tikhonov
The jemshid collective farm

with this mighty invention of the collective farm. It surprises them that they are going to live in houses — until now four walls meant only a trap to them. The cattle will stand in a shed. In a shed? At sunset they always run to meet the herd coming from the desert. The herd is so small, that one can count the beasts on one's fingers. They can never be left out in the open air at night on account of wolves and kotlomans, and there is nowhere to hide them. Still, the Jemshids hide them. Pits are dug in the earth, sheep and goats are seized by the legs and thrust in, deep in, so that they cannot jump out. Bulls and cows are led one by one along a steep, narrow, earthy passage into a great pit, where the animals turn round only with difficulty. If the night threatens to be rainy, the pits are covered over with old felt or mats. The dogs sit alongside and howl all night long, keeping watch.

From this time on, then, the Jemshid has become a farmer.

He had, of course, formerly, worked as a farm-labourer, but that was quite another thing. Now he has his own fields, his own farm. The collective-farmers can be easily counted, there are only twenty-eight families and so far they do not understand very clearly what it is to have their own fields, and ploughs, and cattle. Red Army boys from Kushk brought them the tractor, passed through the fields with songs, and to the accompaniment of these songs sowed cotton and wheat. Beggary and barbarism came to an end. The Jemshids do not know the language of their great brothers, the Russian proletarians. Russians do not know the Jemshid tongue, and yet — work is going ahead. The life of the Jemshid has got to be remodelled. The new Jemshid realises that somehow, and by some means, he must make a radical change in his way of living. Old customs weigh him down. Two men come to the head of the collective farm to settle a dispute. The question concerns the saddle of a mule. What's to be done? The headman with his jolly smile appeals to the organiser of the Kolkhoz, a Communist Turkoman:

"What do I know about it? I'm Soviet. Yes, of course, but you must excuse me this time. I beg to be allowed to judge them according to the Shariat — the sacred law. I don't know Soviet law yet. What is Soviet law? — that's a difficult business!"

"The Shariat is no more", says the organiser,[1] and everybody laughs. A good joke, they think. "Hey, hear that", one shouts to another, "the Shariat is no more!" They laugh with relish, as if someone had just made a clever pun. Today, over innumerable cups of thin, sugarless tea they will repeat over and over again: "The Shariat is no more, the Kolkhoz has come, eh?" and all their listeners will be astounded with the news.

ARPAKLEN VITERITE

You will ride through Sumbar Midnight mists near and far, Till you pass by the Arpaklen Mine.

In the early morning on the rocks towering above the dark cleft of Gebe. Sand, a man can be seen walking alone over the mountain, he walks slowly but as if well-acquainted with the place. One is

naturally tempted to take him for a troll of the Turkmen heights, the guard of the mountain's wealth, going about his domain. If you like, he is a troll, but a proletarian one, quite tangible and guarding in reality the greatest wealth in the world.

The yellow stone he touches is a very special kind of yellow stone. If you want to see similar stone, you will have to cut across Europe, and only in Norfolk, in England, will you meet with the second and last quarry in the world where viterite can be obtained. Viterite looks like fossilised honey. It is a rich yellow with white frozen veins like sugar. It comes to human hands from the very bowels of the earth.

Gaseous substances which rose from the white-hot mass at the rebirth of the world, filled the cracks in the earth's crust.

The gasses of sulphuric and carbonic barium and mercurial salts — baryte and viterite came together with them. Millions of tons of heavy spar were deposited — baryte, and of its precious relative, viterite. In places it was twisted into crystals of weird design, and resembled white coral, sprinkled with sparkling silver.

Viterite yields chlorous barium, indispensable to agriculture, to the porcelain industry, to the preparation of rare poisons and to some other trades.

The proletarian troll who has a complete understanding of the business, penetrating deeper and deeper every day into the secrets of the viterite deposits, is called Siderov. He is a miner from the Don Coalfields. If some Communists, like, for instance, the gardener Sabo, from Buda-Pesth, could command the troops in the gorges of Paropamiz so excellently, if Vatolla from Berlin, could with his Italian liveliness and German persistence inculcate socialism in the most difficult region of this country, Krasnovodsk; if that fine Latvian, Neines can stand guard over the workers' collective farm before the bassmachi of Afganistan; if the fierce Coopershtock, the first of the Soviet "Mohicans", in love with the great yellowness of Kara-Kum, holds the area between Jakhta: — Bazaar and Shiram, in the young hands of a revolutionary leader, then why should not an old Party member, an experienced worker like Comrade Sidorov, come to the remote gorge of Arpaklen. And he has come. He who had never been in the mountains came without any surprise to the white crags. The deposits of viterite were found by the mining engineer, V. P. Sokolov in 1928. The foundation of the mine was laid through the efforts of the energetic N. I. Deev.

According to his directions four yurts were set up, an earthen hut for an office, a cellar where the resounding strength of ammonal is stored and great earthern vessels in which hay for the horses is kept. It was he who gave the solemn signal for work to begin on the slopes of Arpaklen. His assistant, the younger overseer, Sidorov, mentioned above, remains head of the mine in his absence. He has also had to start something resembling special courses on blasting, where he was the only teacher. This he was obliged to do because the Tartars who had been brought to do the mining, ran away from the mine, and turned out to be small people and untrustworthy, while it was only with great difficulty that the Turkoman workers, who knew no Russian, could grasp the meaning of the sudden, mighty, explosion.

If the complexities and importance of blasting were not explained to them, they would have smashed all the viterite into thousands of small useless pieces, and left only charred flesh and bits of old garments to tell the tale of themselves. They had to be taught

how to work with the crow-bar and pick. This was not so simple, either. The Turkoman, absorbed in his work, throwing off his long coat, and baring his back to the merciless sun (it is extrem ly difficult to work in the narrow square pit in terrible heat, with the thermometer running up to 40° C) hammers violently at the comparatively soft viterite. He pays no attention at all to the fact that he is breaking up pieces that form the arch of the vault and are ready to slip, and that the whole pile will come down on his head in a few hours. His comrade, engaged in carrying the broken pieces to the surface, is so busy, what with sweating so hard and breathing so heavily, that he does not see, and even if he did, would not realise at once, that he should stop his mate and direct his blows to another place. How many workers would have been injured and crippled if it was not for the watchful eye of the old overseer observing every movement of the worker, every curve of the capriciously deposited viterite.

Fifteen Turkoman workers have been placed at different points in the gorge, from early morning. The seams of viterite are only found here and there, there are no great continuous stretches. When the rocks begin to show white, like marble walls, without any yellow, this means that the viterite seam has finished. It must be searched for higher, lower, in some other part.

In this place, Arpaklen, the only word that people live on, eat, sleep or begin a conversation with is —viterite. The Turkomans of the neighbouring gorges are struck with this word as if it was a magic formula. When Comrade Sidorov goes out prospecting for possible viterite deposits, Turkomans often come up to him on the road and say that they have also found some sort of stones and want him to come and look. They can only say "Vitar, vitar", and lovingly stroke the stone that resembles their burnt skins in colour.

These places were quite deserted and have never been surveyed. There were no roads, only narrow paths. There are none still. And at the same time the second deposits of viterite known to the world demand attention. They are not so large, maybe, as might be desired, the known resources are estimated as not exceeding two thousand tons (it is not known how much remains to be discovered still) .

Already, however, the twenty-two car-loads that arrived at Kyzil-Arvat on the backs of camels, almost two hundred versts away from Arpaklen, can be regarded as an achievement, especially if we take into consideration that Great Britain has refused to share her viterite with us.

Besides this, the deposits of baryte in these mountain clefts — and the importance of baryte will be clear, if we remember that before the war more than a million poods a year were imported into Russia — are not being worked on account of lack of transport facilities.

The yellow-white heaps of viterite that are scattered about the mountain slopes look like the foundations of future houses. There will be houses soon, too, undoubtedly. At present, on the stream that rattles below through the gorge, stands a little wooden house, a bath-house, and before it in the yard stands a bath. When the three Europeans we found working on the mine take baths, they throw in bunches of mint and thyme as a tribute to the Oriental atmosphere of the place.

The mine has been working since 1930. Forty-seven car-loads of viterite have been obtained during these five months. Not all of this has been delivered at Kyzil-Arvat, but the figures speak for themselves. The delivery is hindered by the incredibly bad state of the roads and

the insufficient number of camels. All these reasons raise the cost considerably.

The mountains around the Arpaklen station have been surveyed by people devoted to their work. We must not forget that the foot of a European has never trodden some of the places in these mountains. People make discoveries at every step here, sometimes puzzled and amazed. After digging the soil to a depth of four metres in one place, a structure was discovered with an ancient vault and a blackened species of chimney. In another place they came upon the bones of a mysterious interment, old coins, and decaying garments. The Turkomans say that none of them remember the place being inhabited.

Along with these finds, deposits were discovered of a strange, shining bluish stone, like glass, that broke off in long narrow flakes when struck. It has a lustre like mica. It is very interesting to wander about amid the awakening industrial life of the place. On the mountains people still look like little dots, scattered about accidentally. The viterite crags are still wrapped in the mysterious vapour of lucky finds. The yurts on the mountain look like travellers' camps, and the camp-fires like bivouacs. Moving away from the fire into the gloom of the gorge, one can still meet unexpectedly with a leopard or a wolf; scorpions fall from the round lattice of the yurt roofs, striking the earthen floors with a heavy thud; snakes glide out from under the feet of the workers; brooks suddenly begin to go mouldy for no apparent reason and become useless, then springs have to be found. The snakes and scorpions have to be burned out with kerosene.

The first period, the Robinson Crusoe period, has already passed. From somewhere or other a dog ran up to the light of the fire and stayed with Sidorov. They called him Bob. Out of the gorge, with a great deal of mewing, came a big cat with a muzzle that seemed chopped off and she remained with the Arpaklen people. A Turkoman woman, the only one, acts as cook.

Sizov, the book-keeper of the mines and a dreamer, a lover of solitude, wanders knee-deep in grasses, lost in thought connected, of course, with viterite. Bob runs behind, playing with the grasses. Sizov plucks himself a bunch of flowers. The Turkoman Switzerland surrounds his poetic soul with the finest views of mountain meadows, with pomegranate trees, dog-roses, and barbarisse. The wind runs through the silvery ranks of the feather-grass, a wonderful mountain wind. Sizov sighs dreamily, sniffs at the grasses and looks around him. He knows all these heights, all the news of the gorges.

"The pomegranate tree got frozen this winter", he says in a melancholy tone. "There's a snake lives over there that kills yellow lizards only. The biggest blue-bells are over on that slope, and the softest feather-grass you can find behind that hill below. I used to go for walks with Klimovskikh, the overseer, but he doesn't like these kind of walks. I take Bob for company, and we collect flowers. Then I have a fairly large collection of stones and crystals of viterite. There isn't such a one in the Mining Institute or the Geological Survey."

The silence of night descends on the gorges. The camp-fire burns like a beacon on the edge of the daylight world. Below, the lonely brook rattles along. The cool stillness of the mountains comes close. The people of Arpaklen all sit together around a hot casserole with fluffy macaroni; Sidorov, Sizov, and Klimovskikh. The dog and the cat come up. Rifles hang on the walls. The horses munch hay from the tall earthenware

vessels. Sidorov puts down his spoon and moves with the brisk step of the miner towards the fire. He stands facing the main blasthole of viterite, invisible now in the night fog, but I know that the fog does not exist for him. Early to-morrow morning he will take his thin light stick, and like a mountain troll go out to measure anew the narrow paths running up and down the gorge. Despising himself for his short windedness, (he is not used to mountains yet) he will climb up on the white rocks, so as be able to say, with a quiet smile, to some newcomer, showing him a huge crag disappearing into a gulf, a crag, perhaps of no apparent merit:

"What a plot I've reserved here. Just see, as they give me the sign, what baryte will come out of there, you won't half be glad! Extraordinary purity!"

You look at this extraordinary fellow, the guardian of such extraordinary things, and all the difficulties of getting to this place, and all your slight weariness vanish from your mind. I remember the conversations at Kara-Kala and I want to tell everybody going to Turkmenistan — stop at Arpaklen! No matter what comes or goes, stay a while at Arpaklen! Whoever hasn't seen Arpaklen hasn't seen Turkmenistan.

Translated from the Russian
by Anthony Wixley.

L. ARAGON

Translated from the French by

E. E. CUMMINGS

THE RED FRONT

1

A gentleness for my dog
A finger of Champagne Very well Madame
We are at Maxim's A. D. one thousand
nine hundred thirty
Carpets have been put under the bottles
so that their aristocratic arses
may not collide with life's difficulties
there are carpets to hide the earth
there are carpets to extinguish
the noise of the soles of the waiters' shoes
Drinks are sipped through straws
which you pull out of a little safety-dress
Delicacy
There are cigaretteholders between cigarette and man
there are silent people at the cars
there are service-stairs for those
who carry packages
and there's tissue paper around the packages
and there's paper around the tissue paper
there's all the paper you want that doesn't cost
anything paper nor tissue paper nor straws
nor champagne or so little
nor the advertisement-ashtray, nor the
advertisement-blotter nor the
advertisement-calender nor the
advertisement-lights nor the
advertisement-pictures on the walls nor the
advertisement-furs on Madame the
advertisement-toothpicks the advertisement-fan and the advertisement-
wind
nothing costs anything and for nothing
real live serviters, tender you prospectusses in the street
Take it, it's free
the prospectus and the hand which tenders it
Don't close the door
the Blount will take care of that Tenderness
Up to the very stairs which know how to ascend by themselves
in the department stores
Days are made of felt
Men are made of fog The world is padded
without collision

You aren't crazy Some beans My dog
hasn't been sick yet
O little clocks little clocks
have you given enough dreams to the lovers on the great boulevards
and the Louis XVI bed with a year's credit
In the cemeteries the people of this so-well-oiled country
hold themselves with the decency of the marble
Their little houses ressemble
chimneypots
How much are crysanthemums this year
Flowers for the dead flowers for the great artistes
Money is also spent for ideals
And besides good deeds wear long black trailing gowns
on the stairs I only tell you that
The princess is really too kind
for the gratitude which is owed you
Scarcely if they thank you
It's the bolsheviks' example
Unhappy Russia
The URSS
The URSS or as they say SSSR
SS how is it SS
SSR SSR SSR oh my dear
just think SSSR
You have seen
the strikes in the North
I know Berck and Paris-plage
But not the strikes in the SSSR
SSSR SSSR SSSR

2

When men came down from the suburbs
and at the Place de la Republique
the black wave formed like a shutting fist
the shops wore their shutters over their eyes
so as not to see the lightning pass
I remember the first of May nine hundred seven
when terror reigned in the gilded drawingrooms
The children had been forbidden to go to school
in that occidental district which was reached by only a feeble
distant echo of wrath
I remember the Ferrer manifestation
when on the Spanish embassy was crushed
the ink-flower of infamy
Paris not so long ago
thou hast seen the procession made for Jaures
and the Sacco-Vanzetti torrent
Paris thy crossroads shudder still with all their nostrils
Thy pavements are always ready to leap in air
Thy trees to bar the way to soldiers
Turn back great body call
Belleville
Ohé Belleville and thou Saint-Denis

where the kings are prisoners of the reds
Ivry Javel and Malakof
Call them all with their tools
the errandboys bringing news
the women with their heavy chignons the men
who come out of their work as if out of a nightmare
their feet still tottering but their eyes clear
There are always gunsmiths in the city
and autos at the bourgeois' doors
Fold the reflectors like wisps of straw
make the kiosques benches Wallace fountains waltz
Bring down the cops
Comrades
Bring down the cops
On on toward the west where sleep
rich children and first-class tarts
Go beyond the Madeleine, Proletariat
let thy fury sweep the Elysée
Thou hast good right to the bois de Boulogne on weekdays
Some day thou wilt blow up the Arc de Triomphe
Proletariat know thy force
Know thy force and unchain it
It prepares its day Know how to see better
Hear that rumor which comes from prisons
It prepares its day it awaits its hour
its minute its second
when the mortal blow shall be struck
and the bullet so sure that all the social-fascist doctors
bent over the victim's body
will have a time making their searching fingers wander under the lace
chemise
sounding with instruments of precision its already rotting heart
They won't find the usual remedy
and will fall into the hands of the rioters who will glue them to the wall
Fire on Leon Blum
Fire on Boncour Frossard Deat
Fire on the trained bears of the social-democracy
Fire Fire I hear pass by
the death which throws itself on Garchery Fire I tell you
Under the guidance of the Communist Party
SFIC
you are waiting finger on trigger
Fire
but Lenin
the Lenin of the right moment
From Clairvaux rises a voice which nothing stops
It's the talking-newspaper
the song of the wall
the revolutionary truth on the march
Hail to Marty the glorious mutineer of the Black Sea
He shall yet be free that symbol in vain imprisoned
Yen-Bay
What is this word which reminds us that a people can't be
gagged, that it can't be

subdued with the curving sword of the executioner
Yen-Bay.
To you yellow brothers this pledge
For every drop of your life
shall flow the blood of a Varenne
Listen to the cry of the Syrians killed with darts
by the aviators of the third Republic
Hear the groans of the dead Marocans
who died without a mention of their age or sex
Those who await with shut teeth
to practice at last their vengeance
whistle a tune which carries far
a tune a tune UR
SS a joyous tune like iron SS
SR a burning tune it's
hope it's the SSSR tune it's the song
it's the song of October with bursting fruit
whistle whistle SSSR SSSR patience
won't wait forever SSSR SSSR SSSR

3

In crumbling plaster
among the faded flowers of old decorations
the last clothes and the last whatnots
underline the strange survival of knick-knacks
The worm of the bourgeoisie
vainly tries to join its scattered fragments
Here a class convulsively agonizes
family memories disappear in fragments
Put your heel on these vipers which are awaking
Shake the houses so that the teaspoons
will fall out of them with the bedbugs the dust the oldmen
How sweet how sweet is the groan which comes out of the ruins
I am a witness to the crushing of a world out of date
I am a witness drunkenly to the stampingout of the bourgeois.
Was there ever a finer chase than the chase we give
to that vermin which flattens itself in every nook of the cities
I sing the violent domination of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat
for the annihilation of that bourgeoisie
for the total annihilation of that bourgeoisie
The fairest monument which can be erected
the most astonishing of all statues
the finest and most audacious column
the arch which is like the very prism of the rain
are not worth the splendid and chaotic heap
which is easily produced with a church and some dynamite
Try it and see
The pickaxe makes a hole in the heart of ancient docilities
crumblings are songs wherein suns revolve
Men and walls of yesterday fall struck with the same thunder bolt
The bursting of gunfire adds to the landscape
a hitherto unknown gaiety
Those are engineers, doctors that are being executed

Death to those who endanger the conquest of October
Death to the traitors to the Fiveyearplan
To you Young Communists
Sweep out the human debris where lingers
the magical spider of the sign of the cross
Volunteers for socialist construction
Chase the old days before you like a dangerous dog
Stand up against your mothers
Abandon night pestilence and the family
You hold in your hands a laughing child
a child such as has never been seen
He knows before he can talk all the songs of the new life
He will get away from you to run he laughs already
the stars descend familiarly upon the earth
it's indeed the least which they turn in assuming
the black carrion of the egoists
the flowers of cement and of stone
the long creepers of iron the blue ribbons of steel
have never dreamed of such a spring
the hills are covered with gigantic primroses
they are homes for children kitchens for twenty thousand diners
houses houses clubs
like sunflowers like fourleafclovers
the roads are knotted like neckties
a dawn comes up over the bathhouses
The socialist May is announced by a thousand swallows
In the fields a great struggle opens
the struggle of ants and wolves
there aren't as many machineguns as we'd like
to use against routine and obstinacy
But already 80pc of this year's bread
comes from the marxian wheat of the collective farms
the poppies have become redflags
and new monsters munch the ears of grain any more
Nobody knows here what unemployment was like
the noise of the hammer the noise of the sickle
mount from the earth is it
really the sickle is it is it
really the hammer The air is full of locusts
rattles and caresses
URSS
Gunshots cracking of whips clamors
It's the heroic youth
Steeled cereals SSSR SSSR
The blue eyes of the Revolution
shine with a necessary cruelty
SSSR SSSR SSSR SSSR

4

For those who pretend that this is not a poem
for those who regret the lilies or the Palmolive soap
they will turn away from me their clouded heads
for the Stop — there people the You're-joking people

for the disgusted people for the sneering people
for those who will not fail to put holes in
the sordid drawings of the author the author
Will add these few very jimple words

> Intervention should begin with the appearance of Rumania on the scene, on the pretext, for instance, of some trouble on the frontier involving an official declaration of war by Poland and the joining together of the border states. To this intervention would be joined the troops of Wrangel which would have traversed Rumania... On their return from the energetic conference of London, entering the URSS from Paris, Ramzine and Laritchev have organized communications with the Torgprom through the intermediary of Riabouchinski, who was keeping up relations with the French government personified by Loucheur... In the organization of the intervention the chef role belongs to France which has prepared it with the active aid of the English government...

The dogs the dogs the dogs are conspiring
and as the pale... escapes the microscope
Poincaré flatters himself that he's a filtering poison
The race of the daggerdancers of the tzarist pimps
the dummy grand-dukes of the casinos which we lance
the informers who charge 25 francs a letter
the huge rottenness of emigration
softly crystallizes in the French bidet
The Polish snot and the the Rumanian drivel
the puke of the whole world
are massed on all the horizons of the country where socialism builds itself
and the tadpoles rejoice
see themselves already as frogs
with decorations
deputies who knows ministers
Foul waters suspend your foam
Foul waters you are not the deluge
Foul waters you will fall again in the occidental slough
Foul waters you will not cover the plains where sprouts
the pure wheat of the future
Foul waters Foul waters you will not dissolve the sorrel of the future
You will not soil the steps of collectivization
You will die at the burning threshold of dialectic
of a dialectic with a hundred turnings which carry scarlet flames
with a hundred thousand turnings which spit the fire of thousands and thousands of canons
The universe must hear
a voice yelling the glory of materialist dialectic
marching on its feet on its millions of feet
booted with army boots
on feet magnificent like violence
outstretching its multitudinous warrior-arms
toward the image of triumphant Communism
Hail to materialist dialectic
and hail to its incarnation
the Red
army
Hail to
the Red

army
A star is born on earth
A star to-day leads toward a fiery breach
the soldiers of Budiony
March on soldiers of Budiony
You are the armed conscience of the Proletariat
You know while you carry death
to what admirable life you are making a road
Each of your blows is a diamond which falls
Each of your steps a fire which purifies
The lightning of your guns makes ordure recoil
France at the head
Spare nothing soldiers of Boudiony
Each of your cries carries afar the firefilled Breath
of Universal Revolution
Each of your breathings begets
Marx and Lenin in the sky
You are red like the dawn
red like anger
red like blood
You avenge Babeuf and Liebknecht
Proletarians of all countries unite your
Voices Call them prepare for them the
way to those liberators who shall join with yours
their weapons Proletarians of all countries
Behold the tamed catastrophy
Behold docile at last the bounding panther
History led on leash by the third International
The red train starts and nothing shall stop it
UR
SS
UR
SS
UR
SS
No one remains behind
waving handkerchiefs Everyone is going
UR
SS
UR
SS
Unconscious opposers
There are no brakes on the engine
Howl crushed but the wind sings
UR
SS SS
SS UR
SS SSSR
Up you damned of earth
SS
SR
SS
SR
The past dies the moment is thrown into gear

SSSR SSSR
The roads spring the rail warms SSSR
The train plunges toward tomorrow
SSSR ever faster SSSR
In four years the fiveyearplan
SSSR down with the exploiting of man by man
SSSR down with the old bondage down with capital
down with imperialism down with it!
SSSR SSSR SSSR
That which swells like a cry in the mountains
When the stricken eagle suddenly lets go with its talons
SSSR SSSR SSSR
It's the song of man and his laughter
It's the train of the red star
which burns the stations the signals the skies
SSSR October October it's the express
October across the universe SS
SR SSSR SSSR SSSR SSSR

Marco Martschewsky

ESCAPE

I wake up and see a cobweb trembling in the sunlight across the window, and in the corner of it, a fat spider awaits its victim.

Outside the window lies Vitosha. Huge, straight pines with sharp green needles. The rays of the morning sun. Warmth. Behind the hut bubbles a spring of clear, cold water.

I get up and yawn luxuriously. I open the window and a stream of fresh, scented air is wafted into the hut. That is good.

Yonka comes in, — she is young and pretty.

Yonka loves to chatter. She tells me about the sea, although she has never seen it, or of cypresses and palms that she read about in the geography books at school. And still it is all very sweet and interesting.

"Would you like me to tell you a story?," asks Yonka.

"No? Well, allright. I'll hold my tongue. I can do that very well. Oi, how well I can do that. Once when Papa was alive, he asked me to tell the teacher, Robov, how the 'Titanic' went down. Are you listening?"

"Yes, I'm listening, Yonka."

"I knew why and how the 'Titanic' was lost. The captain got dead drunk, because his wife used to deceive him with common sailors, when he was away. And when the iceberg appeared on the horizon, enormous and terrifying, the captain drank off the last bottle of champagne and said in a quiet, contemptuous tone:

'Full steam ahead! the Titanic is invincible!' Then he went down to his cabin to think about his wife. There were beautiful gardens on the 'Titanic' with green laurel-bushes and juicy oranges and tall palm-trees. There was a theatre and an orchestra with a hundred musicians in it! And the chief conductor was a fat negro. The iceberg that was a big as Siberia, came nearer and nearer — and the closer it came, the smaller and more helpless the steam-ship seemed. The iceberg struck the 'Titanic' a tremendous blow in the side, and the ribs of the ship gave a loud crash and flew to bits. And the 'Titanic' spun round like a little dog that's been beaten. The tall black funnels panted and gasped, the ship spurted hot water and oil, and then began to sink slowly. The unfortunate people ran about the decks like madmen, the God-fearing ones prayed, the captain slept in his cabin, and the conductor struck his tuning fork on the head of the little negro drummer-boy and raised his hands. The orchestra played a mornful tune... Are you asleep?"

"No."

"Then why have you closed your eyes?"

"But I'm listening all the same."

"Our teacher, Robov, had a heart of stone. He would never have understood the tragedy of the love-lorn captain. That's why I didn't tell him the story of the "Titanic". Next day, in the school, Robov asked me: 'Tell us,' he said, 'how did Catherine the Great die?' I was silent,

oi, how silent I can be when I like. 'Well', he said. 'Catherine the Great died in her dressing-room on that same Polish throne as her first lover had sat on once. So! Sit down. You get only one mark."

Yonka smiled. Her dark eyes smiled, too. Christo, an other political outlaw, came into the hut. Yesterday he walked to Sofia to find out what was going on there. He have been there for days without any news. He looked very upset when he came back. The town, it appeared, was surrounded by a police cordon and it was impossible to get in or out. "Vitosha's a good place," said Yonka. "She will hide us in her green bosom."

Christo frowned and replied:

"Don't forget that our comrades are over there and are likely to fall into the clutches of the police. We mustn't think of ourselves only."

Yes, Christo is right. And Yonka agrees with him entirely.

The pines smelt of tar. I went into the woods, far into the thicket. I took a great breath of the fresh air and then climbed to the top of a pine. Far away in the misty air Sofia could be seen. The golden dome of the Temple of Alexander Nevsky burned in the sun. Somebody was singing in a sweet voice:

" Should i marry me?
Oh! No, oh! no, oh! no!
Oh! No, oh! no, oh! no!"

It was Yonka singing. She felt safe here and was in her element. Vitosha is like a mother to the heidukes.

I had to go to Philippopolis in two days time. Everything was quiet there, our comrades said. How could it be quiet when murder was the order of the day in Sofia and other towns. Some "unknown" person would send a bullet through you from behind a fence just when you were walking down the street.

George told us how the police had discovered three political outlaws in Lozents. The fire-brigade poured kerosene over the house and set fire to it. The revolutionaries would not give themselves up to the police. As they burned they sang the "International." They were real heroes.

I told George that I was going away the next day. He made no reply.

The next day I examined my revolver — everything was in order. I got out the passport that I had made myself, and left the hut. Yonka stopped me. Two hot tears rolled down her rosy cheeks leaving wet trails. I went quickly down the hillside.

A few days after that the police caught Yonka, raped her and then shot her.

The railway station. After the third bell rang the train puffed noisily out between the half-ruined houses that fringed the outskirts of the town. Sofia and Vitosha were left far behind.

A stout priest with a puffy face sat opposite me in the railway carriage. His thick lips, eaten away with cancer, hung down over his beard that had probably not been combed since the day he was ordained. When he spoke he smelt of bed-bugs.

"They've surrounded Philippopolis again to day. The birdies won't fly away this time, he-he."

I lit a cigarette, and went over to the window. Behind the train in the golden fields the ripe ears bent mournfully, awaiting the sickle and the fond hands of the peasant. Ahead of me lay the mountains and Philippopolis. So things were like that, were they? Surrounded. A "cleansing" of the town of "doubtful elements" was going on. I must bear that in mind.

The train stopped at Saram-Bey. A peasant in a big straw hat got into our carriage. The priest was inquisitive and liked to poke into the minds of the people.

"Well, how are the crops?" he asked.

"Oh, all right," replied the peasant. "But there's no one left to gather them in. All the young folks are in prison."

"What ye sow, ye shall reap! It serves you right!"

The priest grinned slyly. The peasant fired up:

"Oh! that's it, is it? And what about the two hundred fellows shot behind the station not long ago? What was that for? And the twelve lawyers in Philippopolis? Dragged them from their beds, they did, yes, and at Lom? A steamer was packed with prisoners and they were given salt fish to eat, and no water. And they died of thirst. What was that for, eh."

The priest got out at the next station. After a few minutes a gendarme entered the carriage and arrested the peasant.

"Eh, Judas!" shouted the peasant. "I'd like to have knocked his face in as a parting gift."

As Philippopolis was surrounded by the police and the town was being "cleansed" of "doubtful elements", I decided that it would be better not to show up there, but remain in the town of Tartar-Pazardzik, the more so since I did not put a great deal of faith in my faked passport and the simplicity of the Fascist police.

Tartar-Pazardzik is situated on the R. Maritsa. During the five hundred long years of the Turkish yoke, less blood flowed down this river than during the five years of the Tsankov-Lapchev Government.

It was a hot day. The sun high over the town, blazed down unbearably over the tiled roofs of the houses.

I hid for three days in the house of a friend of mine, a teacher, and then the police tracked me down and arrested me.

They took me to the police-station, and here I found a hundred and twenty peasants, with their wives and children. They all came from the village of Lessichevo and all they were guilty of having been born peasants, of having worked all their lives in the fields and of having protested against the exorbitant taxes and the Fascist Terror.

A sullen revengeful spark burned in their eyes. It might blaze up at any moment and burst into a terrible conflagration.

They answered my questions evasively. Their prolonged imprisonment had made them mistrustful. More than once the police, having failed to obtain any confessions, had sent spies amongst them who had wormed out the truth.

At ten o'clock in the evening two gendarmes took me to be questioned.

A Young Communist student, a prisoner like ourselves, said significantly:

"Be very careful. They kill those who attempt to run away."

"Oh, I don't intend to run away."

"That doesn't matter."

I understood what he meant. I was in the clutches of the far-famed "democracy," on which my life depended.

There was no use now hidding under an assumed name, since they had found the seal of the revolutionary literary and political magazine "The Flame," on me.

After a short interrogation the superintendent of the police sent me back again to prison.

The student, who was tramping restlessly up and down the ward, whispered to me:

"You've got over the first stage safely. It's not everyone who is as lucky as you are. Maritsa knows that very well!"

The next day a well-dressed man of medium height was brought in. He kept very much to himself and evidently regarded us as criminals.

The prisoners have a custom of interrogating the new-comers. I was chosen examining judge in this case. I put on spectacles and went towards the prisoner. Everybody stood up respectfully as I passed. Someone whispered to the prisoner.

"This is the examining judge."

The prisoner stood up, straightened his tie, trying evidently to look as respectable as possible, and watched me out of the corner of his eye.

"Your name and Christian name?" I asked sternly.

He replied in the correct law-court manner. I saw at once that I was dealing with a professional thief.

"Well, tell us now, what circumstances tempted you to touch property not your own? You must have been aware that the principle of property exists in this country."

At that moment a heavy hand was laid on my shoulder —

"The chief of the police wants you to come for examination."

I turned round and saw a large, heavy gendarme with a long moustache.

The chief of the police began his interrogation without looking at me. He already knew the reason for my coming to the town, so there was no use in hiding it.

To all questions I gave but one reply —"I don't know."

"You'll tell us everything to-night," he promised in a husky voice.

When they took me back to the prison again, the same student whispered:

"Everything's going on all right with you. You' ve got through the second stage safely now."

"To-night will be the third," I replied.

That day the inspector of the police came from Sofia. One of the peasants from the village of Lessichevo complained that in spite of being entirely innocent he had already been kept a prisoner for two months. The crops in the fields were ripe and awaiting his return, and his wife and little children would go hungry unless he was freed.

"Where are you from?" asked the inspector.

"From Lessichevo."

"They're all rebels in your village."

The inspector stopped before the thief, whom I had not had time to interrogate.

"What were you arrested for?"

"For stealing clothes from a shop," said the fellow without stirring an eyelash.

"A petty offence! There's nothing to keep you here for."

And as a matter of fact, the gates of the prison were opened in an hour's time and the thief was set free.

The inspector gave orders for my immediate transference to the office of the Sofia Secret Police. Thus I avoided the third stage of the ordeal.

In four days time I was already in Sofia. After they had entered my name in the register I felt easier. In order to "remove" me for ever it would be necessary to send me away somewhere to the provinces and "at the first attempt to escape — to shoot dead."

I was put in cell number 265, the only cell in which the windows were not smeared with chalk. It was forbidden, however, to look out of them.

In spite of this we managed to see our relations and obtain our under-clothing through these windows twice a week. Some of us even contrived to hold conversations with our friends outside by means of signs. For instance, if the sister of one of the prisoners went past without a hat it meant that everything was all right and that he would soon be set free.

After some time all the women who came to see the prisoners went without hats. This amused us but did not raise our hopes. The government was working along its former lines: the murder and degradation of the people.

Although the prison regime was very strict, we contrived to obtain the daily papers. They were pushed under our doors by an unknown hand. We passed them on to the neighbouring cells in the same way.

Everything was discussed in the papers, everything, that is, except what was going on in the gloomy prison torture-chambers, where thousands of political prisoners were lying. But we knew more than the newspapers. This is not the idle boast of a former prisoner. There was a dark room beneath us, where an inquisition began at midnight and continued until five in the morning. Every night we heard the blows of the police truncheons and the screech of the machine invented by European democracy for the more "thorough" investigation of political crimes.

The bourgeoisie have used this invention with great "success" and discovered one conspiracy after another. A student in our cell told us how he was made to confess.

"They stripped me to the skin," he said, "and gave me thirty blows of a rounded rubber truncheon. My screams made the hangmen angry, and so they started to beat me again, as a punishment, only with a four-sided stick this time.

" 'Confess!' "

" 'I don't know anything.' "

"Then they poured brine over me. My wounded body seemed on fire.

"After this they started to push needles under my nails.

"There was nothing else for it but to invent a story, of how I had organised among the students a conspiracy of five that had for its object the overthrow of the existing government."

Poor students! They had never even dreamed of conspiracies and now they will have to recount their crimes, describe hidden munitions and instructions from Moscow.

Below there in the torture-chamber they will confess everything. The means used by the inquistion are all-powerful: they not only produce physical suffering but also give birth to a richness of imagination in the prisoners. The muse that inspired Dante to write his "Inferno" pales before the inventiveness of European "democracy." These methods of investigation were introduced throughout the whole country and gave brilliant results.

After ten days I was called up for interrogation. The inspector met me very coldly. I was quite calm. I filled in a form and wrote my autobiography. When I came to the question of what party I belonged to, I wrote: "Member of the Bulgarian People's Agricultural Union, a supporter of Dragiev." (Dragiev is leader of the Right-Wing movement associated with religion). The inspector laughed outright. "Lies don't always save people", he said.

What he particularly desired to know was at whose expense the magazine "The Flame" was published. My replies did not satisfy him. He growled out angrily:

"Aren't you getting the money from Moscow?"

I am a man of few words. I told him that the editor-in-chief Geo Milev, could have given a more detailed account. But now he could only be interrogated through spiritualist mediums, since he had been burnt alive, along with the poet Christo Yassenov, on the night of the fifteenth of May.

The inspector tried to frighten me, more, I think, from habit that with any definite aim. "You'll confess everything to-night in the investigation-room. The life of a man is nothing to us, nothing, you understand, when the State is in danger!"

Everything was "quiet," when something suddenly happened that changed our mood entirely, and our hopes of freedom vanished like dews before the southern sun.

At midnight a motor-car stopped before the Secret Police Headquarters. A few minutes later the key grated in the lock and several masked men armed with revolvers entered the cell. They counted us to see if we were all in our places and went out. We heard the following conversation on the other side of the door:

"Bring some ropes!"

"I can't leave my post," replied the sentry."

"We command you to do it."

"I obey only the governor's orders!"

"We shall force you to obey us!"

"I shall not leave from my post while I am alive!"

We heard the click of the revolver triggers, there was an intense silence. Then one minute, two, three passed — and no shot.

The unknown men had gone. We heard the sound of the car starting off.

A dead, heart-sickening silence hung around us. The night passed like a terrible dream. We waited for the return, at any moment, of the unknown men, the "agents" who had, we supposed, gone to General Volkov to obtain permission to "wipe us out."

There are some pleasant moments, though, in the prisoners' lives. For instance, when they receive letters.

I remember once how, when the prisoners from the neighbouring cell had gone out for a walk, somebody pushed a letter under our door from the O — District Committee of the International Class-War Pri-

soners' Aid Society. There was many an encouraging word in that letter. It quietened us and cheered us up. When we went out for our walk we passed the letter on to the next cell in the same way as we had got it. In the course of a week it had gone round all the cells in the prison.

The prisoners were delighted. They knew that the toiling millions were with them heart and soul, and were stretching out brotherly hands to help them.

One evening a month later, when the lamps were being lit in the streets, I was sent from the Sofia Secret Police prison to the town of Haskovo. I asked myself why? by whom am I wanted?

There was only one reply. In Haskovo there were about 50 Macedonian autonomists who were hunting down the Communist partisans led by Mitya Panev. Possibly the police had resolved to deliver me up to these murderers and like Pilate, wash their hands of me.

Life is good... Death on the barricades, when one is intoxicated with the struggle. deafened with the crash of bombs and the whistle of bullets has no terrors for the real revolutionary. But death in a filthy police cell...

I decided to run away.

As we came out of the prison the policeman said warningly:

"I'll shoot at the slightest suspicious movement!"

"Don't worry!" I said soothingly.

"I don't intend to run away. The governor of the Haskov district is a relative of mine, he'll soon set me free."

Lies do sometimes help. The policeman believed me and ceased worrying.

It was a gloomy night. There were crowds of people as usual on the station. They were hurrying somewhere or other, some saying goodbye, some weeping. The railway-carriages were full to overflowing and we were obliged to sit in an ordinary passenger-carriage. The train moved off slowly, along the same line as I had come on to Philippopolis a month ago. The lamps burned dimly, the rain beat on the window-panes disposing us to sleep. I settled myself as comfortably as I could, and started to snore. This made the policeman still less anxious about me. He dozed off leaning on his rifle, but woke up from time to time and watched me from between his sleepy eyelids.

At two in the morning the train drew up at Rakovsky Station. Here we were to change trains. People began to hurry and fuss, and crowded at the exit. I came out into the corridor first. Several people, arguing hotly, about something, got between me and the policeman. I took advantage of this, jumped on to the platform and ran as hard as I could to the edge of the roadbed. A few shots rang out in the darkness...

Many people assert that when death is near at hand, all one's attention is concentrated on the idea of rescue. This is not true. As the policeman shouted "stop! stop!" and shot after me, I remembered by some strange association a verse by an obscure provincial Bulgarian poet:

"Jesus Christ
Was drinking coffee,
Walking up and down
The heavens..."

"How silly!" I thought, plunging into the darkness.

I made my way to the frontier at night time, and slept in the daytime. It went on like that for three days. On the third day in the depth of the woods I came upon the frontier telegraph posts. The endless forest-Greece stretched before me. Bulgaria was behind me.

I crossed the frontier path quietly.

After four days a Greek officer, the chief of the frontier post, sent me to Demotika, a small town with many mosques and cafés. The inhabitants squatted before their houses, sipped coffee "à la Turque" and discussed the question of why Kemal Pasha had forbidden his subjects to wear the fez. In the barracks the Cretian soldiers sang republican hymns. The commander of the division, a stout colonel, apologised to me in French for having to send me to the detention-room, on account of the barracks being overcrowded. It was here, in this town that I first got acquainted with the dirty detention-rooms that stank of human excrement, and with the "republican" idea of liberty.

I know that it takes fourteen days by train to go from Demotika to Seres (the town to which political emigrants are exiled). One must go through Dede-Agatch, Drama, Salonika, Larissa and Athens. By steamer it is only twenty four hours, and still they sent me by rail, in chains.

The "free" Greek republic proved to be in no way superior to other "democratic" countries, particularly when it came to a question of political emigrants.

After three days I was sent in the company of two gendarmes, to Drama. I took leave of Demotika without tears or regret. I did not see the town of Drama, although we arrived in the daytime, because the police-station was only half-a-mile from the railway.

On both sides of the streets were tiny wooden shops, selling silks and Xantian tobacco. Handsome Greeks squatted on their haunches, in front of the shops. They were refuges from Smyrna. Their eyes sparkled as they praised their wares to the passers-by.

I got malaria on the way, and so the police put me in solitary confinement. This measure was intended to prevent the spread of infectious deseases. In three days I was well and started out again to Salonika.

The huge prison of Salonika where I spent three days, is older than the Sultan Abdul-Hamid. It may date even from the days of Alexander the Great. It is partly in ruins, there are scores of signatures on its damp stone walls. Out of its rotting floors huge rats emerge at night and gnaw the boots, the clothe sand the limbs of the prisoners...

Here in this gloomy prison, I met a comrade of mine that I had not seen from five years. The world's a small place, after all, and prisons in it are many! We were both sent off to Athens in chains... People stopped to stare curiously at us the "intellectual criminals" we passed through the streets. One old woman crossed herself and wiped her eyes with her handkerchief. She was crying. And now when I think of Salonika, I seem to see that old woman with her eyes full of tears.

The train rushed through the plain of Salonika. The air was sultry, but we were forbidden to sit near the window where we might have got a breath of fresh air. Supposing that suddenly one of us was to throw himself out!

Oh, you police, all over the world, no matter where you are you are all equally stupid.

We came to Athens at night and went away to Seres at once. We went by steamer on the Aegean Sea.

The sun is older than our planet.

In Greece, over the Aegean Sea and in Seres the sun is larger and hotter than anywhere else in the world.

Our steamer arrived at about eight o'clock in the morning at the only town that the island of Seres boasts. We were tired and weary, tossed about by the Aegean Sea. The town is also called Seres.

I do not know and nobody could tell me, whether the town took its name from the island or vice versa. Seres is an old place, older even than the famous man who lived there once — the Greek philosopher Theocritus. The island of Seres is still more ancient than the town.

Greece is the cradle and the grave of Hellenic culture, and each of her towns is an ancient monument.

Seres is the only marble town in the world. The houses, the schools, the churches, even the brothels, are built entirely of marble. The street are so narrow that two grape-vendors, carrying their portable "shops" on their heads, cannot pass each other without some difficulty. What streets! They are more like the marble stairways in a fairy-tale. The town is built on the mountainous shore and the houses are perched like eagle's nests on high rocks. The only street, along which the only motor-bus runs, starts from the wharf and ends up at the brothel. The whole distance is about one third of a mile. There are almost no amusements. One cinema, a marionette theatre and the inevitable brothel — which only drunken British sailors frequent.

At the cinema a film featuring Harry Peel is shown daily. The marionette theatre has only one comedy in its repertoire: a political satire, though you might not guess so at the beginning. It is a perversion of an historical fact. A small sly lad beats the stout Hassan Bey with a stick. Hassan Bey is so lazy that he does not even trouble to defend himself. At last, in order to escape from the brave lad, Hassan Bey throws himself into the sea together with his legendary "jug." The lad is supposed to be Greece, and Hassan Bey represents Turkey or Kemal Pasha.

I remember suddenly that in 1921 Kemal Pasha surrounded Smyrna with heavy artillery and gave the Greeks twenty-four hours to clear the town — "from the soldier down to the new-born infant."

After the lapse of twenty-four hours, two hundred thousand persons who had not been able to leave in that time, were driven into the sea.

The point of the comedy in the marionette theatre thus becomes clear.

In Seres the sun rises extremely early. On the horizon, between sea and sky the dawn reddens, the stars fade away into the blue depths of the sky, and soon become invisible. From the west, from the Mediterranean, from the Gulf Stream a warm wind rises, and at eight o'clock it is already very hot. At midday Seres goes to sleep for the second time, because until four the heat is unbearable. Not a soul can be seen in the streets: it looks like a dead marble town. The red-hot sun means death. Sunstroke will be your fate if you step out-doors without a hat. The sea is as smooth as a mirror and the whole town burns like a red-hot stove.

It was in this town, then, that by the grace of the Greek police and its observation, forty Bulgarian political emigrants lived. They formed their own community. Instead of a central fund, there was Sali's

pocket, and a halfpenny exercise-book took the place of the cash-register.

Sali was illiterate, he could not write figures. He entered his accounts in the book by means of some system of dots and dashes. He did not always understand these himself afterwards. Still, the American "double entry" was apparently nothing new to him. When he bought fifteen pounds of egg-plants for three drachmas and "Extra" brand cigarettes for six drachmas, he made a note in the debit column as follows: .....-O and in the credit column he would put: 11.

This was supposed to mean that fifteen pounds of egg-plants cost twenty-one drachmas. Instead of noting down the cigarettes he purposely exaggerated the quantity of egg-plants. Sali was from Losengrad and was a passionate lover of cigarettes.

Another interesting figure was the cook. This man had a poetic soul, and liked delicacies as well. He ate all the eggs and butter intended for cooking purposes, but you might safely have washed your head in his soup.

Dobri came to us from the island if Lemnos and Ilya Cherni from Samothrace. Both of them were out of work. The community took them in and fed them. As the number of unemployed increased Sali's funds kept melting. In September the community was nearing its end and forty emigrants were left on the streets without bread.

A man, when hungry can enjoy the beautiful sea but only for the first day. The next day the sea ceases to be beautiful, as Kellerman describes it. The third day the sea completely disappears in the eyes of the hungry man: the sea and the sky gradually melt into one another like a thick fog.

There are a great many beer houses and restaurants in the one and only street through which the one and only bus runs. The hungry emigrants would go to the place where "Home-cooking" was written up in big Greek letters on the glass. Here they would each have a large plate of soup made of egg-plant. The very civil Greek owner would then ask them politely to pay, whereupon they would reply in the negative, and taking leave of the owner urbanely, would go down to the seashore to enjoy the wonderful sunset.

One morning a Bulgarian steamship, the "Ferdinand" arrived at the port.

That day the wharf was livelier than usual. Numbers of boats went up to the steamer and returned with a new load. Sailors in caps adorned with the Bulgarian badge leaned on the iron railings of the decks and threw copper coins into the water for the small boys to dive after.

The captain was a pleasant young fellow. He offered us gold-tipped cigarettes and asked if there were any pretty women in Seres

Yes, the women in Seres were charming. The captain asked in a whisper — whisper — was there a brothel in Seres?

I walked about the deck of the steamer, examined the cabins, had a look round the machine-room, and watched some Greeks falling greedily on the bread being unloaded from the hold. Their hunger reminded me of my own village where I had first seen barns full of grain, and of Sofia, where ten years previously I had felt the pinch of starvation for three or four days while trying to sell some of my stories to editors.

The captain was an officer in the reserve force and as might be supposed, a great patriot. He sang the praises of Bulgaria and its industrious people. According to him, we had forced these people to revolt. He saw no sense in our arguments. He could not understand why we were unable to live quietly, and enjoy the beauties of our own enchanting country, why we should have run away to this remote little island, where there was nothing of interest except a brothel of marble. And here we were, barefoot, ragged, starving...

"We'll return soon," I said to calm him. The captain blinked.

"Come back with us now, if you like. How many are there of you? Forty? That's a good number! But never mind, we'll be in Varna in five days' time."

He smiled and generously offered us more cigarettes.

We explained to him that when we returned it would be in very different circumstances, when Isankov and Lapchev would have "gone to St. Peter" or still further.

"Fanatics!" cried the captain and asked for the third time if there were any pretty women in Seres and where exactly was the brothel.

In the evening the captain went ashore, visited the restaurants, drank brandy and enjoyed all the pleasures of the island nights. When the orchestra finished playing the last air from Peer Gynt, he tossed off the last glass, paid up and went out for some fresh air. We met in the street and he said hoarsely:

"Look here, I'm a seaman and a bit outspoken — tell me, do you really believe in revolution and Marx? That's a great pity, you know. After all, you're an intellectual sort of chap, you're been to the "Parisian Follies" and the "Pharaon," may be you're even shimmied in the "Emperor of Delhi", and here you're going about barefoot, and still no wiser. Just say, do you want to come back to Bulgaria. On my responsibility..."

The captain was very drunk. I wished him good-night and went off to sleep on the warm cement terrace of the police-station.

Early the next morning the boat put out to sea and slowly faded away in the direction of the Dardanelles. We stood by the lighthouse and waved our hats in farewell. The crew also bade us farewell.

The sirens hooted for a long time.

The street that we were generally seen in was called the "Emigrants" street" and all self-respecting Greeks ceased to frequent it. The café where we went to read the papers soon acquired the name "emigrants", too, and patriotic republicans left off coming to it. Only sometimes an old grey beard would smoke his hookah there and watch us playing cards.

One day there came a change, however. A man from the commercial bank came in and announced that a cheque had been received on behalf of the emigrants.

"How much is it for?" everybody asked at once.

There appeared to be enough money to provide for all the emigrants for two months. As nobody dreamed, however, of remaining on the island, we all started to consider the question of escape. As a matter of fact, there was little to consider. We rapidly worked out a plan and started to carry it out.

First of all, we changed our clothes, so that it would be difficult to recognise us. Our means did not allow of our buying new clothes, so

we had to be content with second-hand things picked up in the market. We were no longer looked the tattered barefooted emigrants that mothers frightened their disobedient children with, but respectable third-class passengers.

Wednesday was the day fixed for flight. It brought us no luck, however. The Old Turk, Mechmed, who had been exiled to the island as an incorigible offender, disappeared that day.

Devil take him, this Mechmed!

The whole of the island police force was up in arms about it. What was to be done?

I told the chief that Mechmed had drowned himself.

"How?" asked the chief.

"Quite simply: threw himself into the sea and got drowned."

"What for? Did he go crazy or what?"

"Yes, that was it," I replied calmly.

"Lately he'd been very queer. Every day at sunrise he would pray to Allah, and then go up to a high rock and start cursing the moon".

"What sort of lunacy is that? Is it really true, what you're telling me."

"Of course. I saw him myself."

The lie did its work. The chief of the police signed a report where it was stated that Mechmed was drowned. The police quietened down. And that was all that we needed.

Just one problem remained: how to obtain tickets for the steamer. A Communist sailor (the only Communist in Seres) soon got over that difficulty for us. At ten o'clock in the evening six of us got away unnoticed as third-class passengers in a Greek steamship bound for Atheus.

The Greeks say the same about Athens as the Italians do about Naples — "See Athens and die!" I have seen Athens and so can die in peace, but if you were to ask me what I saw — I should say: nothing, except the Acropolis, Olympus and — the Greek police station.

The Acropolis is the only monument remaining of ancient Hellas and her vanished civilisation. Nothing now remains of this culture save the legends in school books. Now an old woman caretaker sits before the Acropolis, drying her ragged trousers in the sun. The monument itself, ruined by the centuries, stands on the hill facing Athens. From this hill Piraeus and the Aegean Sea can be seen to the east, and to the west Olympus.

Olympus is the cradle of the most ancient myths in the world. The Greeks have driven their gods from the sacred mountain long since and have turned it into an excellent health resort. Here the Greek aristocracy spends the summer, away from the heat of the city. "Dogs and beggars are not permitted to enter."

It is a sad place. Not sad because the Olympians have fallen on evil days and that only a few broken columns remain of the Acropolis — but sad because the Greeks have never created a new civilisation to replace the old. Since they have failed to do that, they imitate the French culture, but this they find rather difficult.

The squares and streets of Athens are strewn with innumerable statues of famous emperors and heroes. They stand in mock-heroic attitudes, their casques and shields turning green. The streets are shaded with thousands of palm-trees, and under each palm stands a policeman

with a particular kind of badge in his sleeve. These policemen are there to arrest deserters from the army. Greek Communists and peasant boys do not want to serve in the army. The police take the deserters to the barracks, but they usually succeed in running away next day.

I wanted to see a comrade of mine in Athens but he was not at home, he had gone to the Communist club. His wife gave me the address and I went there. What was my surprise to find that the club was a police-station! Could the Communist be a traitor?

I found out afterwards that the police had surrounded the club that very same day and in a few hours' time the republican flag was waving over it.

In the Soviet Consulate we had our photographs taken, we filled up forms, and wrote out applications. This was all got through in a very short time, and after twenty minutes we went by the underground railway to the port of Piraeus. Here we boarded the steamship "Batoum" and in the twilight, when thousands of electric lamps were glimmering over the still waters of the bay we sailed off over the Aegean to the Dardanelles and Constantinople.

Translated from the Russian
by Anthony Wixley.

JOHN HENRY

I do not know a great deal about John Henry, and what I do know is certainly embroidered by the imagination, for the negro when he tells you anything very easily falls into exaggeration. But all these events actually happened, and not so very long ago. A song has been composed about John Henry, and whenever there is a strike or a demonstration, the negroes sing this song.

I heard it for the first time in Denver on my arrival from the South. It was sung by quite a small group of people, a few long-limbed clumsy fellows with enormous heads, a few less negroid with heads like pumpkins resting on their wide shoulders, and two or three half-castes. The latter, whose skin was of a remarkable brown color, sang with the same animation as the negroes. If there is a single drop of the blood of the black races in the supple body of a half-caste it is enough to make him as loyal to the negroes as if they were actually his brothers.

I had previously had opportunities of hearing how negroes sing, rounding their thick lips and rolling their eyes while they intone songs of a people sold into slavery and of their sufferings, or merry songs of the rain and the harvest. But what they were singing on this occasion could not have been anything but a war song.

They even trod out the measure on the road as though they were going into battle. They sang as though inspired and some of the notes rang out from their black throats like shouts. But the words of the song were not even rebellious, at least not from the point of view of a European. It was only afterwards in Pittsburg, when I heard the song for the second or the third time, and in Ohio when the negroes told me the whole story of John Henry, that I learned that this black was nevertheless a rebel, and what is more, the first to decide actively to resist the white exploiters and their taskmasters.

As far as I could discover he came from the South — from Saint Louis or New Orleans. He did not come alone, but with his whole family. He worked first as messenger and then in an iron warehouse. After that he was promoted and sent to a foundry where he was put to work at the blast furnaces. He was then 19 years old, he was as strong as an ox and was therefore armed with a hammer and given the job of breaking up steel lumps. It cannot be said that this work was very complicated. The molten iron on leaving the furnace flowed hissing and seething through special troughs. From these it ran into moulds made of sand and water where it cooled. John Henry broke up the large lumps into small pieces, and a good dozen other negroes loaded it onto trucks, and from the trucks onto large carriers and from thence reloaded it into wagons which carried it to its destination.

But it was hard work. In addition the furnace room was very hot and filled with poisonous suffocating fumes. There were often accidents,

as the furnaces were old and it sometimes happened that the slag and the molten iron burst out too soon from the red hot bowels of the furnace. When this happened, everyone scattered right and left, clouds of steam rose up, and anyone who did not manage to get clear was burnt alive or badly scalded.

On one of these occasions the foreman turned to the negroes as they sprang aside to save themselves and choosing from amongst them the strongest — who happened to be John Henry — ordered him to make his way through the spurting steam and across the stream of metal to the water tap, so as to turn it on and quench the iron as quicky as possible. The tap was in the thick of the steam. It was also impossible to see in what direction the iron was flowing, and so John Henry refused to carry out the order.

The foreman who was angry as it was, fearing that the outburst of iron might be attributed to overheating and hoping that a timely quenching of the iron might still save the situation, grasped an iron bar and repeated the order. John Henry again said "No," whereupon the foreman swung the bar over the negro's head and, regardless of consequences, struck him with it.

John Henry who had withstood even heavier blows, clenched his teeth and just looked at the boss. The latter, flying into a rage, again swung the bar and again struck. Then it was that the negro, probably the first of his race, was seized with a feeling of class hatred. He lifted his hammer and shouting "We are also human beings" struck the foreman a knockout blow.

A savage slaughter of the foreman then began. The engineer, accompanied by the gate porter, and a few guards rushed to the scene. But the foreman was already dead, and John Henry unexpectedly found help on all sides. The blacks kept close together, and the whites, finding themselves outnumbered, were forced to retreat, carrying with them their dead.

If the whites had tackled the situation with greater vigor it would have been all over with the blacks in a minute, and John Henry's whole mutiny would have been suppressed at the very outset. But the circumctance that a negro had killed a white man, that a black workman had killed a white foreman, so incited the white inhabitants of the lower part of Pittsburg that they began to attack not only the black workers in the foundry but all negroes whatsoever. They began to stone them, but did not forget that all the time the chief culprit was in the furnace room in the big steel foundry.

John Henry saw that there were not hundreds but thousands of them, and that they were no longer human beings but wild animals. Every one of the blacks rallyng round John Henry realized that nothing would help him now. Explanations, prayers were useless, and they realized that the people who were after them had tasted blood and were consumed with a thirst for more. Nothing remained but to run away, and, if the whites surrounded them, to fight their way through by brute force.

John Henry divided his followers into four groups, telling them each the meeting place — a disused coal mine — and they each made off in a different direction. Three of the groups reached the appointed place without loss, but of the fourth group only half arrived. Here again the flight of John Henry and his comrades might have been quickly ended if all the rage of the maddened whites had not been concentrated on the members of that fourth group which had fallen into their hands. They

had beaten them almost to death before the police were able to take them in hand and shut them up in the police station as mutineers. Moreover the part they had taken in the mutiny was not at all clear, because the greater part of the negroes had run away simply from fear. But the crowd dragged the prisoners out of the police station (it is asserted moreover that the police did not make great efforts to prevent them) and then started to twist their limbs and trample on them till nothing was left but a mass of blood and bones.

The news of this lynching reached John Henry and his comrades in their hiding place. What was there left for them to do except continue their flight?

There was not a second to be lost, because as soon as the whites discovered that the greater part of the fugitives had escaped them, and amongst them the ring leaders, they immediately organized a general search. Half the town rose up to catch the remaining score of negroes. A tremendous number of people started off to track them down, some on foot, some on horseback, and others in motor cars, not counting the police and the so-called civil militia.

The blacks actually made South. It was a most astonishing flight. They crept silently by night in Indian file between the tall blades of grass and maize. If they came in sight of any kind of dwelling they cautiously skirted it by a good mile. In the day time, sending out patrols, they lay at the bottom of some hollow, pressing their perspiring bodies to the earth, like blobs of tar. Thus it was that they managed to get far away from Pittsburg and its hills toward Cumberland and Virginia.

They were very hungry, and were as thin as wolves in winter, so they broke into small farms and took pigs and hens and also found arms there.

When they saw that the searchers were closing in on them on all sides they began to steal more — not because they had acquired the taste for stealing but because they felt that the end was near, that the last decisive fight would soon have to be fought, and for this fight they must summon all their strength.

They even began an offensive. They sent out one or two from amongst them and these moved West, almost in the open, and then hid themselves in the bogs and amongst the canes. The moment one of the searching parties came in sight they suddenly fell on them, using only their heavy fists as weapons, not with the object of killing them, but merely in order to seize Knives, pistols, rifles, and above all ammunition.

The next night they were even more daring — they attacked a larger squad of men, and took from them long-range rifles and some provisions. They now felt that they were sufficiently strong to enter into open fight.

Their headquarters was in a quarry overgrown with grass and bushes not far from the bog. John Henry was the leader and his second in command was a run-away soldier. This man had been in the Mexican militia and failing to be promoted on account of the color of his skin, had run away to the States. Under the leadership of their commander they consolidated their position. They also carried out their sentry duties very thoroughly and were therefore safe from sudden attacks.

Even at this stage it still seemed possible to avoid bloodshed and to get the negroes to give themselves into the hands of the law — all that would have been necessary would have been to enter into negotiations with them. But the attackers would not be satisfied with anything short of taking the besieged by force and so they strengthened

their rather weak patrols made up of volunteers from all different sections.

Nor did the blacks sit with folded arms. Terror of what threatened them if they fell into the hands of the "white beasts" made them ten times braver than they would otherwise have been. They made raids and sudden attacks and entered upon skirmishes which told of despair rather than of bravery. There were some amongst them who were in favor of making a breach in the gradually closing ranks of the whites. Their plan was to divert the force of the attack on themselves, and give the remainder an opportunity of making use of the resulting encounter to slip off in the opposite direction and continue their flight.

But John Henry knew very well to what extent his followers had lost strength and so he rejected this proposal. Thus nothing remained for the besieged to do, apart from the cross firing and the flying raids, but to consolidate their position and with mixed feelings of curiosity and terror, to await what the future had in store for them. However four days later the last attempt to break through the solid wall of the whites was made, with this difference only, that the attempt was made by the whole force instead of by a single section.

It was not even an attempt to break through; it was rather an impulsive move forward prompted by a desire to go and meet with all its horrors the death which was slowly approaching them, and perhaps also the hope that a bullet would save them from death by slow starvation or from torture at the stake or on the aspen branch.

The whites with bloodthirsty patience moved forward with such caution, carried on their firing with such refined discrimination, setting fire to the woods, releasing tear gas and doing everything to avoid killing, that the negroes were eventually driven to desperation. They were exhausted with thirst and hunger and for many nights they had not closed their eyes. There was nothing for them to do but throw themselves like hunted beasts at bay, straight at their hunters, and with one bound cross the narrow threshold that still divided life from death.

This desperate attack did in actual fact put an end to everything—to the flight and the defense, to the whole heroic struggle of John Henry and his comrades to save his poor condemned life. They were broken and defeated, and even if two or three had succeeded in breaking the ring, in spite of the solid wall of searchers with their Lewis and machine guns, John Henry and the majority of his followers would have nevertheless been captured or shot.

The revenge of the victorious white was in fact one of the most brutal of all the brutalities of the last decade. The methods employed in putting the captured negroes to death remind one of the torture of the inquisition or of the peasant wars. They burned the negroes in a slow fire. They rubbed pepper into their skin. They broke one joint after another. They tied them to trees and stuck hot arrows into them, and red hot nails and axes. They nearly scalped them, they castrated them, in short they indulged in all the horrors and perversions of which only the exploiting peoples and slave merchants of precivilized times could have been capable without shame.

John Henry himself underwent these tortures. A certain number of legendary ones have also been added. Some say that they tortured him by cutting away his body piece by piece, but that all the time he had enough strength left to spit in the face of his torturers. Others assert that they literally cut him all over with knives, put him

on the wheel, roasted him over a slow fire and tore him into pieces. Finally others still assert — and this seems to me the most likely story — that they did not succeed in capturing him alive at all, as he, knowing the price that was on his head, struck about him with such violence and put up such a desperate resistance that it was only possible to capture him after he was dead.

But even after all this, the event would not have led to such an exceptional idolization of John Henry on the part of his black-skinned comrades if the Pitlsburgers themselves, in trying to justify their hideous massacre, had not made so much of the affair as to present the mutiny in the light of a danger to the republic, and the lynching of John Henry and his comrades as a deed pleasing both to God and to America. However that may be, the negroes did not begin to proclaim him as a hero until the republican and democratic newspapers had begun their campaign to whitewash themselves.

It was then that a song was composed about John Henry:

John Henry told his captain,
"Man ain't nothin' but a man,
Befo' I let you beat me drivin' steel
I'd die wid de hammer in my han'."

The negroes first of all sang two or three such quatrains, but verse after verse was added until little by little an interminable militant revolutionary song was formed. The matter did not end with a simple description of John Henry's exploit. The man who had lifted a hammer to strike the boss and then fled into the hills with his comrades was transformed into an illustrious champion of negro liberation.

John Henry is celebrated not only in this song but in innumerable stories passed on from mouth to mouth. Some of the old negroes began suddenly to affirm that John Henry had been a rebel for some time and that even in the South before he came to Pittsburg he had worked for the cause of freedom and that both on the occasion of his exploit in the factory and in his flight Southwards many other negroes were to have taken part, but these abandoned their original intention and left their leader to his cruel death. As the years passed the event became overgrown with fantasy. In the mouths of the narrators the murdered foreman became a dozen foremen, engineers and guards, and the number of followers was increased to thousands so as to include practically the whole population of Pennsylvania and Ohio. In mentioning this I do not wish in any way to depreciate John Henry's exploit, particularly because such exaggeration and lionizing of John Henry did not give rise to an imitation of this futile kind of revolt of men driven to desperation, but rather served to strengthen the race-consciousness of the negroes. Under the influence of the stories about these events those who before had looked upon themselves as insignificant, despised and condemned creatures were won over from the ranks of the unorganized proletarians and black-legs into those of the class-conscious workers where they became staunch fighters for the cause.

This is certainly a remarkable example of how, through the act of one single man, a large number of people can be roused to consciousness, and how the power of this man's name alone can make them feel their unity:

John Henry was a man o'might,
John Henry was a man o'might,
John Henry was a man o'might,
He beat de iron man down.

And does the boss take care? He has to take care! He too keeps in mind the first negro rebel and his comrades. And in spite of the fact that this black was killed, he not only remembers but is afraid. I myself never heard this song and the measured tread of the demonstrating negroes, without seeing at the same time a cordon of policeman and soldiers of the militia generally exceeding them in numbers.

But the marches of the negroes do not any longer remind one of the flight into the hills. Now the negroes march away from the factories after declaring a strike. In Denver it was a march and demonstration against wage-cuts. In Pittsburg it was a march and demonstration of protest against incivility—the kind of agitation which would have to be suppressed with machine guns and poison gas. And these agitations are generally supported by their white comrades who themselves join the ranks of the demonstrators and sing the song about John Henry, if not with quite the same fervor and animation as the negroes, at least with a feeling of class solidarity.

And is this only in Pittsburg and Denver? No — the same is seen in other big towns of the United States, even in San Francisco, the most conservative of cities, even in New Orleans and Memphis.

And the famous Jim and the no less famous Eddy, the two negroes who escorted me round Pittsburg in search of anyone who knew anything about John Henry, were right when they said to me as I was leaving; "John Henry broke down the wall which separated the white and black workers in America."

John Henry with his hammer!

John Henry, our black comrade from Pittsburg!]

THE GREATEST RECEPTION ROOM IN THE WORLD

On the eve of my departure to America, 12 years ago, I was received by Lenin in his office in the Kremlin. That was not the first time that I was there. Many times I had the privilege of meeting him, of receiving favors at his hands. For even in the most critical stormy days of the Revolution nothing was too trivial or trifling for him.

He gave me advice on how to set about learning the Russian language. He even acted as interpreter of a speech that I made in Petrograd from the top of an armored-car. He helped me collect a trunkful of pamphlets and books. With his own hand he wrote out a letter to the Siberian railwaymen, telling them to take every care of that trunk that it should not be lost. He joyfully congratulated me on joining the Red Army and suggested that I form an International Legion.

And so it happened that many times I was in the ante-room of Lenin. Here always a varied assortment of dignitories were awaiting an interview.

His natural affiliations were with his party colleagues, with the workers and peasants. He preferred to spend his time with them. And when it came to rationing out his time they were in the first category. This was forcibly brought home to me in that last interview.

In the ante-room there were a number of us waiting our turn. And for some time we had been kept waiting. That was very unusual, because Lenin was always quite punctual in keeping his appointments. So we concluded it must be some unusually important affair of state, some unusually distinguished personage that was thus detaining him. A half-hour, an hour and a half, we sat there impatiently cooling our heels, while from the inner office came the muffled voice of his visitor steadily booming away. Who indeed was this plenipotentiary being granted this lengthy audience with Lenin? Finally the door opened, and to the general astonishment of all in the ante-room, out of it emerged — neither officer, diplomat, or other high-placed dignitary,—but a shaggy-haired mujik in sheepskin coat and bast shoes — a typical poor peasant, such as one meets by the million all over the Soviet land.

"I beg your pardon," said Lenin as I entered his office. "This was a peasant from Tambov, and I wanted to hear his ideas about Electrification, Collectivization and the Nep. And it was so interesting that I quite forgot the time."

Of course, out of his university education, out of his travels, out of his own 30 volumes which he wrote, Lenin knew infinitely more, theoretically than this Tambov mujik could ever know. But, on the other hand, out of the hard school of bitter life and toil, the mujik knew a lot of things practically. In him was the wisdom of the soil. And what he knew Lenin was eager to know. Like all truly great men he was humble enough to understand that even the most illiterate had something to give him. Thus his lines of information reached out into the most varied places and peoples. And the thousands of facts gathered

in, he carefully weighed, sifted, analyzed. And that gave him that advantage over his enemies that enabled him so often to out-wit and out-manoeuver them. He didn't have to guess about the attitude and ideas of the Siberian peasant, the Red Armyist or the Cossack of the Don. It was no secret to him what the Leningrad moulder, the Volga bargeman, or the Moscow charwoman were thinking and feeling... He talked with them first-hand or with some trusted comrade who had just talked with them.

They had something to give him. That was one reason he was ever ready to receive them. A second reason was that he had something to give them — his knowledge of social forces and strategy of the Revolution, his plans and projects for the building of Socialism. Still another and most potent reason was that he liked them — fundamentally liked and loved them. Just as I enin had a peculiar aversion to the parasites and henchmen of capitalism, brokers, speculators, the manipulators and jugglers of wealth; so, on the other hand, he cherished a peculiar affection for the producers of wealth, the workers in coal and stone and metals, the toilers in the fields and forests.

He would have been ready twelve years ago, not only to receive that one mujik of Tambov but all the millions of them. Were it possible, he would gladly have welcomed the workers and peasants of all the world, streaming into his office.

Today I was at the Lenin Mausoleum and suddenly it flashed upon me that this was precisely what Lenin was doing. He was receiving the peoples of Moscow, of the Soviet Union, of all the world. And it was so similar to the reception of 12 years ago. True the building where Lenin now receives in the dark grey and dark red granite is more imposing and more impressive. True the ante-room where the people await their turn to go in to see Lenin is vastly larger. Now it is the Red Square, backed by the serrated Kremlin wall, flanked by the Spasskoie Tower playing the International, and the tombs of the heroes of the Revolution. It is the greatest ante-room in all the world. And the number of people waiting their chance to go in and see Lenin is now a hundredfold, a thousandfold greater. In these respects there is a difference between now and 12 years ago.

But in one aspect — a most important and fundamental aspect — it is exactly the same. That is, in the kind of people that are waiting their opportunity to go in and see Lenin. The great queue that begins to form soon after noon is composed mainly of workers and peasants, the sort of people whom Lenin liked, the people on whose energy and sweat and devotion he relied for the building of Socialism. Almost exclusively these are the ones in the great double line that keeps growing with ever swifter pace. Before two o'clock, the opening hour, it stretches a mile or more away from the mausoleum, winding back and forth on the white snow-mantled floor of the quadrangle.

I walk down the line, stopping here and there to put a question: "Where did you come from?" "What do you do?" "Why did you come?" "When did you first hear of Lenin?"

It is a bit impertinent for a stranger with a strange accent to come prying into their lives. They have a right to resent it. But I preface my questions with the remark: "I knew Lenin. I talked with him. Shook his hand". That makes it all right. That gives me standing in their eyes and they talk freely. First an artel of five Mordvins in bast-shoes, priding themselves in having their own republic and in their leader *(starosta)* who had heard about Lenin way back in 1905.

This was a bit discomfiting to a Buriat, who had to confess that not until 1920 did he hear of Lenin. But now there was a picture of him in every Buriat

Albert Rhys Williams

The greatest reception room in the world.

house, and last winter they carved a huge statue of him out of ice. In the Far North from which he came so cold and long is the winter that Moscow was somewhat like a tropic clime... He was almost ready to complain about it.

Not so the uzbek, wrapping closer to his limbs his frog-green raw silk robe, *(khalat)*, a vivid splash of color on the white square... He wishes that Lenin were alive to visit old Bokhara and see their flourishing kolkhoz reclaiming the waste sands with gardens and orchards.

Quite the contrary a brigadier from Vladimir reports his kolkhoz as not flourishing at all. The undug potatoes are perishing in the fields, the unthrashed oats resprouting in the stacks. However, if he could talk with Stalin or Lenin, somehow he felt he would take heart and go at it again.

Another kolkhoznik is Orlov, Michael Ivanovich, from Smolensk. Many times as a Red Armyist passing through the Kremlin he had a glimpse of Lenin. That was 12 years ago, und not until to-day had he had a chance to come up again to Moscow. He had fought on all the main fronts. Living for days on raw potatoes, once buried completely beneath an avalanche of earth hurled by a shell. Then out of the trenches into the Soviet. But still waging war against local bandits, bureaucrats, and moonshiners. Then organizing the kolkhoz- "New Way of Living" *(Novi Buit)*. Thirty-five landless families before the Revolution were now inheriting 340 dessiatines of first-class flax and fodder-land with 12 horses and 57 horned cattle... To an ardent glowing enthusiasm he added a wide experience. Yes, he knew how kolkhozes went. Some of them badly organized went badly. But this one was a good one,— a top-notch one. Why, he wouldn't be afraid to have Vladimir Ileich himself come and see it.

There are scores, hundreds of similar stories of toil and battle and high adventure in this line that outwardly in its winter garb looks gray and drab and dull.

Here is a Volga stevedore who has lived only thirty versts from the Ulianov homestead in old Simbirsk. From his neighbours he has been hearing about the Ulianovs all his life; to-day he is to have the privilege of seeing the greatest of them.

A very young and zealous komsomol improving the time by citing the words of Lenin and Stalin on Collectivization and kindred subjects.

A Berlin Communist who has read all the works of Lenin translated into German.

A Chinaman who had fought with the Red Partisans in the deep woods of Siberia.

A mujik in bast-shoes and shaggy sheepskin — the prototype of the Tambov mujik in Lenin's office 12 years ago. With his big-breasted *baba* from Riazan he is seeing Lenin for the second time.

It is the first time for two members of a shock-brigade *(udarniki)* from Nizhni Novgorod. Likewise with a group of porters coming up from Turkestan. Indeed the overwhelming number are here for the first time. But still more striking — aside from the fact that they come thronging here from the ends of the earth — so many are making the Mausoleum their first objective as soon as they arrive in Moscow. But nevertheless, they don't have the first chance of entering it. That belongs to the children.

It is school vacation and there are thousands of them out to-day. A group of three year olds holding aloft a huge pale sun-flower, white-petalled, and in the centre, the well-known portrait of Lenin as a child.

"What do they known about Lenin?" I ask their teachers.

"Ask the children yourself" they reply with proud confidence. And quite justified. For weeks they have been learning about Lenin. And today as a climax to this course in reading and writing about Lenin, they are seeing him.

Now it is our turn. Steadily, two abreast, the throng moves up the steps of the Mausoleum. Hats off and hushed we pass into the dim-lit interior, down twenty-four steps into the great granite hall unadorned and simple like the man who is lying there. Never stopping, the line moves on. It does not merely pass the casket. Rising three steps it goes almost completely around upon an elevated dais, thus for each one there is time for a long, uninterrupted look straight into the face of their leader. Then turning right we climb the stairway to the Eastern exit. And out again upon the Red Square.

I stop and watch them emerging, and it seems to me that out of the sepulchre they come, not as mourners, in sad and sorrowing mood. Rather, as if burdens had been left behind, with new resolves, with expressions of ease and lightness in their faces. And on their lips, too.

"Somehow, after seeing him the heart is not so heavy," confides the baba from Riazan.

"I'm going to buy all the works of Lenin and start reading them this winter," resolutely asserts the young Komsomol.

True there is occasionally a minor note as in the regrets of the two men from the Nizhni shock-brigade: "If only he were alive to see what we are doing — building, building! building." And there are tears in the eyes of two old men, one without an arm, the other minus a leg, sacrificed in the Civil War, fighting for the ideas of Lenin. However, very few of these, the crippled, the white-haired and the aged. The overwhelming majority are the strong, the young, and the stalwart — those fighting for Lenin's ideas right now.

Some are not satisfied with one look but hurry around and join the line again. This line that seems to be endless, inexhaustible in its reserves. This line ever renewing itself with new arrivals coming up from the offices and factories and mills of Moscow, from the mountains and mines, the far away steppes and villages of the Soviet lands, from every quarter of the globe. Coming up to give a new pledge of allegiance to their dead leader, and to take from him the inspiration to a new and better fight.

Great and powerful this man was in his life, and now more powerful. If you would see his monument look around. This Five-Year Plan with the Dnieprostroi, Magnetostroi, Traktorstroi, Gigant — all these enterprises staggering the imagination of mankind. What are all these but the mind and science of Lenin taking form and substance.

The Lenin institutes and libraries in all lands, the works of Lenin translated into numberless languages, in millions of volumes. What are these but the seed thoughts, the ideas of Lenin germinating, and bringing forth their rich and abundant harvests.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union under the staunch leadership of Lenin's true disciple Stalin, and the millions under the banners of the Communist Parties in sixty lands! What are these but the dynamics of Lenin marching forth to the destruction of the Capitalist order throughout the world.

In the same degree that the reception of Lenin in the Kremlin 12 years ago has grown into the colossal reception of to-day at the Mausoleum, so has grown the power and might and influence of Lenin, and will grow, until the triumph of Socialism through the Soviet Union and throughout the world.

AT THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE CHINESE SOVIETS

The short account, published below, by the young Chinese Communist writer, comrade Lu-Tche-Sing, gives a sketch of the conditions under which the first conference of the representatives of the soviet districts of China took place, at the end of May, 1930. At the conference there were present, besides representatives of the soviet provinces Tzyan-si, Hube-yi, Hu-nan, Fu-tzyan, Gu-an-dun, Cuansi, and likewise of the Chinese Red Army, of the Red and Youth Guards, representatives of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, representatives of the Red trade-unions and other revolutionary organizations: in all, forty eight delegates.

Soviet China has its roots in the revolution of 1925—27, and first took form concretely in the famous Hai-lu-Fyn Red Republic *(*November 1927—end of February 1928*)* and in the heroic Canton Commune *(*11—13 December, 1927*)*. At the beginning of 1930 it included extensive districts of the southern provinces, hundreds of counties, in area and population representing a wide-sweeping country with tens of millions of inhabitants. Each soviet district, gripped by the enemy's encirclement, engaged in fierce struggle for its existence, had to settle a whole series of extremely complex social, economic and political problems. Among the different corps of the Red Army, as well as among the various soviet districts sufficient contact had not yet been established at the time of calling the conference, and the Chinese Communist Party was not always able to cope with the task of leading the entire soviet movement.

The first conference of the soviet districts of China was summoned in order to take advantage of the enormous revolutionary experience of the various soviet districts, in order to take a decisive step toward unifying the separate parts of the Red Army into a single All-China Red Army, in order to strengthen even further the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, to outline the Bolshevik way of solving all the burning questions brought forward by the very course of the revolutionary struggle and, finally, in order to make ready for the All-Chinese Congress of Soviets.

Comrade Chao-yu-Shi, whose pen name is Lu-Tche was one of the founders of "The League of Chinese Left Writers". He was on the presidium of the League and its bureau and in addition was the manager of the editorial department. In May 1930 he represented the League at the first conference of Chinese Soviets. The sketch published below was written after the conference.

On Jan. 7th he was arrested by the English police who handed him over to the Chinese authorities. On the evening of February 7th he was shot.

Among the writings of comrade Lu-Tche may be mentioned: 2 books of short stories entitled *The Madman* and *Hope*; a novel, *The Death of the Old Epoch*; a drama in verse, *The Three Sisters*. He also made many translations from other languages. He left a number of unfinished works, of which several, including *The Pioneer*, were confiscated when he was arrested.

The Conference worked through a tremendous lot of tasks, summarized in the resolution on the contemporary revolutionary movement and on the political tasks of the soviet districts, in the temporary law on land, in laws for the protection of labor, for the emancipation of women, for the introduction of the graduated income tax, finally in the resolution in defense of the U. S. S. R. and the manifesto for summoning the First All-Chinese Congress of Soviets.

The work of the Conference was carried on in the secrecy of underground methods. The political gendarmerie, the police and counter-revolutionary espionage had all been set going by Nankin. But all the efforts of the bloodhounds of the Kuomintang turned out to be useless. They did not succeed in arresting a single delegate — and that would have meant cruel torture and death.

Certain theses and decisions of the Conference have since been subjected to justified criticism (and were corrected in time). Nevertheless, no one denies its services and its historical importance.

> Then, comrades, come rally and the last fight let us face.
> The International unites the human race.

We have just done singing the great, heroic hymn. There are forty-eight of us. We are standing in close ranks in deep silence. Our attitude is calm and determined. Only our arms are relaxed and our heads slightly bent forward. Our mood is exalted, militant. The sounds of the hymn, like a splendid cloudlike ship, bear us away under the red sail of communism to a happy country in which classes are no more, in which is only equality and freedom.

There are forty eight of us. We are seated in a spacious room at tables arranged in the form of the letter I. The tables are decked with red cloth, and fresh flowers stand on them. In the electrical atmosphere, between the walls as red as fire, the conference is opened.

"Comrades! Throughout the land the red banner of the Soviets is being raised on high." The deep, calm voice of our president resounds.

We are all brothers, and our organization is like a family. Our speeches, conversations, our comings and goings, all our movements and actions are regulated according to the strict rule of conspirative work. Among us is one girl: "Comrade-sister." All material cares are placed on her. She is well-built, beautiful, kindly. Every evening, before going to bed, she wishes us all a "Good night." During the long sessions we often hear her gay voice: "Who wants zhen-dan?"

In order not to make any noise with our chairs and benches, we have our dinner standing up, like soldiers. One comrade standing at the table, waiting for dinner, remarked in his hunger:

"Our way of dining reminds me of a battle. Our chopsticks are bayonets, the rice is like bullets, the fish and meat are the cowardly enemy. Why doesn't he put in an appearance? We are roaring to go!"

After supper, if there is no session, we carry on quiet but lively conversations and discussions. The delegates become better acquainted with each other. Each one shares his revolutionary experience and questions the others.

"What organization is that comrade from?" You hear this question continually.

The delegates coming from the different soviet districts and the Red Army divisions are especially anxious to learn how matters stand in Shanghai at present.

"Well, how about it, are the Shanghai workers, artisans, poor people thinking about the revolution? Are they making haste? Do they understand?" I am flooded with questions.

Evidently my answers do not entirely satisfy them.

Lu-Tche-Sing
At the first conference of the Chinese soviets

"But Shanghai is important, very important", they heave a sigh. "In the villages the revolution is growing and spreading with every day. Shanghai must come forward."

It is difficult to deliver the Shanghai newspapers in the soviet districts. Thus, the present Fourth Corps of the Red Army for three weeks did not receive a single newspaper in its mountain fastnesses. They all began to get worried. The espionage service soon succeeded in learning that in such and such a place in such and such a city a few copies had arrived. That same night a regiment was despatched. Having traversed sixty *li* (about thirty kilometers) the regiment burst into the city, seized the newspapers in the place mentioned and returned. That was a real exploit.

In the room where the session is being held, in one of its corners stands a table with books. The table drawer is stuffed with every possible left magazine, and with communist newspapers and books. A comrade especially appointed for that hands out and takes back the literature. From early morning, when they begin to be distributed, every delegate, except for three or four illiterate peasant delegates, has a book, newspaper, or magazine. They read with great concentration. From time to time, when they come upon doubtful passages, they consult each other. They remind one of small schoolboys before an examination.

The illiterate comrades often come up to the ones reading.

"What sort of book is that?" a peasant delegate asks me.

"It's a monthly magazine, *We means I.*"

"One of ours or not?"

"Ours. About proletarian culture," I answer and relate the contents of the issue.

"Yes, that's our journal," the peasant smiles in a friendly way at me, and agrees

Thanks to our "comrade-sister" each of us has a note-book and pencil in his hand. During the session several write very energetically. In their spare time they draw.

"Our president," "Our delegate from Guan-dun," Our splendid comrade-sister," — I read these titles on extraordinarily finely done drawings in the book of one Red Army man.

They often ask me how to write this word or another.

"Break through the enemy's line, — is that the way to write the sign 'break through'?" And in 'sacrifice their lives' how do you write the sign, 'sacrifice'?"

One delegate put me in a quandary. I couldn't understand the meaning of the hierogliph he had written. It turned out he had invented it himself.

In answering the questions put to me I see whole pages filled with revolutionary slogans: "Let's take the cities by storm," "Bend all our forces to strengthening the Red Army and the Youth Guard," and many others.

Beside me on the floor a comrade from Mukden sleeps. He is enormously tall, but his face is uncommonly kind. The first time I got into conversation with him, he told me about his revolutionary past. Although the son of a big landowner, he joined in with the "common people"

and dreamed of overthrowing the autocracy of the "class of officials." Taking only a gun with him, he ran away from home to join the bandits, whom he regarded at that time as the only enemies of the official class. He took part in many engagements. He was wounded more than once. One bullet went through his shoulder. Another wounded him in the neck, and even now he bears the scar just below his ear, as large as a silver dollar. He soon realised that banditry wouldn't lead to anything, that the entire feudal order must be overthrown, and he entered the revolutionary proletarian organization.

"In the last five or six years I've had to be about everywhere. When I was leading an engagement..."

My neighbor did not succeed in finishing. The voice of our watch on duty was heard.

"Eleven o'clock. Put out the light. No more talking."

The following day I receive a note from my Mukden comrade:

"Is there such a thing as love?"

I am rather puzzled by such an unexpected question, but nevertheless I write an answer: "What sort of love? Love is of different kinds. Love too depends upon class."

"Not that, that's not it", he shakes his head. "I wanted to ask how to suppress this feeling in myself"

The comrades from the soviet districts relate how in the beginning most of the peasants were decidedly opposed to freedom of love and divorce.

Here is a typical example!

A young communist fell in love with a married peasant woman. She announced her desire to get a divorce. The husband, frightfully angered, began at the meeting to complain to his fellow-villagers.

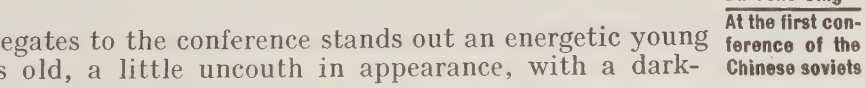
"Revolution! Revolution! But when it comes down to it, they simply want to take our women away."

The peasants became furious and right then and there began to talk about handing out rough justice to the young communist. The party organization had to send him off to work in another place.

Quite another situation among the peasant-women. They demand their freedom and often make declarations of divorce. The civil authorities in the soviet districts are swamped with divorce cases. If the soviet refuses to grant the divorce, the women make speeches at the village meetings and defend their rights from the tribune.

Lately, the soviets have granted complete freedom of divorce and at the same time are carrying on suitable propaganda among the peasants. In many places the situation of the women has already improved very much.

In the Red Army the men do not look with approval on love affairs. That is explained by the fact that there are still very few women soldiers in the Red Army. Moreover, they are usually not indifferent to the Red commanders. It is true, in the Red Army everyone is equal both in a material sense and in discipline, but some occupy more responsible posts and others less so. Among women, even in the Red Army, vanity plays its role. And that is why some corps commanders, to avoid all complications, do not admit women to their corps.



Lu-Tche-Sing
At the first conference of the Chinese soviets

Among the delegates to the conference stands out an energetic young man, sixteen years old, a little uncouth in appearance, with a dark-

colored but extremely good-hearted face, with round, shining eyes. Splendidly built, broad-shouldered, with powerful, muscular limbs he seems to me to personify the strength of the revolution. He is in command of one of the detachments of the Young Guard. He spent in all two years in primary school, but he is already able to write poetry. He read one of his compositions to me.

"Better devote yourself to the revolution, and give up writing love lyrics," I advise him.

He laughs: "I'm not an expert in this, I took this from one collection. But aren't there poets among you revolutionaries?"

"If we could teach this lad for two years in Shanghai," our president remarked to us, "he would turn into a fine Young Communist leader. Only we can't leave him in Shanghai. Such lads are needed in their own districts and indeed everywhere."

While talking to one elegantly dressed comrade, a young commander drew his attention to a bright-colored silk kerchief sticking out of his side-pocket. He took the kerchief up and began to examine it very carefully.

"What sort of thing is that?"

"Nothing much. Just for looks. If you want it, take it along. When you go back, you can make a present of it to your sweetheart."

The commander carefully folded the kerchief and put it away.

"Down with militarism."

"Down with imperialism."

"Strengthen the Red Army with all our forces."

"Prepare the uprisings."

"Long live the victorious Chinese revolution."

"Long live the world revolution."

With these martial slogans our conference came to an end. We all joined in, raising our hands together. But behind each of us stood the tremendous shadow of thousands and millions of toilers. These were their mighty voices. That was their exultation.

With blazing torches in iron hands we will go to the masses of workers and peasants. Arise, China! Perhaps you are destined to light the world conflagration.

Joshua Kunitz

THE RESURRECTED VILLAGE

1

We are going to Novo Zhivotinoie.

In 1901 and then in 1907, the cadet, A. I. Shingarev, subsequently Minister of Agriculture under Kerenski, had made a special study of this village. According to him, Novo Zhivotinoie was the best illustration of the "*Dying Village*" (the title of Shingarev's book). Shingarev gave a harrowing picture of the "physical and material impotence of the population," of its "low social and cultural level." He spoke of its "darkness," its "utter lack of initiative," its "crushed condition," etc.

"What can one expect," wrote he, "in a place where people are chronically hungry, where life is one continuous and futile struggle for the tiniest bit of poor bread, where the population is decaying, dying out. The bitter, primitive struggle for existence attains here at times incredibly tragic dimensions... And what makes the picture worse is that it really characterizes the general condition of the village population of the vast black earth region of Russia..."

So it was in the not very remote past...

2

Our automobile pants and chortles through the thick, sticky, black mud. Suddenly it stops. In the distance, may be seen a row of horses, in pairs, each pair followed by a peasant. Along the road come running a group of peasant boys and girls, one youngster carrying a ballalaika, another an accordion. While we are getting out of the car, a group of peasants surrounds us. The peasants look curiously at our cars, and our outlandish clothes. Our leader, comrade Kollesnikov, head of the Kolkhos center of the entire Black Earth region and member of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Government, explains the purpose of our visit.

"It's too bad, that you haven't come a bit earlier," remarks an elderly peasant, "We just had a general meeting. This is the first day we've gone out into the field."

"It was a swell meeting," breaks in a youngster, obviously a pioneer, "Music, and speeches and everything."

Others join the conversation, chiefly men. The girls, all dressed up in picturesque traditional costumes, are bashful. They huddle together and giggle. Our handsome Italian comrade, with his green hose and multicolored American lumber jacket is the special object of their subdued merriment. Next to Leo, Vaillant-Couturier, with his French beret and flowing tie, is the subject of all kinds of whispers and comments.

Pleasantries, jokes, laughter. The crowd grows lively. The fellow with the accordion strikes up a tune. He is accompanied by the balalaika. The girls choose a relatively dry spot and begin to dance and sing. Their dances are rather primitive: faces immobile; bodies stiff, only feet trudging rhythmically on one spot. While one girl dances, the other sings. The singer, too, is absolutely immobile. In a shrill voice she sings:

I'm not beautiful nor fair,
But little do I care —
For character is permanent
While beauty melts like snow.

Now places are changed: the girl who had just danced begins to sing, while the singer begins to dance. Then this pair retires, and another comes out. The verses are interminable, the stanzas have little to do with each other. The words and the sentiments, despite the primitive execution, disclose definite influences of the city, of the *chastushka* sung by the industrial workers.

One glance at the dancing girls, and you realize the tremendous cultural upheaval which is going on in the village. On the one hand traditional peasant costumes which hark back to times immemorial, on the other — high-heeled shoes and rubbers never dreamt of in the village before, and paint and lip-stick and powder and *chastushkas*...

"Naturally," remarks Shiver, the Editor of the Voronezh paper, "in the diffusion of culture it very often happens that the bad passes together with the good. The more accessible is more readily adopted. And after all to them a chastushka is more comprehensible than the theory of surplus value."

We join the peasant at their ploughs.

3

"Fine horses, these, and well kept," I remark diffidently, fearing to betray my utter ignorance of horses and of how they should be kept.

"They are fine horses all right, but they are very badly kept," remarks Kollesnikov turning to the chairmain of the kolkhoz.

"But...—" attempts the Chairman to defend himself.

"There can be no'buts'; we have not yet enough tractors to meet all your needs. Horses are still very important. To underestimate the horse is to do what the kulak wishes you to do. We are taking people to court for the neglect of horses, my dear fellow. I am simply letting you get away with it this time in honor of our visitors."

The chairman scratches his head and looks embarassed.

"But Comrade Kollesnikov," he mutters, "this will be taken care of. We have already decided today that each man working on the fields is attached to a special pair of horses for the entire season. He works with them, and is responsible to the kolhkoz for them".

This meets with Comrade Kollesnikov's approval. It is in line with the general policy to make people personally responsible for their work, their implements, and their horses.

In the course of our conversation on the field we learn that the Kolkhoz is in its second year of existence, that but for sixteen households it has absorbed the entire village, that there is a Machine and Tractor Station not very far away (Berezovka) which is to deliver four tractors this very day, that they have sixteen of their own tractorists, that in order to avoid the mistakes of last year, to discourage laziness and

parasitism, to improve labor discipline among the members of the collective, the general assembly has decided to introduce piece work, to form organized brigades for each kind of work, to put brigadiers (foremen) at the head of each brigade, to develop socialist competition among individual peasants, among the brigades, as well as between the Novo Zhivotinoie Kolkhoz and other neighbouring kolkhozes.

On the whole, every peasant I tackle seems to be fairly certain as to the specific nature of his work, as to the time, place, and renumeration. The standard unit is a *trudodien* a fixed norm for a day's work, calculated on the basis of what the average good worker can do. In field work, for instance, a *trudodien*, constitutes three-quarters of one hectare, that is, the amount of work that one good worker can accomplish with two horses and one plough in ten hours. Other forms of work have similar norms established.

The most sensational figure on the field is the young peasant, Vassily Uskov. It is his first day in the kolkhoz. When asked what made him join on this particular day his answer was: —

"It was a grand pleasure to see all these fellows go out together, in a group. I hated to remain outside of this gay group. I hated to remain alone, I took my horse, and came to the comrades and said: 'Take me in to work with you...' So here I am, and there is my horse. I had gotten my horse on credit, and I had fully paid for it before I joined the Kolkhoz..."

Vassily Uskov's story comes to a sudden end when the brigadier, a snappy young fellow on horseback, just back from the Red Army, dashes over to the group. He apologizes and suggests that it is about time for the men to resume work. His air of efficiency, courtesy, firmness and his vocabulary all show unmistakable traces of the city. My companions are delighted with him. Kollesnikov looks proudly at him, as if to say — "Here he is the new peasant. A real city worker, forged in the smithy of our Bolshevik Revolution." We shake hands with the young fellow, and followed by the youngsters, the girls, and the strumming ballalaika, we turn to the village hidden behind the hedge surrounding the enormous white church.

4

Outwardly, the village is still the old village. Little huts with small windows and low doors, straw-thatched roofs, rickety fences and all around dirt, mud, and manure. All seems to be quiet here. Even the dog in front of the cooperative is too lazy to bark. He growls, opens his mouth, and then sublimates his energy in a long and delicious yawn.

"Would you like to see the inside of a peasant hut," suggests comrade Pinchuk, the young editor of the peasant paper published in Voronezh and the local correspondent of Izvestia. "Come, see how our Russian peasant lives."

We knock at the first door. No answer. We try the door — it opens.

"Anybody here?"

No answer.

"Hey, boss..."

Silence.

"There must be someone here; the door is not locked", says Pinchuk. "Let's go in."

Stepping across a high threshold, we stumble into the dark room. On the floor, in philosophic resignation lies a cow — this is the cattle-shed. To the right there is a door. We open that door, and once more call for the owner. Again no reply. Pinchuk urges us to enter. What first strikes the eye are the ikons in the corner, the calf in the opposite corner, and the straw on the floor. The room is dim; the air is heavy. At the back of the room there is a huge wooden bed. Diagonally across it, in his clothes and heavy muddy boots, face downward lies a peasant. His snoring rips the silence: it is turbulent, protesting...

"A *yedinolichnik* (an individual peasant, not in the kolkhoz)," remarks our companion. "While the Kolkhoz is working, he lies here sprawled out, snoring. This is a late spring. Every day is precious, and he... That's one of the advantages of a kolkhoz — there you have social pressure, labor discipline. Now is the time for feverish activity, and this lout lies here snoring."

We quietly leave the house, pursued by the whizzing, rattling noise escaping from the nose and throat of the choking *yedinolichnik*.

"It is Kransnian Gorka, an ancient village holiday," explains a young peasant, a member of the Young Communist League, "and Ignat's sleeping is as much of a demonstration as our working on this day."

From the same young fellow we learn that Ignat was a kulak, that he had been "de-kulakalized."

"But doesn't that explain his lack of ambition?" ventures my American female companion. "What's the use of toiling and sweating and accumulating when everything and everybody seems to be ranged against you — the village, the law, the state... One might as well lie down and sleep, things couldn't be worse anyhow."

The young peasant remains undismayed. "Of course he has lost his ambition. A wolf without teeth has no ambition either. But that's the only kind of wolf we let live. He wants to exploit, to underpay, to rent the land from the horseless peasants, to lend money on usurious interest, to grow fat at the expense of the rest — that's his ambition. To hell with that kind of ambition. Instead of him we have 132 kolkhozniks whose ambition has grown a hundredfold. Come a couple of years from now, when the Five-Year Plan has been completed, and you'll see what our village will look like..."

The young peasant's eloquence is cut short by the angry Kollesnikov who catching up with our group points his finger to a huge stack of straw:

"That's bad. Just look at this. Absolute carelessness. Criminal. We are short of fodder, and here the straw is strewn all over the ground, rotting."

"We had to transport it here in a hurry. The stack was on the other side, near the river. Then the place was flooded. We tried to save the straw as quickly as we could. That's why the straw is not in good order," the young fellow tries to explain.

"Objective conditions, eh? Every stupidity, every failure, every mismanagement they blame on objective conditions. It's bad, very bad! The horses uncleaned, the straw exposed to the rain — criminal..."

I feel that comrade Kollesnikov is a little too severe in his criticism. After all, this is a new kolkhoz. The thing naturally cannot run as smoothly as the comrade would like to see it run. Here and there failures and omissions are inevitable, particularly since a new batch of peasants has entered just on the eve of the spring season. On the other

hand, it is quite possible that comrade Kollesnikov is so carping in his criticism because he wants to make sure that he doesn't conceal anything from his foreign comrades. Indeed, so scrupulous is he, so anxious not to paint too good a picture that he leans sometimes a little the other way. We all appreciate the utter honesty of this big, burly, lovable, and good natured worker. Risen from the masses, he is so much one of the masses that the peasants don't resent any of his criticism, even if it is a little harsh. It comes from the heart. He suffers with them. And they feel it.

5

The peasants are gathering in front of the school house. A special meeting has been called in honor of the foreign guests. This extraordinary occasion attracts a vast crowd.

While preparations are made, we get talking to the peasants.

"Are there any *yedinolichniks* in the crowd?" calls out Kollesnikov.

No one responds.

"Are there any *yedinolichniks* here?" repeats Kollesnikov.

"There is one; that one," points out a peasant.

"What's his name?" asks Kollesnikov in a low voice. This is a subtle move. The peasant is bound to be pleased with having an important member of the government call him by name. It is bound to add to his self-esteem, and make him more friendly.

"Vassily Pavlovich," whispers the peasant.

"Vassily Pavlovich, hey there, Vassily Pavlovich," cries Kollesnikov; "won't you come over here please?"

The kolkhozniks smile slyly, pleased at the discomfiture of Vassily and relishing the prospect of an interesting verbal feud.

Vassily grows red in the face, hesitates, and finally comes over to Kollesnikov.

"You don't mind having a little chat with us, Vassily Pavlovich, do you."

"We don't mind talking. Why not talk?"

"I understand you are one of the few refusing to join the kolkhoz, aren't you ashamed to stay out when every body has pitched in to fight for a better life, for a more cultured, cleaner, and fuller existence?"

"I am not ashamed. Why should I be ashamed? Each one lives as he pleases. I have nothing to gain from joining the kolkhoz. Over twenty years have I been dreaming of a horse. I had to bare my head, and bow, and beg, when I needed a horse. Let me tell you, it was hard. I worked, and I saved kopek by kopek, and I got myself a horse. I got the horse on credit, and I sweated my skin off trying to pay for it. It's my horse; I suffered for it; I have been taking care of it; do you want me to give it away to the kolkhoz? Not on your sweet life. It's my horse. They'll cripple it; they won't take care of it."

An argument follows. The peasant is adamant. He fails to see any advantages in collective farming. He prophecies all kinds of mishaps, and internal fights. "Rather than join the kolkhoz I would throw up everything and go to the city. There is plenty of work in the city. And the pay is good. And as a worker, you are privileged."

"But one does not exclude the other. Join the kolkhoz, and then go to the city. When you take it into your head, you can come back, and be the equal of everyone here."

"Maybe next year. So far I make enough for myself and my mother without going into the kolkhoz. My horse is my support."

It is quite clear, that for this fellow, it is the mother that counts for a great deal. The mother, and of course his personal and very deep attachment to his horse. In the kolkhoz ownership is collective, impersonal. The horse is everybody's and nobody's. And this particular peasant has not yet found a way of rising above this difficulty, and in this he was certainly different from his namesake Vassily Uskov whom we had met earlier in the day in the field.

6

The meeting is in full swing. The comrades from Germany and France deliver warm words of greeting to the many peasant men and peasant women gathered in before the school building. The Chairman of the kolkhoz speaks in the name of the Kolkhozniks, welcoming us, inviting us to see the achievements of the toiling poor and middle peasants under the guidance of the proletariat and the Communist Party. He urges us to tell the workers and peasants of our respective countries of the great difficulties and the great triumphs of their comrades by class in the USSR. He assures us that he and his comrades in Novo Zhivotinoie will do everything to carry out the Five Year Plan in four years. Through us he urges the workers in the capitalist countries to follow the example of their Soviet brothers, and thus to hasten the world revolution and the establishment of socialism all over the earth.

A young fellow from the neighboring kolkhoz who has come here to sign an agreement of socialist competition between Novo Zhivotinoie and his kolkhoz also delivers a speech. His speech sounds much more ambitious. He uses many foreign words, sometimes correctly, sometimes incorrectly, but always with a great deal of emphasis and fervor. His speech reminds me of the dancing girls — a quaint mixture of country and city influences. One thing is certain, the fellow is ready at the first call to lay down his life for the Soviet Government, for the Communist Party, and for the international proletariat.

Then Kollesnikov, in a matter of fact manner, tells the peasants that he appreciates their enthusiasm, but that he is not fully satisfied with their work. They have no community stable. Their nursery is not yet in operation. They have wiped out only 80% of the illiteracy. They haven't been taking good care of the horses. They have not managed well their straw supply. He urges the peasants to exercise greater care, to be more economical and organise better. He then asks the peasants to speak up, and criticise, and make suggestions, without any hesitation. Let our comrades from abroad see the real truth, our difficulties, our mistakes, everything.

A spell of silence. Then from the back of the crowd a voice is heard. "Let me say something. I'll speak from my very soul. I'll tell the truth. I have nothing to lose anyway."

"Are you a member of the kolkhoz?"

"No, but I can't stand it any longer. I am a sick man. There are nine mouths in my family. I have no wife. I speak from my very soul, I can stand it no longer. They threaten us. They say they will compel us to go into the kolkhoz. This is wrong. I am a sick man. Perhaps next year..."

This peasant sounds really sincere; he speaks "from his soul." He looks sick, nervous, frightened.

Kollesnikov: "No one has a right to threaten you or to coerce you. One enters the kolkhoz only by free choice."

"They threaten," persists the peasant. His voice trembles. "I'm a sick man. How can I join the kolkhoz? I haven't the strength to work for the whole nine of us."

"But how about the fund for those in the kolkhoz who are incapable of doing any work, the old, the sick, the babes, the cripples?"

"The fund allows a mere pittance. If I join the kolkhoz, I'll die of hunger. I could never do all the work required to satisfy the needs of nine people".

"How old are your children? How old is your oldest one?"

"Seventeen, a daughter."

"Well, so there are two people who can work in your family. Moreover, some of your younger children may manage to earn something. Surely, the kolkhoz has little to gain from having you join it, but you have a great deal to gain by joining the kolkhoz."

"I don't know... perhaps next year... But they have no right to force..."

One cannot help but pity this hopelessly misguided peasant. In his inflamed eyes one can see sleepless nights, doubt, pain and torture. A little personal interest, a genuinely warm, friendly approach and this poor peasant could have been won over, transformed into a staunch supporter of the kolkhoz. Of this I am certain. But the epoch heedless of individual joys and sorrows marches on with iron thread, smashing tradition, shattering customs, crushing old habits. In such an epoch one must be determined, resolute, and definite in one's acceptance of the new world. He who hesitates now is doomed.

7

"A research Institute here? In the Dying Village?"

"Yes, the N. K. Krupskaia Research Institute of Child and Adolescent Labor in Agriculture. It was the idea of the Comsomol. The Institute was conceived, constructed, organized, and is now being run chiefly through the efforts of our organization," declares the fellow proudly. "It's a grand place. And the work we do is of more than of local importance."

Bulgakov, the fellow's name is Bulgakov, does not wait for any evidences of curiosity on my part, he is too eager to tell of the achievements of the Comsomol and perhaps to boast a little of his own. "All we had at the start was zero plus ideas plus enthusiasm. There were three of us. We all worked in the regional executive committee of the Pioneer Bureau. By hook and crook, by persuasion and coaxing, we wheedled 5 000 roubles out of the organization. With these 5 000 we started out on our adventure. Soon we had 90 000 roubles — from various organizations. And when we had 200 building workers engaged here, we were too far gone for any one to stop us. Then there was no light, so with the help of the local peasants, we built a power station. The starting of the power station here was one of the greatest moments in our life. Many of the peasants, particularly the older women, had never seen electrical illumination before. It was wonderful to watch them when the lights went up! Now our work has been recognized; we are

granted 75000 roubles a year. And before long we'll be getting more. Our work is expanding. We have already ten branches working under us throughout the Black Earth region. Moreover, we have many correspondents working for us in numerous village schools. The work of our Institute is three-fold: Scientific Research in pedology, pedagogy, and the economy and organization of child labor — that's one. Second, preparation of pedagogical cadres. And third, experimental work in the use of tools and in the kind of labor which would be most appropriate for children and adolescents. We are trying to find different tools to correspond to different ages."

In the course of the conversation, I learn that Bulgakov is the Director of the Institute. A mere boy, twenty-seven years old, in charge of such an Institution! Altogether so many important officials, statesmen, scientists and *literati* in the Soviet Union are people scarcely emerging from their teens that at first an American is virtually agog, he is inclined not to take these youngsters too seriously until he hears them talk and sees them work!

Like the new peasant, this new Russian youth is a source of great pride to comrade Kollesnikov. He simply glows with pleasure as he hears the young man expatiate on the function of education in the new Soviet village, as he hears him quote Marx and Lenin and various educational authorities.

"The life of the peasant child must be changed. Primitive haphazard, and irrational utilization of child labor in the rural economy must be done away with. We take Marx's conception of education as our starting point. Education must be polytechnical. Education must include physical work and mental work, collective work, work that is socially useful. Moreover, no one must be permitted to utilize the labor of children and adolescents except on condition that "their productive labor be connected with education." The main emphasis must be on education. No work should be imposed on a child unless it fits into the general scheme of a socialist up bringing. Then last but not least, every child must be fully paid for the work it does... Equal pay for equal work."

From Bulgakov's lengthy talk and from the many conversations and discussions with other members of the staff, I gather that though the Institute is new, it has already done a tremendous amount of practical work in the matter of finding forms and methods of introducing productive collective child labor that would assure a thoroughgoing polytechnical communist education to the growing generation of peasant children. Indeed, it is not at all unlikely that within a short time the research carried on in this place, in view of the clear objective and boundless enthusiasm of the young director and his assistants, will place this once "Dying Village" on the map as one of the very significant educational centers in the Soviet Union.

A new Soviet Novo Zhivotinoie is emerging, the socialist industrialization, together with the complete collectivization of agriculture and the final elimination of the kulak as a class, make possible here new forms of life and labor. Now Shingarev's references to "the physical and mental impotance," the "darkness," the "utter lack of initiative," the "crushed condition," etc. of the Novo Zhivotionoie peasants seem fantastically inapt. And if up to 1917 there was not a newspaper in Novo Zhivotinoie, now there is scarcely a young peasant who does not get one or more newspapers. There are radio receivers! There is electricity here. There is a school, a little library, a kindergarten. There are tractors.

There is a cooperative here, and a mutual aid society, and other institutions to indicate the cultural growth of the village. And above all there rises the Institute.

It is significant that besides the church the Institute is the most imposing building in the village. Once this place was occupied by the magnificent mansion of the local *pomieshchik*. During the early years of revolution and civil war that monster was stripped, smashed, and left in ruins. Thus it had stood for years, a silent, gloomy hulk, a gruesome reminder of those days.

The church and the landlord's mansion — these were the most magnificent edifices! Raising their proud heads above the pitiful, cringing hovels of the peasants, they had stood out as the symbols of the two evil forces that pressed upon the peasant for many centuries — the Church and the Landlord.

Things are different now... The church looks shabby and desolate. The old mansion is gone. Instead, there shimmers in the sunlight the vast, white lofty structure of the Institute. A new symbol of a new age!

Even in this remote village Communism and science are taking the place of religion and private ownership of land. Instead of the priest, the village teacher; instead of the witch doctor, the nurse; instead of the landlord, the enthusiastic, forward-looking peasant collective. A cheering picture, this! And what makes the picture more cheering is that it "really characterizes the general condition of the village population of the vast Black Earth region of Russia..."

ART AND SOCIAL LIFE

II

When any class that lives by exploiting another class standing lower than itself on the economic ladder has attained to complete domination in society, to go forward means, for this dominant class, to tread the downward road. Herein lies the answer to the riddle of what appears at first glance to be the incomprehensible and even, it may be, incredible fact that in countries economically backward the ideology of the ruling classes stands not infrequently at a far higher level than in more advanced countries.

I have stated that there is no such thing as a work of art completely devoid of ideological content. To that I added that not any and every idea is capable of being the basis of a work of art. Only that which promotes communion between people is capable of giving the artist true inspiration. The possible limits of such communion are determined, not by the artist himself but by the level of the culture achieved by the social entity to which he belongs. But in a society divided into classes this in its turn will depend on the mutual relationships between these classes and the particular phase of development reached by each of them at the particular time. When the bourgeoisie were still working to effect their emancipation from the yoke of the civil and Clerical aristocracy, i. e., when they themselves constituted a revolutionary class, they led the whole of the labouring masses and together with them constituted a single, the "third" estate. That being so, the foremost ideologues of of the bourgeoisie were also the foremost ideologues for the "whole nation, save for the privileged." In other words, that communion between people which found a medium in the art productions of those artists accepting the bourgeois viewpoint was very broad indeed. But when the interests of the bourgeoisie ceased to be the interests of all the laboring masses, and especially when they clashed with the interests of the proletariat, the limits of this communion shrank very markedly. If, then, Ruskin would have it that the miser cannot sing of his lost gold, in much the same way the mind of the bourgeoisie had come to approach that of the miser bewailing his treasures. The only difference is that the miser complains of a loss which has already taken place, while the bourgeoisie are concerned with the loss threatening them in the future. As I have mentioned: the wise man becomes a fool by exploiting others.

Such is the harmful effect that is bound to be exerted on a wise man (even on a wise man, mind you!), by the fear of losing the opportunity for persecuting others. The ideologues of the ruling class lose their intrinsic value in the measure that they head for disaster. The art created by their experiences decays. The intention of the present section of my paper is to supplement what has been said on this head

in the previous section by examining certain other of the clearest signs of the present day decline of bourgeois art.

We have seen by what means mysticism penetrated the fine literature of modern France. This was brought about by recognition of the impossibility of confining one's self to form without content, i. e. without any idea, plus the inability to rise to an understanding of the great emancipatory conceptions of our days. The same recognition and the same inability have brought in their wake many other consequences which, no less than mysticism, diminish the intrinsic worth of the works of art affected.

Mysticism is irreconcilably hostile to reason. Yet it is not only the man bogged in mysticism that is hostile to reason. Not at all. Equally hostile to reason is that man, who for some reason or other, by this means or by that, advocates a false idea. Now, when a wrong idea is made to underlie any artistic production it embodies in it internal contradictions that must inevitably make its esthetic value suffer as the result.

As an example of a work of art which suffers from the falsity of its basic idea, I have already referred to Knut Hamsun's play, *By the Kings's Gate* [1].

My audience will forgive me if I refer to it again.

The hero of the play is a young writer by the name of Ivar Kareno who if not talented, is at any rate exceedingly overweening. He calls himself a man "whose thoughts are as free as a bird." And what does this bird free thinker write of? Of "resistance." Of "hate." Then whom does he advise to show resistance? Whom does he teach to hate? He advises resistance to the proletariat. He teaches hatred for the proletariat. Surely one of the latest models in heroes? So far we have seen very few of the kind — if not to say none at all — in belles lettres. But the man who counsels resistance to the proletariat is a most undoubted ideologue of the bourgeoisie — nothing can alter that. The ideologue of the bourgeoisie called Ivar Kareno appears to himself and to his creator Knut Hamsun, to be one of the greatest of revolutionaries. From the case of the first Romanticists of France we also learn that there are oftimes "revolutionary" sentiments whose chief distinctive feature is to be found in their conservatism. Theophile Gautier hated the "bourgeois" and at the same time thundered against all people who held that it was high time to get rid of the social relationships of the bourgeoisie. Plainly, Ivar Kareno is one of the spiritual descendants of the famous French romanticist. The descendant, however, happens to have gone considerably farther than his ancestor. He is consciously fighting against something for which his ancestor merely felt an instinctive loathing. [2]

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[1] See my article "Dr. Stockman's Son" in my selected works *From the Defensive to the Offensive*.

[2] I speak of the time before Gautier had managed to wear out his notorious red waistcoat. Subsequently — e. g., during the Paris Commune — he was already a clear-thinking and out-and-out opponent of working-class aspirations towards liberty. It may be added, by the way that Flaubert may also be set down as an ideological forerunner of Knut Hamsun's, and perhaps with even greater justice. In one of his note-books we come across the following remarkablel lines: "Ce n'est pas contre Dieu que Promethée aujourd'hui devrait se révolter, mais contre le Peuple, dieu nouveau. Aux vieilles tyrannies sacerdotales, féodales et monarchist s on a succédé une autre. plus subtile, inextricable, impérieuse et qui dans quelque temps ne laissera pas un seul coin de terre qui soit libre". (To-day Prometheus must needs revolt not against God, but against the people, the new god. To the old tyrannies of the Clergy, feudalism, and monarchy there has suc-

Whereas the Romanticists were conservatives, Ivar Kareno is a reactionary of the first water; and a utopian at that. He wants to exterminate the proletariat. His utopianism goes to the absurdest lengths. All of Ivar Kareno's "thoughts free as birds" turn out to be most amazingly stupid. The proletariat appears to him as a class exploiting the other classes in society. Here you have one of the most fallacious of all Kareno's bird-free thoughts. And the pity of it is that this false thought of his hero's is shared, as is to be plainly seen, by Knut Hamsun himself. He causes Ivar Kareno to bear with all sorts of evils precisely because he hates the proletariat and "resists" it. In consequence, he is deprived of the possibility of obtaining his professor's chair and even of publishing the book he has written. In short, he draws down upon his head a whole series of persecutions at the hands of those bourgeois people among whom he lives and moves. But we might well ask what part of the globe is inhabited by the bourgeoisie who so relentlessly seek vengeance for "resistance" put up against the proletariat? Where is this Utopia? No such bourgeoisie have ever existed anywhere on the face of the earth, nor can there ever be any such. Knut Hamsun founded his whole play on an idea in flat contradiction to reality. So adversely has this fact affected the play that it calls forth laughter exactly in those passages where the author had planned that the development of the play's action should take a tragic turn.

Knut Hamsun is a writer of great talent. Yet no talent in the world will transform into a truth that which is truth's direct opposite. The crass defects of the drama *By the King's Gate* are the natural consequence of the utter bankruptcy of its basic idea. And the bankruptcy of its idea is due to the author's failure to grasp the meaning behind the struggle of the classes in present-day society of which his drama is a literary echo.

Knut Hamsun is not French. But this in no wise alters the case. The Communist Manifesto put it very aptly when it said that: "National one-sidenness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures there arises a world literature."

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ceeded another, a more subtle, inextricable, and imperious tyranny which will soon leave not a single spot on earth free.)

See also the chapter headed *Les carnets de Gustave Flaubert* in Louise Bertrand's book *Gustave Flaubert*. Paris, MCMXII, p. 256.

Here you have the selfsame thought as free as the very birds which inspires Ivar Kareno. In a letter to George Sand of Sept mber 8th, 1871, Flaubert writes: 'Je crois que la foule, le troupeau, sera haïssable. Il n'y a d'important qu'un petit groupe d'esprits toujours les mêmes et qui se repassent le flambeau." (I believe that the crowd, the herd, will always be deserving of hatred. Of importance only is that small group of kindred souls passing the torch down the one to the other.)

It is in the same letter that we find the lines already quoted by me as to the general franchise to the effect that it is a disgrace to the human mind, since it will result in numbers dominating "even over money"! (See Flaubert, *Correspondance. quatrième serie (1869—1880), huitième mille*, Paris,, *1910)*.

In these views Ivar Kareno would have recognised his own thoughts so bird-like free. But these views had not been given direct expression to in Flaubert's novels. The class struggle within modern society was to advance far forward ere the ideologues of the ruling class were to feel the need for giving direct expression in literature to their hatred for the emancipatory aspirations of the "people." But those of them who, with time, came to feel this need could no longer defend the "absolute autonomy" of ideology. On the contrary, they set the ideologues the clearly-recognised aim of serving as a spiritual weapon in the struggle against the proletariat; but of this more after.

Hamsun was born and grew up in one of three countries of Western Europe which are far from belonging to the number of those most economically developed. This also explains, of course, the truly childish simplicity of his conceptions of the position of the proletariat and its struggle in the society in which he lives. But the economic backwardness of his native land has not prevented him from thoroughly soaking himself in that intense dislike for the working class and strong sympathy for the struggle being waged against it which now naturally arise in the minds of the bourgeois intelligentsia of the foremost countries of the world. Ivar Kareno is merely one of the varieties of the Nietzsche type. And what is this Nietzschean cult? It is a new edition, duly revised and supplemented in accordance with the demands of the latest developments of capitalism, of that same struggle against the "bourgeois" which harmonizes quite well with unshakable sympathy for the bourgeois order. Besides, the example of Hamsun can easily be replaced by another example drawn from modern French literature.

One of the most talented and — which is the most important point here — one of the clearest-thinking playwrights of modern France is undoubtedly François de Curel.

Of his dramas the five-act play, *Le repas du lion* must be recognised without any hesitation as the most worthy of mention. The main figure in this play is one Jean de Sancy, who at one time — under the influence of certain exclusive circumstances belonging to his childhood years — was much attracted by Christian socialism, but later on makes a determined break with its teachings and comes to the fore as an eloquent defender of large-scale capitalist production. In the third scene of the fourth act he delivers a long speech to the workers to prove that "egoism which produces *(l'egoisme qui produit)*, is the same thing for the working masses as charity for the poor man." As the workers who are his audience express their disagreement with this view, he — getting more heated all the time — explains to them in a plain and vivid comparison the roles of the capitalists and the workers in modern production.

"They say," he thunders, "that an entire host of jackals follow the lion into the desert to enjoy what he leaves of his prey. The jackals are too weak to attack a buffalo. They are not swift enough to run down the fleet gazelle, and all their hopes of a meal lie in the claws of the king of the desert. Do you hear! in his claws! Towards dusk he leaves his lair and runs, roaring in his hunger, in quest of a victim. There it is! He makes a mighty spring; a bitter struggle begins: a fight to the death ensues; and the earth is stained with blood which is not always the blood of the victim. There follows the kingly repast which is contemplated with attention and respect by the jackals. When the lion has stilled his hunger, the jackals may dine. Do you believe that the latter would be fuller if the lion were to divide his prey equally with each of them and leave himself a small share only? Not in the least! A tenderhearted lion of that kind would cease to be a lion. He would scarcely fill the role of a blind man's dog! He would cease to strangle his victim at its first groan and would begin licking its wounds. The lion is only a fine animal when it is a beast of prey, eager for a victim, driven only by the urge to kill and spill blood. When a lion like that roars, the slaver runs down the jowls of the jackals."

Plain enough though it be, the moral of this parable is interpreted by the eloquent orator in these far shorter, but no less expressive words:

"The *entrepeneur* opens those sources of nourishment which scald the workers with their splashings!"

I am well aware that the artist does not answer for the speeches delivered by his heroes. But very often he gives us a glimpse of his attitude in one way or another towards these speeches, with the result that we are enabled to judge of his own views. And the whole of the play *Le repas du lion*, from that point on shows that de Curel himself holds as perfectly sound the comparison made by his Jean de Sancy of the employer of labour with the lion and the workers with the jackals. Everything points to his being able to repeat with full conviction the words of the same hero: "I believe in the lion. I bow down to the rights won him by his claws." He himself is prepared to consider the workers as jackals feeding on the crumbs of what is obtained by the labour of the capitalist. Just like Jean de Sancy, he conceives of the struggle of the workers against the employers of labour as a struggle of envious jackals against the mighty lion. It is this very comparison that constitutes the basic idea of his play to which the fate of its chief hero is made to correspond. But in this idea there is not a single grain of truth. It distorts the real nature of social relations in modern society far more than do the economic sophisms of Bastiat and all his many followers right down to Bauem-Bawerk. The jackals are held as doing nothing whatever to obtain what the lion feeds on and with which in part they themselves still the pangs of their own hunger. Now, who will dare to say that the workers engaged in any given plant do nothing in the creation of its products? In spite of all economic sophisms, it is perfectly plain that they are created by the labour of the workers and of the workers only. It is true, of course, that the *entrepreneur* participates in the process of production as its organiser. And in the capacity of organiser he himself is a producer.

But here again, everyone is aware that the salary of factory manager is one thing and the profits of the employer owning the factory another. By deducting salary from profits we get the remainder which falls to the share of capital as such. The whole point is why capital gets this remainder. Now, in all the eloquent flourishings of Jean de Sancy there is not even a hint of any solution of this problem. Be it added that Jean does not even suspect that his own income (as one of the big shareholders of the undertaking), cannot be justified even though the completely false comparison of the entrepeneur with the lion and the workers with the jackals did happen to be right. He himself does nothing whatever for the undertaking, but merely draws large dividends, every year. And if anyone is to be compared to the jackal which feeds on what is obtained by another's efforts, surely it is the shareholder whose whole "labour" consists in keeping his shares in safety at home, and perhaps the ideologue, too, of the bourgeois order who takes no part himself in production but gathers up what is left over from the luxurious table of Capital. Unfortunately, the talented de Curel himself belongs to the category of such ideologues. In the struggle of the wage-workers against the capitalists he takes his stand entirely on the side of the latter by depicting in an utterly wrong light their actual relations towards those whom they exploit.

And what is Bourget's play, *La barricade*, if not an appeal addressed by this famous and most talented writer to the bourgeoisie calling on them to rally for the struggle against the proletariat? Bourgeois art becomes militant. Its representatives are no longer entitled to say of themselves that they were born "for neither wild emotions nor for bat-

tle." No; it is they who now throw themselves into the battle. They have no fear now of the wild emotions that involves. But in whose name are the battles being waged in which they are so anxious to take part? Alas, it is in the name of "cupidity." True, it is not out of personal greed; for it would be strange, indeed, to assert that men like de Curel or Bourget come forward as defenders of Capital in the hope of enriching themselves. The "cupidity" for whose sake they experience these "emotions" and throw themselves into "battle" is the cupidity of an entire class. The fact that this is so, does not however prevent it from remaining cupidity when all is said and done. And if this be so, just look at what results.

What did the Romanticists hate their contemporary "bourgeois" for? We already know why. It was because the "bourgeois" held the bright five-franc piece, to use Theodore de Banville's words, above all else. Yet what do artists like de Curel, Bourget, and Hamsun defend in their productions? They defend those very social relationships which serve the bourgeoisie as the source whence they may draw a large number of five-franc pieces. How far these artists are from the romanticism of the good old days! What is it that has thus distanced them from that school? Nothing other than the inevitable march of social development. The sharper the contradictions became within society, the more difficult it became for the artists remaining true to the bourgeois type of thought to hold to the theory of art for art's sake and to live on by locking themselves up in an ivory tower, as the French expression has it.

In the modern civilised world it would appear that there is not a single country where the youth of the bourgeoisie do not sympathise with the ideas of Friederich Nietzsche. Nietzsche loathed his "sleepy" *(schlaefrigen)*, contemporaries perhaps more than Theophile Gautier did the "bourgeois" of his day. But of what did his "sleepy" contemporaries stand accused in Nietzsche's eyes? Wherein lay that chief defect which was the source of their other shortcomings? It lay in the fact that they could not think, feel, and above all, act as was meet for people occupying a dominant position in society. Under present-day conditions this has all the significance of a reproach to the effect that they do not display sufficient energy and consistency in defending the bourgeois order against the revolutionary attempts of the proletariat. It is not for nothing, therefore, that Nietzsche speaks with such ire of the socialists. But look again at what results.

Whereas Pushkin and his contemporary Romantics reproached "the crowd" for placing too much value on the flesh-pots of their lives, the inspirers of the neo-Romantics of our days reproach it for being too slack in defending these same flesh-pots, that is, in not valuing them enough. Yet, as it happens, the neo-Romanticist — just like the Romanticists of the good old days — preach the absolute autonomy of art. But can one speak in all seriousness of the autonomy of any art which devotes itself consciously to the aim of defending any given social relations? Of course, you can't! There is no doubt about it, such art is utilitarian art. And if its representatives scorn the creations guided by utilitarian considerations, it is simply a misunderstanding on their part and nothing more. As a matter of fact, they — not to speak of considerations of personal gain which can never possess a leading significance in the eyes of a man truly given up to art — cannot tolerate those considerations only which have in view the advantage of the exploited majority. For them the advantage of the exploiting minority is the supreme law.

Thus the attitude of Knut Hamsun or François de Curel towards the principle of utilitarism in art is directly opposed to the stand taken by Theophile Gautier or Flaubert; although the latter, as we are aware, were by no means untouched by conservative partialities. Owing, however, to the widening and deepening of the gulf of social antagonisms since the days of Gautier and Flaubert, these partialities have grown so powerful among artists accepting the bourgeois viewpoint that it is now incomparably more difficult for them to adhere consistently to the theory of art for art's sake. Of course, whoever were to imagine that none of them any longer holds consistently to this theory would be mistaken. But as we shall see presently, consistency of this kind works out very dear at the present time.

The neo-Romanticists — again this is Nietzsche's influence — are very fond of imagining to themselves that they are "beyond good and evil." But what does that mean — to be beyond good and evil? It means to perform such an epoch-making work that no judgement can be passed on it that employes as its canons those conceptions of good and evil that arose on the soil of the given social order. In their struggle against the reaction the French revolutionaries of 1793 undoubtedly stood beyond all good and evil, i. e., by their activities they ran counter to those conceptions of good and evil which had arisen from the soil of the old order which had outlived its time. A contradiction of this kind (in which there is always included much of the tragic) may be justified only by the fact that the activities of revolutionaries compelled to sojourn for the time being on the other side of good and evil lead to evil retreating before good in social life. In order to take the Bastille it was necessary to join fight with its defenders. And whoever wages a struggle of that kind inevitably stands for the time being on the other side of good and evil. But insofar as the taking of the Bastille curbed that despotism which could send people to prison "at its own royal pleasure" (or *parce que tel est notre bon plaisir*, as the famous phrase of France's absolute kings ran), to that extent it forced evil to retreat before good in the social life of France and by that same taken for the temporary sojourn on the other side of good and evil may be found a like justification. Take Ivar Kareno, for an example. There is probably not the slightest doubt but that he would not have hesitated in the least to do beyond good and evil for the sake of realising in fact his "thoughts as free as the birds." But, as we know, the sum total of his thoughts may be expressed as: bitter struggle against the proletariat's movement for freedom. For this reason, in his case to pass over to the other side of good and evil would have meant for him to cease to handicap himself in this struggle even with the small weight of those few rights the working class had succeeded in obtaining in bourgeois society. And had his struggle been successful, it would have led — not to any less evil in social life, but to more. It follows, therefore, that his temporary passage to the other side of good and evil would have lost its every justification, just as — generally speaking — it loses any and all justification wherever it is undertaken for reactionary aims. The objection may be raised that while he might not find justification for himself from the proletariat's viewpoint. Ivar Kareno might find it from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie. With that I am in perfect agreement. But in the present instance the viewpoint of the bourgeoisie is that of a privileged minority striving to perpetuate its privileges. And the standpoint of the prole-

tariat is that of a majority demanding the abolition of any and all privileges. That is why to say that the activities of any given person are to be justified from the viewpoint of the bourgeoisie is tantamount to recognising that they are to be condemned from the point of view of all persons not inclined to defend the interests of the exploiters. And that is quite sufficient for me, since the inevitable march of economic development warrants me to assert that the number of such people is going to keep on increasing.

While hating the "sleepy-heads" with all their heart and soul, the neo-romanticists are anxious for movement. But the movement they strive for is a movement conservative insofar as it opposes the movement for liberation of our days. Here you have the whole secret of their outlook and mentality. And here, too, you have the secret to the circumstance that even the most talented of them cannot create such outstanding productions of art as they did when their social sympathies ran in a different direction and when their thoughts moved otherwise. We have seen, then, how far wrong was the idea embodied by de Curel in his *Le repas du lion*. And a false idea cannot but work harm to any artistic production, since it makes for falseness in the mentality of the characters. It were not difficult to show how much falseness is to be found in the psychology of Jean de Sancy, the hero of the play just mentioned. To do so, however, would involve a digression of greater length than is warranted by the scheme of my paper. I shall take another example, one that will enable me to be briefer.

The basic idea of the play, *La barricade*, is that in the modern class struggle each must side with his class. Yet who is looked upon by Bourget as the "most attractive figure" [1] in his play? The old worker Gocheron who doesn't act along with the workers, but with the employers. This worker's behaviour flatly contradicts the main idea of the play; and he can appear attractive only because he is utterly blinded by being heart and soul with the bourgeoisie. The feelings which move this Gocheron are the feelings of the slave who regards his chains with awed respect. One needs to be blind, indeed, to declare him the "most attractive figure" in the play. At any rate one thing is certain: if Gocheron is so attractive, this shows in spite of Bourget that it behooves each of us to march not with the class to which we belong, but with the one we consider to be most in the right.

By his creation Bourget contradicts his own main thought in this play. And this again is for the same reason that the wise man who persecutes others becomes a fool himself. When a talented artist is inspired by a fallacious idea, he mars his production. And the modern artist is unable to find inspiration in a right and sound idea if he wishes to defend the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the proletariat.

I have already said that artists accepting the viewpoint of the bourgeoisie find it incomparably more difficult to-day than was previously the case to adhere consistently to the theory of art for art's sake. This, I may add, is recognised by Bourget as well. He expresses himself even more strongly on this head. As he says, "The part of the indifferent chronicler is impossible for a mind capable of thinking freely or for a head able to feel, when it is a question of these internal wars upon which, it seems at times, the whole future of our land and civilisation depend." [2]

[1] These are the author's own words. See the preface to *La barricade*, Paris, p. XIX.

[2] *La barricade*, preface, p. XXIV.

But here it is time to make certain reservations. As a matter of fact, a person possessed of a thinking mind and responsive heart cannot remain an indifferent onlooker in the civil war that is going on in modern society. If his field of view is circumscribed by bourgeois prejudices, he will be found on one side of the "barricade"; but if he be not infected with these prejudices, he will be on the other side. So it is. But not all children of the bourgeoisie — nor of any other class either, for that matter — are gifted with the mind that thinks. Again, those of them who can think do not always possess a responsive heart. And nowadays it is easy for men and women of this kind to remain consistent supporters of the theory of art for art's sake. As it happens, no other theory is so much in keeping with the feeling of indifference to social — even though they be narrow class — interests. Now, bourgeois society is most probably the social order best calculated to foster such a spirit of indifference. Where whole generations are reared up in the principle of each for himself and the devil take the hindmost, there very naturally appear types of egoists who think only of themselves and are only interested in themselves. Actually, we see that among the modern bourgeoisie such egoists are to be met with in greater numbers than ever before. Regarding this point we have the very valuable evidence of Maurice Barrès [1], a bourgeois ideologue.

"Our morals, our religion, our national feeling — all has collapsed," he says. "We cannot borrow any rules for life from these things. And in expectation of the time when our teachers shall have established trustworthy truths for us, we must needs hold on to the sole reality, the 'ego', our own 'I'." [2]

When a man finds that his all has "collapsed" — save and except for his own 'ego' — there is nothing to prevent him from playing the part of the calm chronicler of the great war that is going on within society to-day. Though that may be too sweeping a statement to make. For even then there is something that can prevent him from playing this role. This something will be precisely that absence of any interest in social matters which is so plainly reflected in those lines of Barrès I have just cited. Why should any man taking not the slightest interest either in society or its struggle come to the fore as the chronicler of the social struggle? Everything relating to that struggle would be bound to bore him to death. And if he be an artist, he will show not a trace of it in his productions. There, too, he will give himself over to the "sole reality", that is, to his own "I." And since his "ego" may get the blues if it has no other company besides itself, he will fabricate for it a world of fantasy "on the other side" which will stand high above the earth and over all "mundane matters." And that is exactly what many an artist does to-day. Nor am I slandering them either: they themselves admit the fact. Here, for instance, is what our own countrywoman, Zinaida Hippius, writes.[3]

"I consider prayer a natural and most essential need of human nature. Every human being must pray or strive towards prayer, quite irrespective of whether he recognises the fact or not and irrespective of the form taken by his prayers or to which God they are addressed. The form depends on the capabilities and inclinations of each individual.

[1] Maurice Barrès, French novelist.
[2] *Sous l'oeil des barbares*, ed. 1901, p. 18.
[3] Zinaida Nikolaievna Hippius, Russian emigre poetess.

Poetry generally, verse-making particularly, and the music of words — these are merely one of the forms taken by prayer in our soul". [1]

The point need not be laboured that this indentification of the "music of words" with prayer is entirely unfounded. In the history of poetry there have been long periods in which it has had absolutely no relation whatever to prayer. There is no need, however, to quarel over this point. It was important for me here to introduce the reader to the terminology of Mme. Hippius, as ignorance of the terms she uses might lead him somewhat astray in reading the following passages which are important for us this time by the essence of their whole trend.

Mme. Hippius continues: "Are we to blame that each 'I' has now become a separate and solitary entity severed from the other 'I' and therefore incomprehensible and unnecessary to it. Our own prayer is passionately necessary, understandable, and dear to each of us. We need, too, our poems which are the reflection of the momentary fullness of our hearts. But to another whose sacred 'ego' is different, my prayer will be strange and lacking meaning. Knowledge of their own solitude divides people still more from one another, and sets apart their souls and stops their mouths. We are ashamed of our prayers and, knowing that either way we will never share with anybody in them we pronounce them, set them forth, in undertones, say them to ourselves, utter them in hintings clear only to ourselves." [2]

When individualism reaches this extreme limit, then in very truth there vanishes, as Zinaida Hippius very justly remarks, "the possibility for communion through prayer (i. e., through poetry, G. P.), and that oneness of the transports of prayer" (i. e., of poetry, G. P.). But poetry — being one of the means of communion between people — cannot fail to suffer as the result, this being true, too, of all art generally. The Jehovah of the Bible himself observes with the full weight of his authority that it is not good for man to dwell alone. This is excellently borne out by the example of Mme. Hippius herself. In one of her verses we read:

Relentless is my path
That leads me on to Death
But I love myself like God;
And Love my soul shall save.

One may doubt this. Who loves "himself like God"? The unqualified egoist. And an unqualified egoist is hardly likely to be capable of saving anybody's soul.

But the point is: will the souls of Mme. Hippius and all the others like her who love "themselves like God" be saved? We insist that poets who love themselve like God can have no interest whatever in what goes on around them in society. Their strivings must necessarily be extremely indefinite. In her poem "Song" Mme. Hippius "sings":

I need that which cannot be found on earth,
Which cannot be found on earth.

This is not so badly put perhaps. All that is left for a person who loves "himself like God" and has lost the ability of communing with other people is to "ask for a miracle" and strive to reach "that which cannot to be found on earth": what is on earth is not likely to be of any

[1] See preface to her *Collected Poems* p. 11.
[2] Ibid., p. 111.

interest to him. The ensign Babaiev, one of Sergeiev-Tsenskovsky's characters, says that it was "some chlorosis invented art." [1] This philosophising son of Mars was hitting very wide of the mark indeed, however, when he took it that any and every art was the invention of some chlorosis. But the fact is not to be disputed that art which strives to reach "what is not on earth" is created by this pallid green sickness. In itself it is typical of the decay of an entire system of social relations and is therefore very aptly termed decadent.

Mme. Hippius will probably say that I have been quite arbitrary in ascribing to her complete indifference to social questions. But to begin with, I have ascribed nothing to her, but have merely referred to her own lyrical outpourings and have sought to define the meaning which lies behind them. I leave it to the reader to judge as to whether I have understood her outpourings correctly or not. In the second place, I am aware, of course, that Mme. Hippius is not against airing her views even now about the social movement. There is, for example, the book she wrote in conjunction with D. Merezhkovsky [2] and D. Filosofov and published in Germany in 1908. It stands as a convincing piece of evidence bearing witness to her interest in the Russian social movement. But it is enough to read the preface to this book to realise how much effort its authors put into the labour of striving to attain to "what they do not know." It is stated there that Europe is aware of the cause of the Russian Revolution, but is unaware of its soul. And seemingly for the purpose of enabling Europe to make acquantance with the soul of the Russian Revolution they tell the Europeans this sort of thing: "We are as like you as the left hand resembles the right... We are your equals, but in the opposite sense... Kant would have said that our spirit lies on the transcendental and yours on the phenomenal plane. Nietzsche would have said that in your case Apollo reigns, in ours Dionysus. Your genius consists in moderation, ours in the transports of spirit. You are able to check yourselves in time. If you run up against a wall you either stop or go round it. We would ram our heads against it (*wir rennen uns aber die Koepfe ein*). It is not easy for us to rouse ourselves, but once we are roused we can no longer stop ourselves. We don't walk: we run. We don't fly: we hurl ourselves through the air. You like the golden mean on the road: we love extremes. You are just: while for us there are no laws. You can preserve your mental equilibrum, whereas we are always striving to lose it. You possess the kingdom of the present: we are seeking a kingdom of the future. In the long run you always set the power of government above all the liberties you can gain. But we always remain insurgents and anarchists, even while wearing the chains of slaves. Reasoning and feeling bear us to the extreme limit of negation, and yet, we, each and all of us, remain mystics in the deepest layers of our being and will." [3].

The Europeans are further informed that the Russian Revolution is just as absolute as the governmental form against which it is being directed and that if the empirical goal towards which this revolution is striving is socialism after all, its unconscious and mystic aim is really anarchy [4]. In conclusion our authors state that their words are not

[1] See his *Tales*, vol. 11, p. 128.

[2] Dmitry Sergeievich Merezhkovsky, emigre novelist and poet, whose novels are accessible to the English reader, as well as some of his critical work.

[3] *Der Zar und die Revolution*, von Dmitri Mereschkovsky, Zinaida Hippius, und Dmitri Philosophoff, Munich, K. Piper & Co., Verlag, 1908, pp. 1—3.

[4] Ibid., p. 5.

addressed to the bourgeosisie of Europe, but to — whom do you think, dear reader? — the proletariat! I am mistaken: "Only to individual minds of universal culture, to people sharing Nietzsche's view that the State is the coldest of all cold monsters in existence", and so on, and so on. [1]

I have not cited these extracts for polemical reasons. Not at all. Indeed, this is no polemic I am conducting in these lines, but merely an attempt to depict and explain certain sentiments of certain social strata. And I believe that the passages I have just quoted are sufficient to show that though she did (at long last!) evince an interest in social questions, Mme. Hippius has remained the same person who appears in the verse we quoted, that is, a representative of an extreme individualist decadent outlook who thirsts for a "miracle" for the very reason that she lacks any serious attitude towards the living realities of social life. The reader will not have forgotten Leconte de Lisle's words to the effect that poetry offers an ideal life to him who lacks a life in reality. And when a person loses all spiritual contact with the people he lives and moves among his real life ceases to have any connection with life on this earth. His fantasy then carries him to the skies and he turns mystic. Thoroughly soaked in mysticism as she is, her interest in social questions offers nothing constructive. Together with her collaborators she is completely wrong in assuming that her eagerness for "a miracle" and her "mystic" denial of "politics as a science" are peculiar to the Russian Decadents. The "sober" West was before "drunken" Russia in giving birth to people who revolted against reason in name of irrational cravings. Social-democrats and drawing-room anarchists like J. Henry Mac Kay are sworn at by Erik Falk, one of Pshibyshevski's characters, for nothing other than their alleged superfluous trust in reason [2].

"All of them," thumps this non-Russian Decadent, "preach the world revolution and the replacement of the broken wheel when the cart is actually moving. The whole of their dramatic structure is idiotically stupid for the precise reason that it is so logical; for it is based on reason, the omnipotent. But up to now everything has been happening — not according to reason, but according to very stupidity, in accordance to ridiculous chance."

The allusion by Falk, to "stupidity," and to "ridiculous chance" is quite identical, by its nature, with the striving after the "miracle" that throughly permeates the German book of Mme. Hippius and Messrs Merezhkovsky and Filosofov. It is one and the same idea under different names. Its origin should be ascribed to the extreme subjectivism of a considerable portion of the contemporary bourgeois intelligentsia. If one considers his own "ego" the only "reality", he cannot admit then the existence of an objective, "rational", i. e. legitimate connexion between this "ego" on the one hand and the outside world around him on the other hand. He is bound to conceive the outside world as either entirely unreal or as real only in part, to the extent of its reliance upon the only

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[1] Ibid., p. 6.

[2] As will be readily understood, their mystical anarchism frightens no one at all. Speaking generally, anarchism represents merely an extreme deduction from the basic premises of bourgeois idealism. This is why we frequently hear of bourgeois ideologues expressing sympathy with the aspirations of anarchism in period of decline. Maurice Barrès was also in sympathy with anarchism in that stage in his development when he contended that there is no reality except one's own 'I."

reality, i. e. the "ego." If such an individual be given to philosophic speculation, he will say that, by creating the outside world, our "ego" introduces into it at least a particle of our own rationality; the philosopher cannot utterly rebel against Reason, even when restricting the rights of the latter for one reason or another, for instance, in the interest of religion. [1] If such an individual (who considers his own "ego" the only reality) be without any philosophic inclination, he will simply give no thought to the question of how the outside world is created by this "ego." Then he will not at all be inclined to presume in the outside world even a particle of rationality, i. e. of legitimacy. On the contrary, he will then conceive the world as the kingdom of "ridiculous chance."

And should it occur to him to sympathize with any great social movement, he will be sure to say, like Falk, that its success can by no means be assured by the legitimate course of social development, but rather by human "stupidity," or, which is the same thing, by "ridiculous" historic "chance." But, as I have already said, the mystical view of Hippius and of both her fellow-thinkers on the Russian liberation movement contains no substantial difference from Falk's view on the "ridiculous" causes of great historic events. In their effort to startle Europe by the unparalleled exuberance of the libertarian strivings of the Russian individual, the authors of the said German book remain Decadents of the purest water, capable of sympathizing only with that "which is not, which never happens", or in other words, incapable of sympathizing with anything which happens in reality. Consequently, their mystical anarchism by no means weakens the deductions at which I arrived on the ground of the lyrical outbursts of Mme. Hippius.

Having once touched on this subject, let me state my thought to the end. The events of the years 1905—06 produced on the Russian Decadents the same strong impression as the events of 1848—49 made on the French Romanticists. To wit, they aroused in them the interest for social life. Yet, this interest was even less attuned to the frame of mind of the Decadents than it had been to that of the Romanticists. Therefore, it proved to be even less enduring.

Let us now return to contemporary Art. If one is inclined to consider his "ego" the only reality, then, in common with Mme. Hippius, he "loves himself like God". This is perfectly feasible, and quite unavoidable. And if one "loves himself like God", he will, in his works of art, busy himself solely with his own personality. He will be interested in the outside world only to the extent that the latter is related in one way or another to that "only reality", to that precious "ego". In Sudermann's very interesting play *Das Blumenboot*, the baroness Erfflingen says to her daughter Thea, in the second scene of the first Act: "People of our rank exist only in order to create, out of the things of this world, something like a gay panorama which passes before us, or rather, seems to be passing before us. For, in reality, it is we that are in motion. This cannot be doubted. And in this pursuit we need no ballast whatsoever." No better words could be cited to portray the life-purpose of people of the category to which Mme. Erfflingen belongs, of people who may,

[1] As an example of such a thinker who restricted the rights of Reason in the interest of religion, one may allude to Kant: "Ich musste also das Wissen aufh ben, um zu Glauben Pla'z zu bekommen". Cf. "*Kritik der reinen Vernunft, Vorrede zur zweiten Ausgabe* S. 36, Lepzig, Druck und Verlag von Philipp Reclam, zweite verbesserte Auflage.

with full conviction, reiterate the words of Barrès: "The only reality is our own ego." But people who pursue such a purpose in life will consider Art only as a means of embellishing in one way or another the panorama which "seems to be passing before us." They are certainly not going to encumber themselves with any kind of ballast. They will either ignore entirely the ideological contents of works of art, or they will subordinate the latter to the whimsical and fickle demands of their extreme subjectivism.

Let us turn to Painting.

Already the Impressionists showed a complete indifference as regards the ideological content of their works. It was declared by one of them, aptly expressing their common conviction: "Light is the chief dramatic personage of a picture." But the perception of light is just a mere perception, i. e. it does not yet constitute sentiment, it does not yet constitute thought. The artist who limits his attention to the realm of perceptions, remains indifferent to sentiment and thought. He may turn out a good landscape. Indeed, the Impressionists have produced many excellent landscapes. This is quite so; nevertheless, the landscape is not the whole of the painting art. [1]

Let us recall the "Sacred Supper" of Leonardo da-Vinci and ask ourselves: was Light the chief dramatic personage in that famous fresco? It is known that its object was the intensely dramatic moment in the history of the relations between Jesus and his disciples when he said: "One of you will betray me". Leonardo's tasks consisted in depicting the spiritual condition of Jesus himself, profoundly saddened by the terrible discovery, as well as that of his disciples who could not believe that treachery had crept into their little family. Had the artist thought Light to be the chief dramatic personage in the picture, he would not have thought of depicting this drama. Had he nevertheless painted his fresco, then his chief artistic interest would have been centred not on what was passing within the souls of Jesus and his disciples, but rather on what was passing within the walls of the room where they had gathered, on the table before which they were seated, and on their own skins, i. e. on the multiform light effects. We should then have contemplated not a harrowing drama of the soul, but a series of well-painted patches of light: one, say, on a wall of the room, another on the tablecloth, a third on the crooked nose of Judas, a fourth on Jesus' cheek, etc., etc. Yet, owing to this, the impression produced by the fresco would have been incomparably fainter, i. e. the art value of Leonardo's work would have been much diminished. Some French critics have likened impressionism to Realism in belles-lettres. This comparison is not unfounded. However, if the Impressionists were realists, then their realism should

[1] Among the first Impressionists there were many people of great talent. Yet it is remarkable that among those highly talented people there were few first class portraitists. This is quite natural, for in portrait painting, Light cannot be the chief dramatic personage. Moreover, the lanscapes of the foremost impressionist masters excel by the very fact of their successful delineation of the multiform play of light, while containing little "mood." This was quite well pointed out by Feuerbach: "Die Evangelien der Sinne im Zusammenhang lesen heisst denken". (Thinking means the connected reading of the gospels of the senses). Without forgetting that by "senses", sensitiveness, Feuerbach understood everything pertaining to the realm of perceptions we may say that the Impressionist showed neither the ability nor the desire to read the "gospels of the senses". This constituted the chief defect of their school. While good landscapes were painted by the earlier and chief exponents of Impressionism, many of the landscapes by their exceedingly numerous followers resemble carricatures.

be recognized as quite superficial, going no farther than the "crust of the phenomena." While this kind of realism has conquered a wide place in contemporary art — and this conquest is unquestionable — the painters, reared under its influence, were faced with the dilemma: either to exercise their ingenuity on the "crust of phenomena," inventing new, more and more amazing and more and more artificial light effects, or to try and penetrate farther than the "crust of phenomena", having comprehended the mistake of the Impressionists and having realized that the chief dramatic personage is not Light, but Man, with the large variety of his spiritual experiences. And, in fact, in modern painting we see the one as well as the other. Concentration of interest on the "crust of phenomena" is responsible for the production of paradoxical canvases on gazing at which even the most indulgent critics shrug their shoulders and declare modern painting to be passing through a "crisis of hideousness." On the other hand, admission of the impossibility of limitation to the "crust of phenomena" compels one to look for ideological content, i. e. to worship that which one used to burn not so very long ago. However, to impart an ideological content to one's works, is not so easy as it may seem. An idea is not a thing which exists independently of the surrounding realities. The store of ideas of a given man is determined and enhanced by his attitude to the world around him. He whose attitude to this world has become so constituted that he considers his own "ego" the "only reality", must inevitably become a hopeless pauper as regards ideas. Not only does he not possess them, but he is even deprived of the possibility to acquire them. Just as the want of bread drives the starveling to eat weeds, so these people, in their want of clear ideas, have to content themselves with hazy hints of ideas, with substitutes drawn from mysticism, symbolism, and other "isms" that are characteristic of a decadent epoch. In short, — in the realm of painting we see a repetition of what we have seen as regards belles lettres: Realism falls as the result of its inherent lack of content; triumphant is the idealistic reaction.

Subjective idealism has always relied on the idea that there is no other reality except our "ego". Yet, it has taken the whole of the unbounded individualism of the decadent epoch of the bourgeoisie to render this idea not only into the egoistical rule which determines the relations among people, each of whom "loves himself like God" (exessive altruism was never characteristic of the bourgeoisie), but even into the theoretical basis of the new esthetics.

I have before me an interesting book, *Du Cubisme*, by Albert Gleises and Jean Metzinger. The joint-authors are painters, both of them belonging to the Cubist school. Let us turn to them, following the adage: *Audiatur et altera pars*. How do they justify their amazing creative methods?

"There is nothing real outside of ourselves," they say... "We do not mean to deny the existence of objects which affect our external senses; yet there can be reasonable conviction only as regards the image that is produced by them in our mind."

Hence, the authors draw the deduction that we know not the forms that are assumed by the objects in themselves. And since we know not these forms, they think themselves entitled to give the delineation that they deem fit. Yet, they make the remarkable reservation that they would not like to limit themselves to the realm of perceptions, like the Impressionists. "We are looking for the substantial," so they say, "but

we are looking for it in our own personality, and not in something eternal that is so industriously turned out by mathematicians and philosophers."

In these arguments, as the reader can see, we encounter primarily the familiar idea that our "ego" is the "only reality." It is true, this idea is presented here in a milder form. It is declared by Gleises and Metzinger that for them doubt as to the existence of external objects is quite alien. Yet, while admitting the existence of the outside world, our authors promptly declare it to be unknowable. And this means that to them there is nothing real except the "ego."

Since the images of objects arise in our minds as the result of the effect of the latter upon our outward senses, it stands to reason that one cannot talk about the outside world being unknowable; for, we conceive it precisely because of this effect. Gleises and Metzinger are mistaken. Their talk about the form in itself is rather feeble, too. One cannot seriously blame them for their mistakes: such mistakes were made by people who were a good deal stronger in philosophy. Nevertheless, attention must be drawn to the fact that the supposed unknowableness of the outside world leads our authors to the conclusion that the substantial has to be looked for in "our own personality." This conclusion may be understood in two ways. First, by "personality" one may understand the human race in general: second, any given individual personality. In the first case we arrive at the transcendental idealism of Kant, in the second case we are led to the sophistic recognition of any individual man as the measuring standard for all things. Our authors incline to just such a sophistic interpretation of the aforesaid conclusion.

Having adopted this sophistic interpretation one may do in painting, as in everything else, anything he likes. If instead of *La Femme en Bleu* ("The Woman in Blue", such was the title under which a picture by F. Leger was exhibited in the Salon last autumn) I depict a few stereometrical figures, who dares tell me that I have turned out a bad picture? Women are part of the outside world around me. The outside world is unknowable. In order to depict a woman, I have to appeal to my own "personality", and my "personality" gives to the woman the form of a few scattered little cubes, or rather, paralleloids. These little cubes provoke the mirth of all the visitors to the Salon. But never mind that. The "mob" is derisive only because it does not understand the language of the artist. The artist should under no circumstances yield to such influence. "The artist who does not yield, who explains nothing and tells nothing, is accumulating an internal power which sheds light on everything around him." And while in waiting for the accumulation of this power, one has to keep on painting stereometrical figures. By the way, the appearance of such parodies indicates that the internal dialectics of social life have now reduced to the absurd the theory of "art for art's sake."

It is not good for man to be alone. Our contemporary "innovators" in art are not satisfied with what has been created by their predecessors. There is nothing wrong in this. On the contrary, the quest for the new is quite frequently a source of progress. Yet, it is not always that the seeker after new things finds them. One must know how to look for new things. He who is blind to the new teachings of social life, he who knows of no other reality than his "ego", will also find nothing "new" except new nonsense. It is not good for man to be alone.

We find then that under the present social conditions the fruits of art for art's sake are not at all luscious. The extreme individualism of the epoch of the decadent bourgeoisie is shutting to the artists all the fountains of true inspiration. It blinds them entirely to what is going on in social life, so that they are doomed to the fruitless rumination of their utterly vain personal experiences and fancies. The net result of this pursuit is that the artist turns out something that has nothing in common with beauty, but represents an obvious absurdity that can be justified only by the aid of a sophistic distortion of the idealistic theory of conception.

At best, these artists are to blame for being some eighty years behind the times. In rejecting the best aspirations of their epoch, they naively imagine themselves to be the epigones of the struggle against philistinism that had been started already by the Romanticists. The theme of the alleged philistinism of the present proletarian movement is quite a pet of the estheticists in Western Europe as well as in Russia.

Of course, this is ridiculous. Richard Wagner has long since demonstrated the reproach of philistinism, leveled by such gentlemen at the emancipatory movement of the working class, to be utterly groundless. It has been rightly pointed out by Wagner that, upon attentive consideration (*genau betrachtet*), the emancipatory movement of the working class turns out to be striving, not towards philistinism, but from philistinism to free life, to "artistic humanism" (*zum künstlerischen Menschentum*).

It is "a striving towards the worthy enjoyment of life, towards a system of existence in which human beings will not have to spend the whole of their vital forces in deriving the material means of subsistence." It is this spending of vital energy on the securing of the material means of subsistence that serves at present as the source of "philistine" sentiments. The perpetual worry about the means of subsistence "has rendered the human being into a feeble, humiliated, stupid and miserable creature incapable of loving or hating; into a citizen who is prepared at any moment to sacrifice the last vestige of his free will in order to get some relief from this worry."[1] The emancipatory movement of the proletariat leads to the elimination of this worry which degrades and demoralizes the human being. Wagner thought that only through the consummation of the emancipatory aspirations of the proletariat will be fulfilled the advice of Jesus, that one should not worry about food etc. Wagner has rightly pointed out that only the attainment of the aforesaid goal will shift the ground from underneath the theory of the antithisis between esthetics and morality that is maintained by the adherents of art for art's sake, (e. g. by Flaubert). Flaubert thought moral books to be tedious and false *(ennuyeux et faux)*.[2] He was perfectly right. Yet, he was right only because the morality of our present society, the bourgeois morality is tedious and false. The antique "morality" was not considered by Flaubert to have been either tedious or false. Yet, the difference between that morality and the present bourgeois morality consisted in that it had been free from bourgeois individualism. Shirinsky-Shikhmatov, minister of education under Tsar Nicholas I, saw the task of art to consist in "asserting the article of faith

[1] *Die Kunst und die Revolution*, (R. Wagner, Gesammelte Schriften, 11 B. Leipzig 1872, S. 4—41).

[2] *Les carnets de Gustave Flaubert.* (L. Bertrand, Gustave Flaubert, p. 260).

so important to social as well as private life, that evil doings meet with retribution here on earth," i. e. in the very society that was taken care of by people of the stamp of Shirinsky-Shikhmatov. The artists are doing the proper thing when turning their backs upon such fallacy and bigotry. And when we are told by Flaubert that in a certain sense "there is nothing more poetical than vice," we understand the true meaning of this sentence to consist in the counterposing of vice to the bigoted, tedious, and false virtue of bourgeois moralists like Shirinsky-Shikhmatov and their kind. But the elimination of a social system which breeds this bigoted, tedious and false virtue, will do away with the moral necessity for the idealization of vice. I reiterate, the antique morality did not appear to Flaubert to have been bigoted, tedious and false, although, while respecting that morality, yet owing to his exceedingly undeveloped social and political conceptions, he could admire such monstrous negation of that morality as had been the conduct of a Nero.

In the socialist society it will become logically impossible to be carried away by art for art's sake, to the extent that the present social conditions will disappear, based as they are upon the aspirations of the ruling class to maintain their privileges.

Flaubert says: *L'art, c'est la recherche de l'inutile* (Art is the quest for the useless). To be carried away by this idea would mean for the artist merely to rebel against the narrow-minded utilitarianism of a given ruling class or caste. After the abolition of the classes, this narrow-minded utilitarianism, closely akin to selfishness, will automatically disappear. Selfishness has nothing in common with esthetics. Artistic taste presupposes invariably the absence of motives of personal gain in the person that displays it. The endeavor to be useful to society, which had been the basis of the antique morality, was the source of self-sacrificing acts; yet an act of self-sacrifice may easily become — and such was frequently the case, as is demonstrated by the history of the arts — an object of esthetical delineation. Suffice it to allude to the songs of primitive peoples, or, not to go so far back, to the Harmondios and Aristogitones monument at Athens.

It was already realized by ancient thinkers, like Plato and Aristotle, that the material worries are a source of degradation to the human being. This is being realized also by contemporary ideological exponents of the bourgeoisie. They too believe it necessary to relieve man of his perpetual burden of economic worries. Yet they are concerned only about the man of the upper class that lives upon the exploitation of the workers. They see a solution of the question in the way it had been contemplated already by the ancient thinkers: in the enslavement of the producers by a handful of lucky individuals approaching more or less the ideal of the "superman." Yet this solution, which had been a conservative one already in the epoch of Plato and Aristotle, has now become ultra-reactionary. While the conservative Greek slave-owners of the time of Aristotle could expect to be able to retain their dominant position by relying upon their own "valor," the present advocates of the enslavement of the masses of the people take a highly sceptical view of the valor of the exploiters belonging to the bourgeois class. For this reason they gladly dream about the appearance of a great genius, or a superman at the head of the state who might buttress up the edifice of the class rule that is rumbling, by the sheer force of his iron will. The Decadents, those of them that are interested in politics, are frequently found to be warm admirers of Napoleon I.

While Renan wanted a strong government that would compel the "good rustic" to work for him, allowing him to indulge in philosophy, the present estheticists must have a social order which would compel the proletariat to work while they would indulge in supreme joys, like the painting and tinting of little cubes and other stereometrical figures. Organically incapable of any serious work, they wax sincerely indignant at the thought of a social order under which there would be no idlers.

If you live in Rome, do as the Romans do. While combatting philistinism in words, the modern bourgeois estheticists are worshipping the golden calve no less than any common philistine. "They believe that if there is any movement in the realm of art," says Mauclaire, "it is really a movement in the picture market where speculation goes on also on geniuses which have not yet appeared." I may add by the way that this speculation on "geniuses which have not yet appeared" is to be partly explained by the feverish quest after "the new," in which most of our present artists indulge. Whenever people strive for "the new," it is because the old fails to satisfy them. Now the question is, why does the old fail to satisfy them? A great many of the modern artists are not satisfied by the old for the sole reason that while it is still supported by the public, there is no room for the manifestation of their own genius. Their rebellion against the old is not prompted by a love for any new idea, but rather by the love for that "only reality," for that precious "ego." "The question of money becomes so strongly intertwined with the question of art," Mauclaire continues, "that the art critics feel as though hemmed in a vice. The best critics may not say what they think while the others say only that which they believe expedient in a given case, because they have to live by their writing. I do not say that one ought to be indignant about this, but it will do no harm to take stock of the intricacy of the problem."

Thus we see that the idea of art's sake has become transformed into that of art for money's sake. The whole problem in which Mauclaire became interested, amounts to determining the cause of this phenomenon. And this cause can easily be determined:

"There was a time, as in the Middle Ages, when only the superfluity, the excess of production over consumption, was exchanged. There was, again, a time when not only the superfluity, but all the products, the whole of the industrial existence, entered into commerce, in which the whole production depended upon exchange...

"Lastly, there comes a time when all that men have regarded as inalienable become objects of exchange, of traffic, and can be disposed of. It is the time in which even the things which until then had been communicated, but never exchanged; given, but never sold; acquired, but never bought — virtue, love, opinion, science, conscience, etc. — where all at last enter into commerce." [1]

Is it any wonder that in a period when everything is vendible, also art has become vendible?

Mauclaire does not want to say that we should be indignant about it. Neither am I inclined to view this phenomenon from the point of view of morality. To use a well-known phrase, I do not wish to cry, nor to laugh, I merely want to understand. I do not say that the modern artists "must" be inspired by the emancipatory aspirations of the pro-

[1] Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, English Edition (Chicago), p. 36.

letariat. Not at all. Just as the apple-tree must bear apples, and the pear-tree must bear pears, so the artists who maintain the standpoint of the bourgeoisie must rebel against the said aspirations. The art of a decadent epoch "must" be decadent. This is unavoidable, and it would be useless to wax "indignant" about it. But, as it has been justly said in the Communist Manifesto: —

> "In times when the class-struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of old society assumes such a violent, flaring character that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands. Just as, therefore, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole."

Among the bourgeois ideologists going over to the side of the proletariat we see very few artists. This is probably due to the fact that the height of theoretical understanding of the whole course of the historical movement can be reached only by those who think, whereas the contemporary artists, in contradiction to the great masters of the Renaissance, for instance, think exceedingly little [1]. At all events it may be confidently stated that any artist of considerable talent will increase his power to a very high degree if he will become imbued with the great emancipatory ideas of our time. It is necessary that these ideas should enter his flesh and blood, that he should express them precisely as an artist. [2] It is also necessary that he should be able to properly assess the art modernism of the contemporary ideologists of the bourgeoisie. The ruling class is now in such a state that to go forward means for it to go downward. This sad fate of the bourgeoisie is shared by all its ideological exponents. The foremost among them are precisely those who have sunk lower than all their predecessors.

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[1] "Nous touchons ici au défaut de culture générale qui caractérise la plupart des artistes jeunes. Une fréquentation assidue vous demontrera vite qu'ils sont en géneral très ignorants... incapables ou indifférents devant les antagonismes d'idées et les situations dramatiques actuelles, ils oeuvrent péniblement l'écart de toute l'agitation intellectuelle et sociale, confinés dans les conflits de technique, absorbés par l'apparence matérielle de la peinture plus que par sa signification générale et son influence intellectuelle" Holl, "La jeune peinture contemporaine", pp. 14—15, Paris 1912.

(We refer here to the general cultural defect which characterizes most young artists. A close study will very soon show that they are, as a rule, exceedingly ignorant..... indifferent to or incapable of dealing with actual dramatic situations and antagonisms between ideas, they keep unpardonably aloof in their work from all intellectual and social commotions, confining themselves to disputes about technique and absorbed by the outward appearance of things.)

[2] Here I refer with pleasure to Flaubert. He wrote to Georges Sand: "Je crois la forme et le fond... deux entités qui n'existent jamais une sans l'autre." (I believe form and substance... two entities which never exist one without the other). ("Correspondances" 4th series p. 326). He who believes it possible to sacrifice form "for idea", ceases to be an artist if he was one before.

EDITORIAL NOTE

The article Art and Social Life was one of Plekhanov's last works on esthetics and was published in *Sovremennik* in 1912—13. In it he repeats and in part enlarges upon several of the contentions he made in 1905—06. This article is perhaps the most significant of all Plekhanov's contributions on art problems. It criticizes without mercy the idealistic theory of art for art's sake and shows that in the long run it amounts to a theory of art for money's sake. The exposure of the French romaticists, of Knut Hamsun's play *By the King's Gate* and the decadence of the impressionists played a very important part in the development of our Marxist science of literature. The proofs of connections between art and the life of society, proofs that are concrete and detailed, too, given by Plekhanov, did much to enrich the Marxist theory of art. The wealth of theoretical material in this article (thought imagery, true and false ideas of the productions of art, utility of art) still retains considerable interest for Marxian esthetics. However Plekhanov is not altogether correct in the article and in some cases makes serious theoretical mistakes. The incorrectness of Plekhanov's esthetical views is closely conjoined with his political and philosophical opportunism. Menshevism could not but leave its mark on the esthetic views of the author and this applies especially to that period of wavering (1906—1912) to which this article belongs.

We shall enumerate the chief mistakes made in this article.

(1) In the basic conclusion of the article on the origin of utilitarian art and of art for art's sake, where reference is made to a "mutual bond of sympathy" between the artists and society, in the former case, and of dissonance between the two in the latter case, Plekhanov fails to apply sufficiently a class view of art.

Here we find an utterly false setting up of the artist against society. Plekhanov incorrectly maintains that dissonance enables the artists to rise above his surroundings.

Such a fictitious super-class point of view on the development of art does not correspond to the reality of the class struggle in art where each artist takes his part as the representative of one or other class engaged in struggle.

(2) Plekhanov writes: "The ideal of beauty prevailing in any given society or given class of society is rooted partly in the biological conditions governing the human race (which, *inter alia* create racial features as well): and partly in the historic conditions making for the rise and continued existence of this particular society or class."

In this quotation Plekhanov gives a false solution of the problem of the influence of the biological and social in art, attributing to the one and the other a certain "part." Just as the arts are the product of world history so the ideal of beauty is determined not by racial and not by biological peculiarities but by the social practice of a class.

(3) In this work, as in others Plekhanov, emphasizes that selfishness has nothing in common with esthetics, that artistic taste is disinterested and "presupposes invariably the absence of motives of personal gain in the person that displays it."

This assertion is borrowed from Kant. Plekhanov uncritically transfers into Marxian esthetics the view of this idealist philosopher that the true artistic taste must be non-party. Artistic taste, in contradistinction to the view of Kant and Plekhanov, is a utilitarian and party affair.

(4) Plekhanov uncritically agrees with Ruskin in that the value of an artistic production is determined by the loftiness of the sentiment expressed in it, affirming that the loftier the emotion in any work of art the more readily can it serve as a means of spiritual communion between people. Plekhanov's criterion as to the loftiness or lowness of the feeling expressed in art is an abstract criterion. It does not provide the possibility of estimating the class nature of a work of art.

These are the chief of Plekhanov's mistakes in this article. They may be overcome only by accepting Leninism. Only Marxism-Leninism makes it clear how inadequate are Plekhanov's philosophy and esthetics: contemplativeness, objectivism, incomprehension of the party character of philosophy, literature and art. Only on the basis of Marxism-Leninism does the further line of development of the bolshevik theory of art become clear.

Ivan Anisimov

THE FILMS OF EISENSTEIN

1

The films of Eisenstein, created during the epoch of the social revolution, attempt to epitomize its content and record its movements. They constitute a form of revolutionary practice in which the genius of the artist works hand in hand with the socialist offensive of the proletariat.

In order to understand and evaluate the art of Eisenstein, we must point out his individual characteristics, and determine his attitude towards the social revolution.

Eisenstein followed a definite path of development. His four films:— *Strike*, *Potemkin*, *October* and *The General Line* represent links in this process. We must seek the driving forces of this development, lay bare the contradictions through which it passed and reveal the relation between the progress of the revolution and this artist's creative growth.

In outlining the main features of Eisenstein's creativeness, we must first of all point out his tendency to break with the traditions of bourgeois art. His works are a thoroughly consistent exposure of bourgeois art, and herein lies the revolutionary character of his films, and their close connection with the "attacking class." [1]

First of all we observe a decisive and merciless criticism of bourgeois individualism and its esoteric character, and the successful overcoming of the conservatism of psychological intimate drama. A striking characteristic of Eisenstein's films is their non-individualistic tendency. This does not mean however that he immediately changes his world-outlook to that of the proletariat, or that once having destroyed the fetish of bourgeois individualist art he arrives on the "virgin shores" of a new proletarian style. No — despite their revolutionary tendency the cinematographic creations of Eisenstein still retain traces of the very bourgeois limitations denounced by him. But although the artist has not as yet fully succeeded in creating an altogether new form, in place of the discarded traditions of individualist art — which as a proletarian artist he should have found — nevertheless his films have for us a very great significance.

In his endeavours to overcome the individualist limitations of bourgeois art, Eisenstein arrives at an original form of social monumental art [2]. Embracing certain great historical processes not as they might

[1] "Attacking Class". A quotation from the revolutionary poet Vladimir Maiakovski—a figure in his particular poetic sphere comparable to Eis nst in. The whole line is: "All my ringing power of song I give to you, attacking class."

[2] "Social monumental art" as distinguished from "differential intimate art" of an individualist bourgeois society. Friche, the leading modern Marxian critic on Art writes: "In the history of art there are two regularly recurring types: sometimes the arts — architecture, sculprure, painting—develop as a single united whole, as for instance in Egypt and Greece (V cent. B. C.) or else the opposite

have been reflected through individual experiences, but with a wider conception expressed by social movements, Eisenstein strives to show social revolutionary progress in a general, non-individualistic way.

Rejecting the individualistic stagnation inherent in bourgeois art Eisenstein has made rapid strides along the road to social monumental art. Of primary significance is the fact that he has constantly stressed the importance of the mass rather than that of the individual. In these conceptions expressed in images of the revolutionary epoch, we distinguish not only their positive content but also a characteristic narrowness, a conservatism, despite the fact that these conceptions have arisen during the overcoming of the individual limitations of bourgeois art. Realizing the necessity of the revolutionary negating of bourgeois practise Eisenstein completely denies individualistic principles and thereby transforms himself into a poet of the abstract mass. Indeed one might say that he has moved from one extreme to the other without really finding a true solution of the problem, which he can only learn from the class with whom now lies his destiny. Eisenstein does not think dialectically, and therefore the historic monumentalism of his films often becomes too abstract.

If Eisenstein in throwing over traditions of bourgeois individualism attempted to embrace the immense content of social processes and to find a new epic form, and if in his struggles with the ossifying petty-bourgeois-art he appears as a revolutionary artist of our day, it is nevertheless true that certain traits in his work tend to distinguish it from real proletarian art, and reveal his connection with certain forms of petty-bourgeois thoughts. The films of Eisenstein are revolutionary works, but they contain inner contradictions showing the conflict between the old and the new.

The film *Potemkin* is of especial significance with regard to the genius of Eisenstein. It is distinguished by its rich content and its completeness.

Here we have a profound interpretation of the Odessa episode of the 1905 Revolution. Refusing to portray the social content through the use of individual drama Eisenstein expresses the social conflict in a form that has all the appearance of an historical document. *Potemkin* presents an extremely interesting solution of the problem of social monumental art, overthrowing individualistic traditions of the past.

The revolutionary rise and fall are portrayed by Eisenstein as profoundly dramatic actuality, with a vast content. The revolutionary rise, expressed basicly as a *drama of the ship and a drama of the steps*, is on the one hand extremely simple and concrete, and on the other, receives a monumental interpretation.

The moment of climax (crescendo) and the moment of fall (diminuendo) are the culminations determining the new drama. And by the destruction of the old dramatic construction, based on individual psychological content, new and wider horizons are revealed. Eisenstein very originally realizes his drama in the spirit of social monumentalism.

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takes place, this synthesis is disinitegrated and each of these arts exist and evolve independently, as in Greece (IV—III B. C., Italy XV cent., Europe XIX cent.) Architecture is the basic nucleus of synthetic art. (Now of course we have a new, even more synthetic art—the cinema.) Social monumental art is that which fulfils a great social demand, in contradistinction to that made for a particular individual or patron.

Battleship and stone-steps are given as two opposing images concentrating all the grandiose content of that historical event. This transforms the whole structure into a living, clear conception, sufficiently deep to hold the vast content of the social conflict, and yet concrete enough to form a system of images,[1] and present historical events in a design of representative art. Ship and steps are the main images through which the historical moments of the revolutionary development are reproduced with exceptional clearness. The monumental art of Eisenstein is expressed nowhere so successfully as in this very simple rigid construction of Potemkin. It is the greatest attainment of revolutionary art. Here not only were bourgeois traditions negated, but also a new quality appeared in contradistinction to bourgeois art practice.

Potemkin has as its subject an episode from history. Understanding of history is determined by the class nature of the artist. One cannot say that an artist of one epoch cannot understand the history of another, but it must not be forgotten that an adequate historical perception is directly related to the class nature of the perceiver. An artist of the revolutionary proletariat, whose world-outlook is dialectical materialism, which consequently conditions his creative power, is of course able to give an adequate historical picture. But the contemporary bourgeoisie are quite unable to portray their own history in a true light. This class limitation is revealed most clearly in the creative work of a declining class. In all petty-bourgeois interpretations of any historic process we find many limitations. They are retained even where we have to do with those fellow-travellers of the revolution who have linked their fate with the working class and are re-educating themselves in the common fight. In *Potemkin* we can distinguish traces of such limitations, notwithstanding the fact that this work constitutes an event of first importance in revolutionary art and is connected so closely with the socialist offensive of the proletariat.

In his understanding of the part played by the bourgeois revolution in overthrowing the feudal-landlord regime, Eisenstein is completely logical. His film gives in many ways an adequate reproduction of the historical process. His creation contains some petty-bourgeois features but such a production as *Potemkin* would have been impossible if these petty-bourgeois tendencies had completely dominated the outlook of its author. A sluggish mentality could never have risen to such a height nor would it have been so daring and monumental. The artist's closeness to the revolutionary struggle of the working class broadens his horizons. It allows him to base himself upon the revolutionary world-outlook, and arms him for creative victories which would be impossible under conditions of bourgeois conservatism. The positive significance of this film is determined by the fact that the artist himself is closely connected in his creative activity with the revolutionary offensive of the working class. And herein lies the measure of its achievements. Yet the work contains features akin to traditions of petty-bourgeois mentality which

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[1] "System of Images". This means the complex of image-units that make up the whole of a work of art.

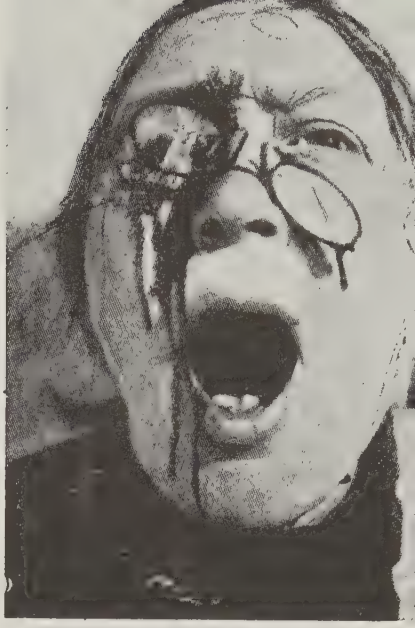
By "image" is meant that minimum unit in which is expressed an idea. An image may be anything, living or material, actual or imaginary. In the "General Line" for example we have the image of the cream-separator which expresses the whole of the technical revolution that is taking place. Or the more complex images as the ship and the steps in "*Potemkin*" the first representing the solidarity of the proletariat and the other the individualism of the petty-bourgeoisie. All the images of a piece are part of a whole system which is the work of art.

continue to weigh heavily upon the artist. He has shaken off a considerable portion of them, but has not overcome them completely, and to that extent his world-outlook is limited. To reveal the contrasts in Eisenstein's greatest work, means not only to understand the real content of this production but also to find the underlying contradiction in all his creative work.

Let us examine the opposing contrast of the ship and the steps, and their concrete content. It is not difficult to see that individual distinction could be established only on the steps and not on the battleship. The sailors are presented in specific aspect — they are envisaged as a scheme of non-psychological phenomena. In essence they are indistinguishable. They are synonyms. We perceive them always as in relation to the mechanism and the ship. These external circumstances unite them. This mass is put together mechanically and represents a purely quantitative formation. By this, individualism is cast aside, and Eisenstein in trying to find his expression, turns to the mass, and overthrows the fetishism of bourgeois individual art. He wants to show the mass in its collective movement. And here appears a very important obstacle. Collectivism includes, of course, individual features. This new art reveals extraordinary possibilities for individual expression, but it proposes in principle a new dialectical approach to the personal. Eisenstein solves the problem by completely doing away with individuality. His mass therefore exists as a scheme which does not find concrete fulfillment. The artist, then, is faced with the necessity of creating some exterior form emphasizing the unity of this broken-up mass. In the film the battleship serves as this central form. The people on the ship are always related to the technical system. The ship is objectively expressed in broad dramatic sequences. Here is necessary to note not only the traits of technical fetishism but also the fact that the movement of the human masses, and the social content of the drama are to a certain extent subordinated to this exterior formation.

If the men on the ship were without individuality, the people on the steps are to be considered in an essentially different way. They are distinguished in their individual peculiarities, they are conceived as part of a psychological drama. Before us are images that are saturated with meaning, nothing superfluous, given in a series of actual incidents. Imagine a long flight of stone steps up a hill, and on them the developing drama: a mother carrying her shot child, or the old wounded grandmother—all these separate expressions of the crushing of the bourgeois-democratic revolution are pieced together in a very complete picture. Here it is necessary to note the psychological content of the portrayal. All of it is the opposite of that on the ship. The drama of the democratic revolution that failed to materialize receives in the picture of the martyrdom on the steps, a convincing and concrete expression. The steps scene is pathetic. The men on the ship are so related to the people on the steps that they become merely a projection of this drama of suffering. Their external similarity and lack of individuality is in clear opposition to the drama of the individually expressed people shot down on the steps.

Why does the artist thus denying individualism, at the same time revert to it? Eisenstein deprives the sailors on the ship of their individuality because he is unable to give a dialectical exposition of the mass or to understand the unity of the general and the particular. Hence — his schematisation and de-personalisation. The individualistic portrayal



Potemkin

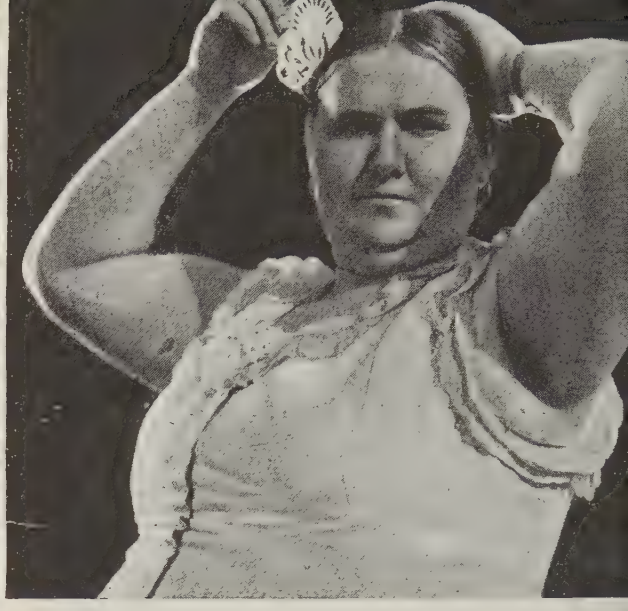
To the article by I. Anisimov: „The films of Eisenstein."

Thesis and Antithesis: ship and steps. The sailors are represented as lacking personality, while the people on the steps are conceived as part of a psychological drama.

October

To the article by I. Anisimov:
„The films of Eisenstein."

ensten's petty bourgeois stand in dealing h the October events is here made clear. The olutionary workers are shown as a lifeless ss, as a conglomeration of objects while ects are imbued with life.



The Old and the New

To the article by I. Anisimov: „The films of Eisenstein."

The artist attains breadth instead of depth, making the image hyperbolic instead of concrete. Eisenstein's rich peasant is homerically rich, extremely tall, monstrously stout.

Dante's Hell of the poor peasantry... is portrayed by the artist with... refinement.

of the people on the steps testifies to Eisenstein's adherence to the principle of individual psychological exposition. The democratic aspect of the 1905 Revolution is particularly accessible to him and receives a deep interpretation. Petty bourgeois traditions are expressed in the handling of the people on the steps and in the depersonalisation and non-psychological treatment of the sailor mass. In these contrasts is revealed the underlying unity of the class content — here is not only a revolutionary affirmation arising during the revolutionary practice of a petty-bourgeois fellow-traveller but also indications that his class limitations are being overcome, but are as yet not fully conquered.

The drama on the battleship has one very characteristic distinction, shewn in representing the world opposed to the revolutionary seamen — by means of a physician, a commander and a priest. Here again are images retaining an individualistic colouring. We have the following arrangement: on one side a drama of the martyred petty-bourgeois radicals given in sequences really understood, and on the other side the Tsarist reaction, expressed very concretely. These circumstances are essential for they show wherein lie the roots of Eisenstein's historical conceptions. The film portrays above all the drama of petty bourgeois radicalism.

The revolution of 1905 was a bourgeois democratic revolution, but it was at the same time a proletarian revolution, for the rising proletariat was the main moving force; it was an essential link in the development of proletarian struggle on the threshold of the great social revolution.

Did Eisenstein have a wider understanding of the Odessa episode than of the whole bourgeois-democratic episode? Is it conceived as a link in the historical process leading to the October Revolution, to the victory of the revolutionary proletariat? No. The Odessa incident is considered only from the "democratic" point of view. This is why the steps serve as a key to the film, why the tragedy of petty-bourgeois radicalism, overcome by Tsarist reaction, finds so profound an illumination in contrast to the depersonalisation and levelling of the social movement just where it was able to get into direct touch with the proletarian tendencies in the 1905 revolution.

The film gives a very striking reproduction of historic events; not without reason did it rise during the revolutionary practice of a co-worker from another class, connected now in his development with the proletariat. There is no getting around the fact that besides the revolutionary richness of the film, it has certain traits which do not belong to proletarian art. To tear the Odessa episode away from the whole proletarian movement meant fetishism of its democratic character.

The Odessa episode is portrayed in an isolated and limited manner. It is understood in terms of things. A trace of reticence, a peculiar inertness, is inherent in Eisenstein's whole historical conception. The main historical event is separated from its necessary connections with historical progress. It is taken as such for itself alone.

The conservatism of things is shown in the film's scenery. We have in it whole series of sea scenes reproduced along a plan of deep statics as opposed to dynamics. Sunset, the ships that are wafted through the fog past the tent where lay the body of Vakulinchuk — all these are pictures of a purely contemplative character. However paradoxical and unexpected, Eisenstein, the destroyer of bourgeois esthetic traditions, has in his films traces of estheticism. Static pictures, the quietude of sea

scenary with a sparse background of developing drama, serve as a means of stabilizing the picture. Thus it forms a definite circle, which is as it were removed from the chain of historical process.

There is true pathos in Eisenstein's portrayal of the 1905 revolution yet it is not fully conceived as it should have been by a proletarian artist. The events are estranged from the historical development of the proletarian struggle and considered as sufficient in themselves. A characteristic contradiction arises: the event is taken as a monumental historical picture which the artist endeavours to represent as something "individual-less" — gigantic — and at the very same time the film is given a limited "esoteric" character. The Odessa episode contains in its treatment traces of esoteric reticence, even renunciation.

It may be affirmed that the style of *Potemkin* represents that stage when the petty-bourgeoisie, collaborating in the revolution, merge with the proletariat and are beginning to lose their class character.

Hence the cogency of the bourgeois-democratic episode.

Hence the specific esoteric features and underlying passivity of its exposition.

2

Strike was the forerunner of *Potemkin* and Eisenstein's first film, and in it will be found confirmation of our deductions. The film deals with the class-struggle in an atmosphere of victorious reaction. Factory and proletariat on one hand, and capitalists and Czarist State on the other. Let us consider these opposing forces, which are the basic factors in the film. First of all we see the capitalist-bourgeoisie represented merely as fiction. They are without content, comprehensible only as a plan of genuine caricatures. The artist's extreme radicalism is thus shown in caricaturing the enemy of the working-class. Yet, as a matter of fact, this testifies only to the petty-bourgeois limitations of the picture, to the fact of its being torn away from the revolutionary practise of the working class. Such a falsification of actuality, such an underestimation of the forces of the class enemy, is not at all natural to the proletarian world-outlook.

In *Strike* external aspects of the factory receive full expression. Machines fascinate Eisenstein, they come before everything else. The problem of handling people is dealt with very characteristically — like the sailors of *Potemkin* they are not individualised, but are mechanically united around objects. Therefore the workers are constantly shown in relation to mechanism: men at the anchor, people on the farms, workers on the crane, etc. Things come first of all. Workers and machines are not shown in their productive relationships, but in a scheme of technical fetishism. When it is necessary to represent a meeting, Eisenstein places his men in most exotic situations, which instead of expressing the social content, appears as a decorative mechanical setting for some purely external happening. Machines and things are constantly being "starred" in *Strike*.

In picturing the working masses the same characteristics are revealed. As in *Potemkin* individualism is cast aside and the mass denied its own psychology. For petty-bourgeois thought striving to surmount individualist limitations, this was a peculiar necessity. The struggle with individualism resulted in the elimination of the individual.

Yet there is in *Strike* one aspect of individualism, which discloses the inability of the artist to solve dialectically the problem of the general and the particular. Individualization is accomplished by complete isolation from the general. If the mass with Eisenstein is depersonalised then any individual can only be portrayed outside the mass — that is, conceived in the light of petty-bourgeois individualism. As for instance the workers, forced away from the factory during the strike, are considered in terms of: interiors, birds, janitors etc. True unity of general and particular proves impossible for the creator of this film.

He is able to conceive the general, but in no way connected with the particular, or to present the particular in no way connected with the general.

Petty-bourgeois individualism and the depriving of personality: — within the confines of these extreme contradictions moves Eisenstein's mentality, still subject to a certain mechanical inertness. He gave in *Strike* the essential characteristics of the proletariat but one must be aware that these have inherent limitations.

Technical-fetishism, the subordination of the social content of the film, has here a special significance. We have already seen traces of it in *Potemkin*. In *Strike* it is shown more clearly. Undoubtedly there is here the closest connection between technical-fetish mentality and the negating of individuality and psychology. This introduces a new phase into the work of the artist, expressing the ideology of the petty-bourgeois re-educating itself by co-operation with the working class. This we shall observe also in all Eisenstein's subsequent works. The nature of this class-limitation is clearly expressed in these traces of technical-fetishism.

The film has for its purpose the portrayal of the proletarian movement. But in many ways it is superficial and far removed from the real content of the events reproduced. The external very often appears as the basic and sole content. Even the spies in *Strike* appear more eccentric than real, thus showing that what is more important to the artist is not the social meaning of the scene but rather its external accidental expression. The lumpen-proletariat participating in the pogrom (one of the culminating scenes in the film) are made into a fetish while taking part in events which should have been natural to them. This rabble is presented as something self-sufficient whose meaning is external to the developing basic movement. The artist accomplishes an original and exotic interlude. The dispersal of the demonstration by firemen using hosepipes is also presented as something outré and self-sufficient. This episode drags through an appreciable portion of the film, by no means commensurate with the unity of the whole conception.

In *Strike* the artist shows the nature of his connections with the practice of the revolutionary class. It is an attempt to find a new content. An indispensible condition for a real understanding of the revolutionary history of the proletariat is liberation from petty-bourgeois narrowness. In Eisenstein this limitation is still inherent, as is shown in his inability to solve the problem of the general and the particular, not only in the predominance of the external, often misconstrued, characteristics, but also in the technical fetishism of the artist's mentality, in the depersonalisation and non-psychological representation of the working class. He approaches reality with very marked mechanistic convictions. Essentially he remains a passive contemplator of reality, always limiting himself to the external: thus Eisenstein's first picture showed that his creative method has a basic bourgeois inclination.

These first films show the artist's point of departure. The revolutionary character of his creative power, manifest in his destruction of bourgeois art traditions, and his attempts to find a new form of expression does not remove the question of the inner contradictions. We have here a revolutionary fellow-traveller who must re-arm and re-educate himself in order to attain the world-outlook of the proletariat. The process of overcoming petty-bourgeois limitations is very complex and strenuous — a fact which must not be overlooked in an appraisal of Eisenstein's creative work.

The development of the artist is accomplished through sharpened contradictions. *Strike* and *Potemkin* show that the tasks which the artist set himself, connecting his work with the socialist offensive of the proletariat, — are not entirely accomplished. His aspirations go much further than his actual achievements. His class limitations have not yet been overcome. The development of Eisentsein took place under very unfavourable circumstances. His first two films were not subjected to any serious Marxian criticism. He was highly praised and rightly so, but the essential questions concerning the inner contradictions of his creative power were never raised. Eisenstein, like all our cinematography, developed without real criticism. This without doubt hampered and complicated the growth of his creative power.

3

Strike and *Potemkin* are historical films. They deal with the past. With them Eisenstein began — later he found it necessary to turn from history to contemporary reality. There is a logical process of development leading from *Potemkin* to *October*. The artist sets himself ever more serious tasks, he aspires to raise his creative power to the level of the high demands imposed upon art by the working class. Here is charted the growth of the revolutionary artist. He does not remain stationery, he develops with the times. One cannot accuse Eisenstein of lagging behind the impetuous tempo of this epoch, he always keeps abreast of it. If his films are examined from the point of view of their general direction, it will be seen that they are in close keeping with the demands of the socialist offensive.

October is an attempt to epitomize that revolutionary upheaval which opened up the socialist reconstruction of society. A film with such a purpose can be produced only by an artist of the proletariat. Only such an interpreter can understand events in their entirety, only he has the requisite flexibility, depth, clarity and fuliness of historical knowledge. The method of dialectical materialism is an indispensible requisite for an adequate reproduction of such a gigantic revolutionary upheaval.

Eisenstein took upon himself an exceptionally difficult problem. *October* is for him a step closer to the world-outlook of the proletariat. This was to be a transition revealing new horizons. Why then is this film representing such a daring attempt to express the events of October in social monumental art — such a pallid work?

The contradictions inherent in Eisenstein's first films are now repeated even more sharply. His production is still characterized by petty-bourgeois limitations. The measure of his re-education does not satisfy the demands made by the epoch on a revolutionary artist. The very fact of *October*'s appearance testifies to the artist's advance, but together

with this we may observe the superficial character of his development. Eisenstein is still subject to mechanical thinking, a form of class-limitation, and is unable to represent the October events in their real content. It proves to be external and formal. Facts are given but without an exposition of their essence. The coldness, stiffness and pomposity of the film prevent the events from appearing in their right relationships and essential content, notwithstanding their documentary reproduction. The film deals with a multitude of external appearances registered with the exactness of an historical document, yet they remain a lifeless mass of phenomena.

We see moving masses, armoured cars tearing along, we see the streets of Petrograd, we see a man photographically resembling Lenin, we witness a multitude of events exactly reproduced, but all of this fails to provide the inner qualities which such a film as *October* should have brought out.

The mass is treated not only in an individual-less aspect, but is often considered allegorically: in other words it is ineffectively emphasized. The artist, powerless to master the movements of the masses — the real heroes of the October epic — finally deprives his picture of concreteness. Depriving reality of its real content he presents merely allegorical schemes.

The masses are taken arithmetically — as a simple sum of separate items. The artist thinks quantitatively, or as Feuerbach liked to say — insipidly. He cannot understand that the sum of hundreds and thousands of men produces a whole greater than its parts, that out of the added quantities a new quality arises.

The masses in *October* are reproduced purely externally, that is why they do not become the chief figures in the film, but are transformed into a sort of decoration. They are presented as something elemental which cannot be made concrete. The artist cannot perceive individual distinction; before us is a gray torrent in which it is impossible to distinguish anything clearly.

The external characteristics become of extreme importance — the raising of the draw-bridge across the River Neva, the artillery galloping across the court-yard of the Winter Palace — many similar episodes stand out clearly against the dull background of non-individuality. This reveals the nature of his whole conception; incomprehension of the real content of developing events and a purely superficial manner of approaching them.

Objects pour down upon the heads of the spectators in enormous quantities — porcelain, cut-glass, chandeliers, statues, columns, architectural ensemble of the Winter Palace — all these, not conforming to the basic content of the film, are transformed into a real deluge of objects; we might say an "objective deluge!" The film which was to have been a history of the October Revolution becomes a horde of dead objects covered with the dust of museums. A curious paradox results: the museum objects are individualized and pictured with great exactitude, while the movement of the masses appear drab, deprived of individuality and reduced to mere allegory. This failure to understand essentials leads to a perversion of the content of the film. This deficiency is further brought out in the main contrasts of the film: the Smolny Institute versus the Winter Palace. Externally we have in the Winter Palace — the Provisional government, in Smolny the revolution. But Eisenstein proves powerless to reveal the content of this antithesis. He makes the contrast absolute.

The Winter Palace is conceived as a consistent whole, whose elements are architectural, material, external. Here the objective mentality of Eisenstein triumphs overcoming all obstacles.

The purely external treatment of the Winter Palace accentuates its feudal aspects. The objects in the Palace are those of feudalism. Making this antithesis absolute there arises a paradoxical perversion: the essential point that the Palace was the residence of bourgeois ministers and that the feudal form had already been replaced by bourgeois content, is forgotten. Here we have a purely quantitative estimation of the form, while the real content of the antithesis remain unrevealed. The bourgeoisie who were overthrown by the October Revolution are not shown in the film. Instead we have a substitution of the feudal emblems of Petersburg. One may say that the artist understands the proletarian revolution within the limits of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. This is an echo of the historical conception of *Potemkin*. But if there the "democratic" limitations corresponded in some measure to reality, here, in the interpretation of the October events, it appears monstrous and paradoxical. Historic aberrations result from the artist's limited world-outlook. His deep sincerity is unquestionable, but even the most sincere narrowness cannot compensate for inability to understand what is essential.

Eisenstein in his attempt to portray the October events monumentally is restricted by those identical limitations which characterised *Potemkin*. Externally we have dynamic movement, impetuosity, bustle, abstract dynamics; internally it is static. No attempt is made to present the Revolution as a link in a historic process. Eisenstein limits himself to documental facts, not understanding how to combine them into an integral whole.

Potemkin presents a deeper interpretation of historic reality than was attained in *October*, in spite of the traces of petty-bourgeois limitations. If Eisenstein gave us a profound characterization of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the movements of the proletarian revolution proved inaccessible to him. He did not develop quickly enough to interpret the complex problem involved. This circumstance was responsible for the failure of *October* and for its mechanical and external character. The contrast between his external striving and the actual extent of his re-education become clearer. If superficially Eisenstein became more logical and coherent, in the revolutionary sense, by attempting ever more necessary problems — the essence of his films tenaciously retain traces of class limitation. Their resistance is not yet broken.

4

Eisenstein's latest work *The General Line* proved to be such a spineless composition that it became necessary to rename it very unpretentiously "The Old and the New." It points to an accentuation of the crisis. After *October* the artist should have produced a film solving the contradictions in that unsatisfactory work. This was the only way out. There remained only the alternative of a mere retreat: the artist could have renounced the huge scale of his creations, — but it was clear that such a retreat would be for Eisenstein equivalent to creative death.

The General Line in its general tendency is a big step forward. The artist approaches closer to the concrete working of the socialist revolution, aspiring to grasp one of its most important aspects — the

reconstruction of the village by socialising the pigmy, individualist farms. Eisenstein addresses himself to the solution of this new problem with great enthusiasm. Yet the result is very poor.

If we examine the images which Eisenstein gives in his new film it will be seen that they are all on an immense, immeasurable scale. Concrete co-relations are violated. Aiming to give prominence to the contemporary village the artist attains breath instead of depth, making the images hyperbolic instead of concrete, resulting in a purely quantitative presentation. Consideration above all of external appearances is inherent in Eisenstein. In this is shown his incomprehension of the content. But in *The General Line* even the external character of the images are limited by their pure quantitativeness, and abstraction. Eisenstein's rich peasant is fabulously rich, extremely tall, monstrously stout. The poor peasantry are similarly expressed in extremes. The pauper's hut reminds one of Dante's Hell. Eisenstein shows swarms of bed-bugs, men at tillage, a hut broken in two. All these pictures are not generalized, they do not become concrete images. They are taken beyond all measure. The cream-separator is conceived as something resembling a turbine of Volkhovstroi (technical fetishism flourishes in full bloom in picturing this modest machine). Addressing himself to cattle-breeding, Eisenstein gives an episode of a "bull's marriage" which not only takes up a large part of the film but also serves as a most characteristic expression of the boundlessness and excess of his images. All is conceived not in its real contours, but in a schemé of hyperbolization. All becomes abstract, the external torn away from living reality. Immensity serves to express the fact that the artist has not found the essence of phenomena, that he sees them only as accidental, superficial expressions.

Immensity and abstraction distinguish the images of *The General Line* although its method is documentation. The rich peasants and poor peasantry are not actors but real rich peasants and real poor peasantry. They portray themselves — yet the real becomes unreal. The peasants are taken, almost bodily removed, from reality, but they appear to be archly unreal. Why is this so? Because the artist takes the village outside of its real relations, outside of living connections. He thinks in terms of things. He disintegrates reality into disconnected, unrelated pieces. This makes quite illusory Eisenstein's construction which is proclaimed in principal as arch-realistic. This film, arising from a desire to express a most urgent page of living reality, full of throbbing interest, proves to be a production torn away from reality itself.

The social movements of the contemporary village do not find in this film any deep revelation. So, paradoxical as it may be, the film dealing with the socialist reconstruction of the village is least of all interested in its social content! The class struggle in the village is here examined so narrowly and falsely that one is surprised that such crude misconstruction of reality was permitted. If in the relations between the rich peasant and poor peasantry (both sides are understood abstractly and in extremes) there still arises some schematic resemblance of the class struggle, yet such an essential figure as the middle-peasant — he who is the knot in the struggle taking place in the villages — is completely forgotten. And this is not accidental. Given that abstract, external and limited approach which is characteristic of the film, there arose a necessity for representing the village as a mere scheme, and consequently without the middle-peasant with whom it was absolutely imperative that connections be made.

Phenomena are conceived of as isolated. Eisenstein's village has no connection with the process of socialist reconstruction. It represents a conservative, self-sufficient nucleus. The "conservative" limitations, ever inherent in the external monumentalism of his scenes, are here very sharply brought out. The village is reconstructed surreptitiously. The whole process of internal regeneration is a local process, not connected with the surrounding reality. All is represented as the sum of mechanical accidents. The regularity, the necessity of the given process is not. revealed; therefore we have a film distinguished by its disintegration. It exists as a piling up of unconnected happenings, related only by their proximity. The film is extremely mechanistic, and lacks internal development.

The triumph of the external is here just as great as in *October*. Whole portions of this drama represent a mechanical juxtaposition and enumeration of disconnected objects. This explains the peculiar apathy of the film. Dante's Hell of the poor peasantry, and the satiety of the rich peasant, are portrayed by the artist with equal refinement. A lustre and a sparkle cover everything. All becomes peculiarly esthetic. The poor peasant's hut of the background of the sunset becomes a fact not without a certain elegance. The external approach to phenomena is expressed by levelling them. Indifference, apathy, a peculiar esthetic reproduction, all testify that the quality of actuality is inaccessible to the artist. He is in the captivity of poor empty abstractions.

The consequent result of all the creative work of Eisenstein is "technicism." The village that is reconstructing itself is perceived under the onslaught of technical progress. The problem of the class struggle is considered secondary and not very essential. The social meaning of the deploying events is alienated. The biggest revolutionary change in the viliage is perceived as a *technical revolution*. So the tractor is transformed into the cause, the base of socialist construction, instead of changing class content.

Reducing all events to a purely technical oranisation is expressed by one of the more substantial images of the film — the agronomist. This person always appears when it is necessary to turn the development into one or another direction. Agronomy is given above all. All the threads of the village's development are in his hands. Here we have a very characteristic perversion of real relations: the technical organizer appears as the essence of the evolving process.

The film is permeated with technical fetishism. If in the previous works of Eisenstein we have seen but traces, in *The General Line* they become quite definite. Their domination hinders the artist from perceiving socialist reconctruction in its essential meaning.

The gigantic social process is represented only in its technical-organizational aspect.

People in the film are deprived of personality and presented in a scheme of "non-psychological" characteristics. The connection of this treatment with the false, limited perception of the social proccess is now clear. Not the social but the technical organisational substance is regarded as essential. The lack of social concreteness in *The General Line* is the corollary of its technical-fetish essence. We have before us a world-outlook logically materialising. It becomes a whole system. By it the human-element in the social process is deprived of personality, and reduced to the role of a simple mechanical unity.

In *The General Line* all these features recieve a logical development. What is their class meaning? We know that the ideology of the technical intellectuals is permeated with technical fetishism, which plays a specific role in the formation of their world-outlook. Here we always meet with a tendency towards fetishing the technical covering of reality, a tendency to take it for the whole that implies misunderstanding of the real content of the social process. The last film of Eisenstein testifies convincingly to his relations with the technical intellectuals. It reveals the essence of his development, and of those errors in which he still persists. His petty-bourgeois limitation is not overcome during his collaboration with the proletariat but instead passes over into a new quality, becoming a "technical" limitation. In the initial stages of his development Eisenstein's work is a form of petty-bourgeois practice changing its class nature through participation in the proletarian struggle — but in the actual course of this development it becomes permeated with the ideology of the technical intelligentsia. Such is the concrete character of the history of Eisenstein's genius. Such is his real essence.

We have often to deal with a group of the petty-bourgeoisie who pass into a new quality, providing forces for its technical intelligentsia. This takes place continually in the contemporary development of the petty-bourgeoisie under conditions of the proletarian revolution. This peculiar crystallization becomes for them a form of co-operation with the working class. We have a social group retaining a petty-bourgeois spirit and traces of organisational-fetishism. This technical-intelligentsia finds its expression in ideological creative work, of which Eisenstein's cinematographic style is a vivid example. This explains why, in spite of an external revolution, his limitations are so obstinately retained, thus hampering the real revolutionary growth of his genius. It is clear that the revolutionary cinema conceptions of Eisenstein are only external. The artist does not surmount his psychological contradictions by social re-education, by merciless criticism of class conservatism, but attempts to do this through a technical-organisational collaboration with the working-class. This keeps him in the captivity of many illusions and hampers him in becoming a dialectical materialist, in becoming one of the greatest artists of our epoch. The crisis of Eisenstein's development has such deep roots that its solution is possible only through a complete revaluation of values.

As is known Eisenstein made a series of attempts to prove theoretically his views on art. In his remarks, eccentric and fractional in character, there is one very interesting assertion. Theory is always a generalisation of practice. However cursorily the formulations are stated, the mechanical quality of Eisenstein's thinking is clearly seen in them. Before us is the philosophy of objective limitation so logically expressed in his films. Of particular interest is the theory of the "intellectual cinema" which Eisenstein advances as the basis of his method and as a "perspective" for the development of all revolutionary cinematography. This theory is an expression of organisational-technical fetishism. It is simplicity in the extreme, this theory of new rationalism. It is reduced to fetishising the primacy of reason as against the psychological "elementals." It is well to remember here how Eisenstein, denying bourgeois individualism attempted to do away with personality. This very same limitation is manifested also in preaching intellectualism. Eisenstein

thinks within the limits of mechanical stagnancy, and this brings him to very poor illusions.

For the creative development of Eisenstein, his theoretical reasoning has a negative significance. It not only proves that the artist has moved very little in the direction of re-education but also shows militancy and obstinacy in his defence of these limitations, which serve as a stumbling-block in his revolutionary growth. The theory of the "intellectual cinema" represents, for him, a peculiar defensive device justifying his limitations. This theory will disappear when he overcomes that inertness in thinking which hinders this great artist from rising to his full height.

What are the perspectives? We have no reason for doubting that Eisenstein can surmount the contradictions of his creative growth and that he will be able to give his work far more completeness and depth than he did in *October* or the *General Line*. If he turns to decisive re-arming, overcoming his traits of class limitation, making closer relationships with the "attacking class," Eisenstein can create real revolutionary cinema productions. But we must on no account minimize the difficulties confronting him. The way out of this crisis is possible only through a stubborn campaign for re-education, through merciless exposure and criticism of his first films. The method of dialectical materialism is a necessary condition for the creative growth of the artist. Only by mastering it, only by conquering the mecanical limitations of his thought will he produce films worthy of this gigantic epoch. Then will be the authentic achievement of social monumental art.

Translated from the Russian by H. P. J. Marshall

WHOSE FRONT?

Something in the nature of an open letter to the editors and publishers of Front. [1]

Whose front? — this question remains in one's mind even after reading through the first four numbers of your magazine. The fact that we ask this question by no means signifies that we cannot quite accurately estimate where *Front* stands, as regards a number of cardinal points. Such an estimate, moreover, is definitely unfavorable from the point of view of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers, and in particular of the decisions adopted by its second conference held at Kharkov in November 1930. We are quite ready to assume that *Front* was founded as a result, amongst other things, of intentions of a subjective kind, perfectly laudable from the point of view of the International Union. Such an assumption is confirmed by the statement made recently by P. Nizan to the effect that *Front* has accepted the platform of the Kharkov conference, although this point has, up till now, received no official recognition in the pages of *Front* itself such as could be looked upon as binding. This only makes it all the more necessary for us to pay very great attention to what *Front* is actually doing, and to be strict and searching in our criticism of the philosophical and political standpoint reflected in its pages. Such a critical examination constitutes one of the most fundamental methods of work of any truly revolutionary organization, and hence also of our organization. In the case of *Front* this must be carried out with very great care since any intentions in the right direction are given such very scant and vague expression that it is often difficult to tell what they really amount to. What is more, any number of instances can be found of its ambiguity and eclecticism in dealing with political questions and of tendencies permeating its whole work which are manifestly false and harmful to the proletariat, and hostile too.

In studying the contents of the copies of *Front* which have been sent to us, we are really seeking an answer to one fundamental question: Does the political and literary line of *Front*, as expressed in its pages, approximate to the general line of the International

[1] *Front*. No. 1. December, 1930; No. 2. February, 1931; No. 3. April, 1931; No. 4. June, 1931. Editors announced in No. I for U. S. A., Norman Macleod, Albuquerque, New Mexico; for Europe, S. Prins, Amsterdam, Holland; for U. S. S. R., Secretariat of FOSP.

In No. 4. members of the editorial board announced include the following. Latin America: Xavier Abril, Madrid; for Japan: Masaki Ikeda, Aboshieho, Ibogun, Hyogoken. For U.S.S.R. Secretariat of FOSP, Administration of VOKS. For Europe: Sonya Prins, Charles Duff, Fernand Jouan, Georges Herbiet, Erich Reinhardt, Gino Saviotti.

Administration: N. V. Servire, The Hague, Holland.

Union of Revolutionary Writers, and if so to what extent? This fundamental and general question can, in its turn, be expressed more concretely in the two questions given below:

1. During the eight months of its existence has *Front* fulfilled the minimum requirements set by the Kharkov conference as obligatory for all organizations and writers who are members of the International Union as also for all groups and individuals expressing the wish to make use of its platform?

2. What is the substance of what has so far been published in the pages of *Front*, what tendencies are to be observed in conflict and which are seen most clearly to predominate?

We shall begin by emphasizing one most characteristic circumstance which immediately leaves one suspicious as to the true political position of the magazine. We refer to the complete absence from all four numbers of any documents, explanations, leading articles and so forth which might express the point of view of the editors on the fundamental questions of the international political situation and the revolutionary literary movement. What for instance do they think about the prospects of world capitalism surviving the crisis through which it is at present passing? How do they regard the position of the Soviet Union in the contemporary system of international relations? What is their attitude to the fevered preparations being made by the imperialists for new wars and in particular for war against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics? How do the editors react to the fascist menace which is growing in every capitalist country and how do they interpret the role of social fascism, the chief buttress of capital? What do they look upon as the next most important tasks for the international front of revolutionary literature and also for *Front*, itself? (If indeed it looks upon the latter at all as a field of campaign for the former.) It is no good looking for a clear and concise answer to these questions. In any case mere declarations can never satisfy our requirements. Declarations, however clear and consistent, can only be taken as true coin when they are systematically confirmed and strengthened by everyday practice, that is to say in this case by the expression of a correct politico-philosophical standpoint in the pages of the publication in question. This does not mean that we deny that such declarations have any use. We believe, on the contrary, that a clear and open statement of your position and the tasks which you have set yourselves would be of the greatest service, since apart from the fact that it would be fulfilling a recognized political obligation it would also give a criterion, accepted by you, for judging the practical work of your publication. That is the only object of such declarations, unless they are to serve merely as smoke screens.

From the very beginning you wished to remain free of any political obligations, and it was this that led us to take up an extremely critical and suspicious attitude to the whole plan of your magazine. After all, in keeping yourself free from any political obligations with regard to the international organization of revolutionary writers and to the revolutionary proletariat in general you were, in actual fact, hiding from them your true political position. Consequently you must not be surprised at us replying to this attitude in the direct and plain-spoken manner of revolutionaries.

Perhaps you will answer by saying that the absence of any definite political obligations is made up for by the kind of literature published by *Front* and you may even refer to extracts, sketches and poems by

Soviet writers (Vishnevsky, Zhiga, Lugovskoi, Maiakovsky, Platoshkin and others) which have been published in various numbers and which more or less truly express the great revolutionary struggle and socialist creativeness of the toiling masses of the Soviet Union. That is quite true, and we cannot deny the great practical value of such publicity.

But in the first place is such a fact as this sufficient to make us give your position our full approval? Is it not clear that the mere fact of publishing such things does not show what your position is? What is required is to show an unambiguous attitude to their philosophical and social implications. Monsieur Henri Poulaille, who is Monsieur Valois' assistant in literary affairs, also quite often prints translations from the Russian revolutionary writers in his *Nouvell Age*, but this does not prevent us from regarding Monsieur Poulaille together with his patron, Monsieur Valois as agents of the bourgeoisie in literature, nor from carrying on the fiercest struggle against them.

In the second place in the very same number in which you publish two scenes from V. Vishnevsky's epic play *The First Cavalry Army* [1] you print side by side, on an equal footing, without any explanation or comment, to say nothing of dissociating yourself from it politically, a piece of pure counter-revolutionary calumny by a Phillipe Lamour (of whom more later), slandering the Soviet Union, bolshevism and the international proletarian movement. Then again, while printing some of Maiakovsky's revolutionary poetry you offer your readers similarly on an equal footing whole quantities of the most nauseating examples of reactionary bourgeois mysticism and eroticism of whose social function there can be no doubt whatsoever. Again, while publishing the correspondence about the fight that is being carried on for proletarian literature in Japan (No. 4) and an essay by Harry A. Potamkin on the bankruptcy of the bourgeois film (No. 3) you print some passive and idyllic twaddle by Gino Saviotti about the literature of an Italy that is groaning under the yoke of fascism (No. 2. "Italian Literature of To-day"), and by Adolf Scheer on the literary tendencies of a Germany that is rent by economic crisis (No. 3. *Die Neue Sächlichkeit und Neue Romantik*). We could go on citing similar examples, but it is sufficient here to mention that the latter kind of contribution unfortunately predominates. [2] We shall return later to examining them in detail. Meanwhile we should like merely to mention that this way of doing things reminds us very forcibly of the tactics of Henri Poulaille. But Monsieur Poulaille's unprincipled methods are merely his way of carrying out the social fascist aims, towards which he consciously works on behalf of his bourgeois friends under the immediate guidance of Monsieur Valois,

[1] It is worth noting that considerable liberties are taken in translating. For instance on page 131 in the translation of episode V, the passing of Voroshilov's troops is transferred from the part entitled "Revolution" to page 136, and in the translation of the episodes from the Second Cycle the seventh episode becomes quite arbitrarily joined onto the fifth, while the sixth episode is omitted altogether.

[2] Is it not significant in this connection that the first pages of No. 1., where one would expect to find a statement of the views of the editors on the most important questions of principle, are filled with extracts from the novel by Erik Reger *Bei Kilometer 208; Naturgeschichte einer Brückmontage*? Erik Reger's name is known well enough by our German comrades. He is a bourgeois journalist on the staff of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* who came out in 1929 with an attack on the young proletarian literature of Germany (see an article by Antonia Gantner in *Linkskurve* No. 2. Sept. 1929 pp. 20—24, where a criticism of E. Reger's novel is also given). The extract in *Front* shows Reger to be a typical *Hampist* who deals with the harmony of the capitalist system of production, and is therefore an ally of capitalism.

the one time agent of the *duce*, Mussolini and now one of the possible candidates for the position of the French *duce*. Monsieur Valois' mission is to gloss over the deepening social contradictions in life and literature, to declare that the hostile elements of the present capitalist order are reconcilable, to throw dust in the eyes of the petty bourgeois masses and to dupe them by means of illusions as to the permanence and impregnability of French *prosperité*, thus keeping them in the service of the financial and industrial oligarchy of the capitalists. The great advantages which have accrued to French imperialism as a result of her having been able to rob the German toiling masses systematically for twelve years, and the resulting comparatively slow rate of development of the economic crisis in France, together with the backwardness of the proletarian and revolutionary cultural movement all gave Monsieur Poulaille a temporary success amongst certain sections of his petty bourgeois readers, a success the ephemeral nature of which is becoming more evident as the inexorable facts of economics prove how unfounded were the legends about the impregnability of French *prosperité*. But by now the true class function of Monsieur Poulaille is clear to all the truly advanced revolutionary elements in French literature, to say nothing of the communist vanguard of the French proletariat. In his polemic with Susanne Engelson on the question of the nature and function of proletarian literature, the editor of the *Nouvel Age* finally threw away his mask.

Just consider, publishers and editors of *Front*, with whom you are associating in carrying on your work as you do, consider for what kind of fishermen you are stirring up mud to becloud the water of politico-literary life. You may perhaps answer that your great faith in the justice of the revolutionary cause and in the inevitability of its final triumph justifies you in giving an "objective" picture of the struggle between the different sides without taking any part in the fight, confident as you are that you have only to wait and that from the clash of opinions truth will out.

We, in our turn, are ready — provisionally — to welcome this confidence of yours, but at the same time we must say, quite *a priori*, that your method of defending your convictions betrays the falsest and most noxious of petty-bourgeois illusions, in the cultivation of which men like Poincaré, Briand, Valois and their servant Poulaille are very closely interested. That this is the case is proved by age old revolutionary experience.

During the last years we have seen how Henri Barbusse, a true and honest revolutionary, has become a victim of these illusions as a result of not having been able to free himself from the last traces of bourgeois prejudice in politics and art. It is just under this banner of a so-called objectivism that is above class that comrade Barbusse tries to edit his review, *Monde*. And what of it? Comrade Barbusse is not Monsieur Poulaille! They stand on different sides of the barricades. Monsieur Poulaille is an agent of the bourgeoisie. Comrade Barbusse is a front line fighter in the great army of the proletarian revolution. But thanks to the illusions to which comrade Barbusse has become a victim, *Monde*, which might have become one of the most powerful weapons in the hands of the broad masses of France has actually fallen prey to the marauding bands of bourgeois and social fascist scribblers, including in their ranks renegades of every colour imaginable from Trotsky to petty swindlers like Istrati, bands which are in many cases made up of the same people as the literary crew of Messrs Valois and Poulaille. The conduct of *Monde*

and its editor has done serious harm to the international proletariat, and in spite of its recognition of the valuable revolutionary services of comrade Barbusse, the International Union of Revolutionary Writers, when all milder and more friendly methods of persuasion had failed, was obliged to condemn in the strongest terms the political line followed by *Monde*. The Kharkov conference confirmed this criticism in a special resolution.

Bearing all this in mind, we must from the very beginning warn you that the way you have chosen to conduct your magazine sets you on the fatal path chosen by *Monde*, a path that can only lead eventually to your virtually upholding all that is hostile to the proletariat in the literary and cultural life of the present day. Particularly disturbing are the only official words of the editors that have appeared for the whole time that the periodical has been published. They have been left till page 391, the last page but one of the fourth number. Here they are:

> If a publishing-house were interested in financing *Front* we would be able to make it a radical proletarian magazine. The first four issues have provided a field of operations for many literary forces; henceforth we will only concern ourselves with literature as an art when it arms the workers against the bourgeoisie.
>
> The editors (Abril, Ikeda, Macleod, Prins).

How is all this to be understood? What for instance is the meaning of the first half of this exceedingly short editorial announcement? Are we to understand it as a formulation of the conditions for turning *Front* into a "radical proletarian magazine." If so the condition given seems to us, to say the least of it, extremely strange. We have known cases when the financial problem has become a matter of life or death for an already existing proletarian organ. This was the case, for example, some years ago with *L'Humanité* and such difficulties are inevitable in the life of the proletarian press, while it is struggling under bourgeois rule. However no cases have ever been known to us where the fact that the funds were forthcoming made it immediately possible, without making any changes in the editorial or publishing staff, to preserve a proletarian policy or where formerly it had not been such, to turn the paper in question into a proletarian organ. And if you think that all that is necessary to turn *Front* into a proletarian channel is to obtain sufficient funds, it only shows once again how little you understand the International Union's formulation of the fundamental tasks which at the present moment revolutionary and proletarian literature has before it.

What the International Union is always emphasizing is that *cadres* of revolutionary literary organizations can only be forged in the relentless revolutionary struggle, in the everyday life of all working people against capitalism, against the war menace, against intervention in the Soviet Union, against fascism and social fascism. But for you this problem has been reduced to a mere matter of cash. Does it not show that in your case petty bourgeois prejudices take not only a sentimental quixotic form, which of itself is far from harmless (e. g. the "objectivity" that is "above class"), but also what one might call their directly commercial forms? And what publisher have you particularly in mind? You don't say anything about that. And are you really not aware of the fact that in a class society a publishing firm is not merely a cash desk *plus* the apparatus for producing and circulating printed matter, but that it is from first to last a whole system of thought, a whole political outlook, guardian of definite class interests. If it interested Monsieur Valois, for instance, to finance *Front* what would be your attitude to his offer to do so?

You even write that the four most important numbers of *Front* "have provided a field of operations for many literary forces," and that you are going to concern yourselves in the future with literature as an art when it arms the workers against the bourgeoisie. Is the first proposition an admission of previous lack of principle in editing the magazine? If so, then this is an extremely vague and cowardly admission.

A propos — there is another rather peculiar circumstance. In the English text the admission of lack of principle is hardly brought out (in fact "provided a field" might be looked upon even as approval), while in the German it is made very much more clear: — *sind mehrere Literaturströmungen zusammengeflossen* (several literary currents have flowed together). Then in the French text the statement is left out altogether and the announcement starts off with the words: — *Désormais nous ne nous occuperons...* (henceforth we shall not concern ourselves). What is to be made of this? A translator's or editorial error? Or perhaps the different texts have been consciously modified to suit the special conditions in the countries in question. Do not let the publishers and editors of *Front* take offence at such plain speaking. The second proposition contains an excellent intention, but it is unfortunately expressed so tersely that it is almost impossible to disencypher it. What is more, it is extremely onesided: "literature and art" disarming the workers, that is to say bourgeois, reactionary, fascist, social-fascist literature should be studied by proletarian and revolutionary writers so that they may be able to show it up and carry on a relentless fight against its influence. But let us assume for the moment that this "admission," this "intention" is a more or less adequate expression of the line at present taken up by *Front*. In that case your first duty was to give an impartial criticism of the line followed by the first four numbers, and to make a full and clear confession of the harm done by your magazine, in view of its wide circulation and influence, to the cause of the revolutionary liberation of the working class. But you did not do this. We shall do it for you, in the first place because we wish to do everything that lies in our power to bring you onto the right path (if that is possible) and in the second place in order to help others to avoid similar errors. To a certain extent we have done this already since we have outlined the general principles (or rather lack of principle) of the political editorship of *Front*. Let us consider now a number of more concrete aspects of the political and literary theory underlying the contents of your magazine.

In the first place we ask again: what has *Front* done towards carrying out the minimum obligation agreed upon by the International Union of Revolutionary Writers at its Kharkov conference. Let us recall what this minimum consists of:

> The International Union of Revolutionary Writers resting on their minimum program as formulated at the first Conference of Revolutionary Writers in November, 1927 (1. The struggle against imperialist wars, 2. The struggle against fascism and the white terror), must extend this program in accordance with the present situation. Members of all sections are obliged to contribute actively to the revolutionary movement of the proletariat in their respective countries, to wage war not only against fascism but also against social fascism, to support the struggle of the oppressed colonial peoples with all the means at their disposal, to struggle in the most active way for the defence of the USSR.

(From the resolution on political and creative questions; see *Literature of the World Revolution*, 1931, Special Number containing reports of the Kharkov conference p. 92.)

On what basis did the International Union draw up this political minimum? It drew it up on the basis of the great changes that are taking place in the international situation, of the special characteristics of the third period in the growth of post war capitalism, on the basis of the tremendous and growing crisis through which world capitalism is passing, on the one hand, and the triumphant constructive work of the Soviet Union which has entered upon the period of socialism, on the other. It drew it up on the basis of the new wave of revolution in the countries of the capitalist west and the colonial east on the one hand, and of the growth of the fascist menace and the rapid process of *fascization* of the parties belonging to the Second International, on the other. It drew it up on the basis of the ever increasing menace of new imperialist wars, particularly of war against the Soviet Union, on the basis, finally, of the process whereby one section of the great masses of the petty bourgeoisie who are being driven hither and thither by hunger, necessity and ruin are joining the ranks of the revolutionary proletariat, while the other section are going over to the fascists.

Under these conditions the International Union, as a genuinely revolutionary organization, could not neglect to draw up its minimum demands.

The crisis like a mighty hurricane is driving the petty bourgeois masses, who have lost the support which once they had up onto the proletarian shores. This too is finding its reflection in literature. It is part of the work of the proletarian revolutionary organization to rally together, to educate, to spur on to active opposition to capitalism these fellow-travellers and allies, some of whom may even turn out to be real soldiers of communism. This can be done, however, only if the revolutionary struggle is made part of their day to day work. It should be clear to everyone taking part in this struggle what tasks are implied by it, and what fundamental demands it makes upon them. Such is the purpose of the political minimum of the International Union.

It would be foolish to expect the rise in the numbers of fellow-travellers and allies to be continuous and constant. As a result of innumerable factors that enter into the development of the class struggle, there is an inevitable ebb and flow and there are bound to be cases of wavering and desertion. Such is the social nature of the petty bourgeois class. But a tremendous lot depends here on whether the right guidance is given by the proletarian revolutionary organization. By stating definite political tasks clearly and unambiguously, by seeing that they are duly carried out, by giving a consistent criticism of all doubts and uncertainties, half heartedness and lack of courage, by pointing out the right direction for organization, the number and amplitude of deviations from the true revolutionary path ought to be considerably reduced, and the tasks lightened of sorting out the more decidedly revolutionary elements from the unstable and hesitating, and helping the latter as easily as possible to get over their doubts and uncertainties.

Nobody can deny that with every wave of new recruits to the ranks of the fellow-travellers there is always a sediment made up of all kinds of socio-politically undesirable elements. The fascist and social fascist agents of capital try to speculate on the growing popularity among the broad masses of the revolutionary and proletarian attitude to literature, trying to make for themselves a comfortable nest in revolutionary organizations "in case of emergencies," and again there are literary

carreerists, businessmen, who when business is bad try to warm their hands at the fire of the popular slogans. All this varied brood can only be looked upon by the IURW as the worst enemies of the working class and socialism. There is only one policy to be followed with these people. They must be shown up and expelled from our ranks. Here again the IURW minimum provides a means of keeping a continuous check on its members and keeping the movement clear of undesirable elements. That is the third purpose of the IURW minimum. In all these points a partial if not a full analogy can be drawn with the famous 21 conditions of the Comintern which have played a rôle of such tremendous historical importance in bringing together and consolidating all those forces which are genuinely on the side of world communism.

What then is the impression that we get if we examine the political publicity section of your magazine, bearing the above three points in mind. As we have before mentioned, you, the editors have never printed a word as to your attitude to the IURW minimum. We may even add that not one of the 4 numbers of *Front* contains an article written on a socio-political subject, nor is there any attempt to discuss the questions raised by the IURW. It would seem that for the gentlemen who have written most of the articles such questions do not even exist. Instead they put questions of their own to which they give their own answers, the kind of questions and the kind of answers that we have always replied to and always shall reply to with a straight blow from the proletarian ideological elbow.

Take for instance Philippe Lamour whom we have already mentioned in passing. His essay *Au dela des mots* (No. 1. pp. 92—94) is nothing but a scurrilous attempt to compare bolshevism to fascism, to put Lenin and Mussolini, Stalin and Hitler in the same category.

Monsieur Lamour's "conception" is not a very complicated one. What is worrying him is the fate of the "old European democracies" (that is to say before anything else his own native French capitalism). These democracies are falling into decay, being incapable of adapting themselves to the changed conditions, and Lamour puts the alternative: — either these democracies must become rejuvenated or they must fall a prey to more powerful opponents. Thus we see that Monsieur Lamour shows himself in favour of increasing the power of Europe (that is to say of French capitalism) as a world competitor. Who now are these younger and more powerful competitors? Lamour answers: Russian bolshevism in the East, Italian fascism in the West, Hitlers national fascism (Lamour calls it *racisme)* in Central Europe. Is there any difference between them? Fundamentally there is no difference at all, Lamour answers.

> All over oppressed Europe, in the midst of its individualist institutions which are unsuited to the collective life resulting from the industrial revolution, youthful forces are rising up, apparently contradictory, but nevertheless born of the same needs and making for the same ends. Their accidental differences are due to individual circumstances and to climate. Bolshevism, fascism, *racisme* are at bottom three aspects of the same reaction to the satisfied volition of the elite, who are tired and spent after fulfilling their role in history.
>
> These movements seek, with varying success, the modern state based on collective economy. Later on when time has smoothed out their differences, people will feel their common spirit showing itself in their joyful vigour of youth, in their revolt against sluggish mediocrity. They are already uniting in actual fact. Italy has been the first to renew diplomatic relations with the USSR and is supplying it with aeroplanes. She is receiving its military missions. A Russian fleet is in her waters. (P. 93.)

After that Lamour begins with a hoarse voice to make dark prophecies:

> If a conflict were to break out to-morrow in Europe the old democracies would find themselves faced by a federation of young revolutionary States, which in spite of their apparent differences are nevertheless united by a common sentiment, a common hatred of individualistic capitalism.

Lamour ends up with the following call to action: "One must become rejuvenated, see clearly or die" (p. 94.).

The game that Lamour is playing does not require any long explanations. After frightening the "old democracies" with the possibility of a "federation of young States" he calls upon the first to resort as quickly as possible to the methods of open fascist dictatorship. His talk about rejuvenation is only a concealed way of referring to fascism, and something else lies behind this concealment, namely a call to a war of intervention against the USSR, for it is the USSR that is to head the "young" against the "old." Finally in comparing Lenin to Mussolini, Lamour tries to show the broad petty bourgeois masses whom the crisis is diverting into the revolutionary movement and who have not yet been granted the delights of an open fascist regime, that the so-called bolshevist paradise and the fascist hell (or vice versa, whichever you like best) are in practice as like as two peas.

We do not know who this Lamour is or of what political party he is officially a member. Nor do we need to know, for his article in the first number of *Front* immediately stamps him as an agent of Poincaré. If it ever turns out that Lamour is a member or has been a member of the French general staff we shall not be in the least surprised. Still less will it surprise us if we learn that Lamour is a member of the Socialist Party of France, that is to say of Boncours' and Grumbach's party. We have not quoted Lamour so fully, in order to give his obscure and scurrilous game publicity, but merely because we wished to disclose a tendency which, as we shall shortly see, does not appear in this case merely by chance on the pages of *Front*, and which one may assume is fairly widespread beyond the limits of this publication.

Let us now turn to the article by V. V. Calverton: "The Literary Artist in a Mass Civilization", which is provided with the most imposing subheading: "An Analysis and a Prophecy" (No. 1, pp. 12—21). It is worth noting that in certain primarily bougeois circles of the United States, Calverton is well known as almost the leader of the Marxist school in American literary criticism. We shall not go fully into this question now. Our business at the moment is to discuss the actual works of the respected editor of the *Modern Quarterly*. In Calverton's article which is written as though on a literary subject, we are chiefly interested in what is really its political side and especially in those places where the ideas which inspire Lamour's article also make their appearance. It is true that Calverton's ideas are somewhat toned down but this does not prevent them from being the same ideas at root. Calverton's "conception" is also quite simple. Up till the 19th century individualistic forms of economy prevailed. That was what gave rise to the democratic superstructure, to the political system, individualistic *Weltanschauung etc.* The end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th brought with it the rule of "mass production," and the mass civilization corresponding to it. (This is a conception which the "Marxist" Calverton substitutes for the imperialist phase of capitalism and the epoch of imperialist wars and proletarian revolutions.) If any one

can show us that there is any more Marxism in this conception than there is in the political views of Herbert Hoover, we are willing to give Calverton a nook in the international pantheon of Marxist thought.

However, the point is in the political logic of this conception. Caverton deduces from the "law of mass production" both bolshevism and fascism. Calverton holds the essential characteristic of each of these to be dictatorial control, founded on this all embracing law of mass production. Calverton writes:

"democracy cannot function in the modern State... dictatorial controls whether they be bourgeois or proletarian, are inevitable in the present stage of society. The very law of mass production necessitates such control."

(p. 20, italics are ours.) On page 9 speaking of dictatorial control over publishing, Calverton remarks: — "In dictatorships, the group controls, as we have seen, are decisive. *In Italy the controls are no less effective than in Soviet Russia.*" (Italics are ours.) Now we see quite clearly what Calverton's point of view is.

Let us try to sum up. Calverton holds: — 1) That the same idea underlies the proletarian and fascist dictatorships. 2) That the essence of each is their dictatorial character and the fact that they are diametrically opposed to individualistic democracy. 3) That their class nature is a matter of secondary importance ("whether... or") making no difference to their practical function (i. e that of exercising control over mass production) and finally: 4) That "normal" bourgeois democracy is not a special form of bourgeois dictatorship but is "pure democracy."

We have before us the finished system of thought of modern social fascism. We have a "scientifically" revised edition of Monsieur Lamour's theory. It is just from this point of view that international social fascism carries on its fierce vilification of the Soviet Union and the world communist movement, it is on such pretexts as these that it builds up its intervention propaganda and helps its "national" governments to pursue in practice a fascist policy of open coercion and pillage of the working people. The fact that in the case in question Messrs Lamour and Calverton are so good as to admit the almost historical necessity of some kind of dictatorship does not alter things in the least. That is merely camouflage, it is the inevitable hypocricy of a class enemy. What is important is the point of view from which they start, their fundamental conception of how the forces that are in conflict stand to oneanother.

We see now to what extent the line taken by *Front* with regard to the basic questions of the international class war approximates to the minimum set by the IURW. We see that in practice it falls into line with the social fascists in their defence of fascism.

From this we must make still further conclusions. It is quite evident that at a time when the masses are moving more and more towards the left and when their sympathy with the Soviet Union is growing, it becomes necessary for the bourgeois agents to make more frequent attempts to hide the fundamental incompatability between bolshevism and fascism, the two extremes in the class war at the present day. It would be foolish to think that the class enemies of communism are not trying to turn to their own use the movement of the masses which is at present directed against them. Their attempts are the more dangerous, the more insiduously they are prepared and the more artfully they are hidden behind a smoke screen of hypocritical sympathy with the "young" and "strong" (etc., etc.) powers. These manoeuvres of the bourgeoisie are

found in their most carefully worked out forms, as is often the case, in the "higher" fields of thought, in literature, art and philosophy. The example of *Front* strikingly confirms our contention.

This makes it necessary for all sections and individual members of the International Union to be on their guard. A vigorous resistance must be put against these new manoeuvres of our enemies. What is particularly required is an untiring campaign for enlightening the masses by means of literary works, theoretical researches, leading articles and literary criticisms, showing them 1) that bolshevism and fascism on account of the different class basis of each are irreconcilably hostile to one another; 2) that fascism is not in the least hostile to, not in the least opposed to, not in the least exclusive of modern bourgeois democracy; 3) that both under a bourgeois democratic and under a fascist regime the class content is bourgeois; 4) that bourgeois democracy and fascism are only special historical forms of the bourgeois dictatorship, that they are closely bound up with one another and that one easily passes over into the other, fascism being the form that the dictatorship takes during the period of imperialist wars and proletarian revolutions; and that finally, 5) anyone who tries to gloss over or to fog the real issue is either an open enemy of the proletariat or an unconscious tool in the hands of the fascist counter-revolutionaries, and in both cases he is virtually standing up for the social-fascists in their preparation of a war of intervention against the Soviet Union.

The idea of the identity or even of the similarity of bolshevism and fascism is one of the corner stones of the theoretical foundations of intervention. This must be emphasized with the greatest force.

Now that we have touched upon these glaring examples in the first number of *Front* we could pass on to a review of the political sections of the following numbers, only that we cannot pass over without comment the article by a certain Caspar Hardy entitled *Zwei Generationen* (pp. 94—95) which comes immediately after the article by Lamour. One is the complement of the other. Caspar Hardy sees all the evils of the times as due to a lack of mutual understanding between the generations: the old people have ceased to understand the needs of the young and the young have forgotten how to revere age. For Caspar Hardy the question of the day is how to get rid of these unfortunate misunderstandings.

A hundred years ago Heinrich Heine very properly thought fit to put this sort of wisdom, not into the mouth of human beings but into the mouth of asses. However this century old provincial stupidity is not without a certain interest to-day. It is surrounded with an invisible but quite perceptible nimbus of nationalist propaganda. How otherwise are we to understand Herr Hardy. Do there not exist single nations with their own interests and aims, and do not conflicts between the different generations hinder the normal working of this single national unit? A reconciliation is what is wanted, Caspar Hardy tells us. *Was drüber ist* (What is over there) — i. e. capitalism, class conflict, revolution — *ist von Übel*, (is evil). It is thus that Herr Hardy carries on his propaganda, and it is to be expected that sooner or later he will be shaken by the hand for it by Adolf Hitler.

In No. 2 we shall deal first of all with Ezra Pound's "Open Letter to S. Tretiakov, Kolhoznik" (pp. 124—126) which is something in the nature of an answer to S. Tretiakov's sketch in the first number on the collective farms of the Northern Caucasus, and the cultural

work that certain Soviet writers, including comrade Tretiakov himself, have been doing there.

You seem to have a particularly pious respect for Ezra Pound. You devoted a whole page in the first number to his cheap paradoxes (see Ezra Pound "Credo" No. 1 p. 11) which make it quite evident with what oily bourgeois selfsatisfaction he pours contumely on all that the oppressed masses of working humanity are striving for amid such toil and pain. This is the only writer to whom you thought it worth devoting a special critical article (see Louis Zukofsky, "Ezra Pound's XXX Cantos," No. 4, pp. 364—367). We may be mistaken but as far as we can see this Ezra Pound shows himself in his work to be merely a more or less honest disciple of Robert Browning and is at the same time an esthete who is not only perfectly satisfied with himself but also with the established order of things on five sixths of the earth's surface.

In his answer to comrade Tretiakov he confirms this view, starting off almost immediately with the assertion that in his opinion, "there is a great deal of doubt as to whether anything like the Russian revolution is possible, advisable or necessary for either the USA or of Western Europe" (p. 124). This is probably a misprint for "for Western Europe" but that is, of course, a personal matter for Mr Ezra Pound himself. We may add, however, that the history of the class struggle has this somewhat uncomfortable property that it has never taken any notice of the opinions of wise men of Mr Pound's type. Further Ezra Pound makes fun of Tretiakov's idea that every advanced writer must take part in the great socialist reconstruction of society which is taking place all over the Soviet Union.

It is not necessary to quote all that Mr Pound says on this subject. His stupidity is unbounded. We shall say merely that Ezra Pound shares the hundred per cent bourgeois view of the present position of capitalism and in particular that of the United States. For Pound the crisis and unemployment do not exist, nor the poverty and starvation of millions and millions of workers and peasants. He brings forward the following, apparently as an argument against introducing the "Russian" methods into American agriculture:

> You can not "introduce" a village tractor in a community where each farmer has a tractor of his own. (P. 126.)

In answer we should like to inform the respected author that there is nothing to distinguish him in the case in question from any hack writer of the bourgeois press, such as daily seek to conceal the real condition of the millions of farmers who are condemned to ruin, starvation and finally extinction, and whose ruin has already been begun by the policies of high finance, the enormous debts with which they are burdened and the low prices of corn on the world market. Like these writers, Ezra Pound is wholeheartedly in favour of preserving the present state of affairs in the USA. He merely asserts that "the American people are too hog lazy" (this refers to almost 10 million unemployed) "and too unfathomly ignorant to *use* (the italics are the authors) *the mechanism they have inherited to better economic and intellectual advantage"* (Our italics.) At the same time Pound holds that the mechanism of Wall Street and its executive in the White House can and must make for the well-being of the American people!

How could you let the statements of such a shameless supporter of bourgeois ideology pass without comment?

It is true that you asked Comrade Tretiakov to write an answer for No. 3, but to begin with, this answer did not appear even in No. 4. and besides you ought yourselves to have printed in the same number, without waiting for an answer from Tretiakov, a critical account of what you think of the article. Or did you want here also to keep out of the discussion. But if so, this is just an example of the unprincipled position you keep up which we have already referred to. So far the only person who has got anything out of this is Ezra Pound.

You allowed yourself to publish without any introduction an article by a certain Martin Beheim-Schwarzbach — *Spengler und wir* (No. 2, pp. 181—183). This Herr Beheim who seems also to be troubled about what is to be the fate of Europe and civilization, tries to revive and re-establish the already long forgotten (and justly so) theory of Oswald Spengler. This is the conclusion that Herr Beheim comes to: — "Oswald Spengler was so horribly right about the last century or one may safely say about the last six to eight centuries, that we cannot evade making our attitude towards him quite clear, without any Vogel Strauss Politik. *There can no longer be any doubt that he was right.*" (PP. 183, our italics.)

Thus it is not Lenin or Stalin who has made a correct analysis of modern civilization (that is to say capitalist society), nor any of the advanced revolutionary workers of the world, but it is Oswald Spengler, the royal Prussian obscurantist, who has sung the praises of the Prussian dynasty and contended that the Hohenzollern monarchy and the iron fist of German imperialism are the very symbols of true socialism. So in everythings Spengler is right, Spengler the ideological ally of Gugenberg and Hitler! And after publishing this monstrous drivel you are able to write that all you need is sufficient funds in order to turn *Front* into a "radical proletarian magazine."

No improvement in the direction of clearing up and strengthening the political position of *Front* is observable in the third number. On the contrary the polemic of a certain Erich Reinhardt (who one must mention has since been appointed as one of the European editors) against the catholic church... *Offener Brief an Pater Muckermann* (pp. 239—247) is at bottom an example of the social-reformist treatment of the subject. It is true that Erich Reinhardt declares himself to be a non-believer and gives his approval of the Soviet policy towards the church, but this does not prevent him from taking up a typically social-democratic, that is to say social-fascist position.

In the first place he does not say a word about the exploiting function of every church and every religion, nor about its indissoluble organisational connection with the whole system of bourgeois dictatorship. For Reinhardt "the Catholic Church as a power is on a level with the state" (p. 240). He reproaches the Catholic Church (and why merely the Catholic Church? Surely not because he sees in the evangelical church, let us say, a lesser evil?) with insisting on its independence of the government and at the same time trying to appropriate some of its most important functions. Thus, the writer of this "Open Letter" is virtually standing in defence of the authority of the bourgeois State, in this case of the government of such contemptible creatures as Otto Braun and Severing.

In the second place Reinhardt tries to separate the church from religion "*I take the point of view that Religion and the church are two different things.*" (P. 240, italics are ours.) By this means he saves

himself from having to fight against religious views of the world in general.

In the third place he is guilty of concealing the true class function of the church during the imperialist war of 1914—1918. He does not think it necessary to show how the army of God's servants on every front without exception drove millions of workers and peasants to a certain death in the name of the God of big banks. The only thing he had to say against the pope and his accomplices (and again why only the catholics?) was that in carrying out their priestly duties "the Lord's servants" did not take properly into account how tired and nerve shattered the soldier masses were. This comes to the same thing as recommending Father Muckerman to follow a more prudent course in the event of another imperialist war, against which Erich Reinhardt apparently has no objections.

In the fourth place Reinhardt shows amazing adroitness and condescension when the question turns on the policy towards the church of Braun and Severing. "For some incomprehensible reason the Prussian government signed a concordat with the Vatican" (p. 242). To Reinhardt, the social-fascist trying to conceal himself behind left-wing phrases, this policy is incomprehensible, but it is not incomprehensible to us who know that the signing of such a concordat by the Braun — Severing government answers in every way to its class aims, making it easier for them to shoot down revolutionary workers, persecute the communist party, and draw up extraordinary decrees to bring in a fascist dictatorship.

After all this can you assert that your magazine — in conformity with the IURW minimum — is fighting against social-fascism?

In No. 4 we find an article by Xavier Abril (since appointed editor for South America) in memory of the Peruvian writer and theorist Jose Carlos Mariategui (pp. 298—299 article under this heading) who died in 1930. Abril presents Marietegui in this article as almost the Spanish-American equivalent of Marx or Lenin, and at the same time Abril tells us that Mariategui showed in his works, "a thorough grasp of the fulminating application of dialectics as shown by Lenin" (299) and "was a promoter of the iron line of Lenin" (299). We are not familiar with the original works of Mariategui mentioned by Abril though we are ready to treat his memory with respect; it may be that he was a sincere and hard-working revolutionary. But the extract from *Amauta*, June-July, 1930 (posthumous article by Mariategui "Man and Myth" No. 4 pp. 300—304) leads us to suppose that either Abril was rather too hasty in describing him as an author who was "a promoter of the iron line of Lenin" or he himself has a very remote conception of what the "iron line" is. The whole tenor of the articles shows that for their author the socialist revolution is more than anything else a religious idea, a myth, in which mankind must believe. Here are one or two of his formulae:

> The proletariat believes in a myth: — the social revolution. The strength of the revolutionaries is not in their science; it is in their faith, in their passion and in their will. It is a religious force, mystical and of the spirit. It is the power of the Myth... the revolutionary emotion is a religious emotion. The religious, mystic and metaphysic nature of socialism was established some time ago. (P. 303).

This point of view not only has nothing in common with the teaching of Marx and Lenin about revolution, but it is definitely hostile to it. Lenin fought relentlessly against any tendency, whatever its origin and in whatever clothing it was concealed, to obscure proletarian socialism

with the least trace of religion. He rightly looked upon any such attempts as a bourgeois perversion and degradation of socialism, as part of the clergy's scheme to hoodwink the masses and to head them off, before they have found out that there are two sorts of socialism, the true proletarian sort — and the journalistic, religious, reformist falsification of socialism. And is it not clear that there is definite agreement between Abril's article and that of Mariategui on the one hand and that of Reinhardt on the other.

A special resumé of the characteristics of the political and publicist section of your magazine seems hardly necessary. We shall just say one thing. You did not wish to show your true political position but the great ugly spots of *Poulaillisme* which are scattered over your pages immediately betray you to the impartial reader.

And are things any better with your literary criticism and the information you give about cultural life? Are you carrying on, as the IURW requires, a campaign against imperialist, fascist and social fascist literature? Are you showing up the literature of open preparation for war and intervention, and also pacifist literature which deceives and scares the masses, against *Remarquism* in all its forms? To all these questions we get from the first four volumes of *Front* an almost invariably negative answer. Only about two articles in ten can be looked upon as in any way satisfactory. We have already referred to them: the article by Potamkin on the bourgeois film ("The death of the Bourgeois Film" No. 3, pp. 284—288) and the letter by Masaki Ikida on Japanese literature (No. 4, pp. 293—297). None of the others will stand criticism.

We have already mentioned the articles by Gino Saviotti and Adolf Scheer and think it unnecessary to consider them in any more detail. We might merely add that both of these would do honour to Monsieur Poulaille's *Nouvel Age* or any other bourgeois paper. The only practical effect they have is in a bourgeois direction as far as the true state of affairs in capitalist society and capitalist literature is concerned. All is well with the bourgeois world — that is the tenor of the kind of trash with which they supply their readers.

To this kind of writing we might very justly add the article of a certain Emilio Adolfo von Westphalen (No. 4, pp. 304—305) and Basil Bunting "Directory of Current English Authors" (No. 3, pp. 217—244). We must stop to consider the latter for a moment. The author of this article takes up an extremely militant attitude to a certain section of Anglo-Saxon literature. But this militancy has nothing in common with a revolutionary criticism of bourgeois art. Mr. Bunting carries on his polemic in a way that is typical of the yellow press and bourgeois bohemians. Mr. Bunting is not capable of more enlightened criticism than is involved in using insulting epithets.

His lack of any kind of principles is only equalled by his lack of restraint. Nevertheless with all his lack of principle a very definite tendency can be noted in him. He applies the most contemptuous and annihilating epithets to the most honest and courageous minds of modern radical bourgeois literature, to men who in spite of mistakes and confusion of thought have been able to see that in the USSR a new society is being born and to realize that the capitalist civilization must inevitably fall. Thus of Theodor Dreiser he writes: — "he is terribly dull" (p. 220) and then he adds: "let us leave these literary slums." We believe that it was to Dreiser's recent defense of the American communist

party and nothing more, that Mr. Bunting, writer of politically yellow guides to literature, was reacting. Of Bernard Shaw he writes that his "merely animal vitality has enabled him to maintain a disproportional reputation for so many years, right into his now well established dotage" (p. 220). We are quite aware of Bernard Shaw's serious shortcomings and the weakness of his philosophical standpoint, and have ourselves often criticized them, but nevertheless we will not stand by and see mud being thrown at a man who has done so much to disclose all the meanness and the stupidity of the bourgeoisie. (Incidentally amongst the characters in Shaw's comedies there are, if we are not mistaken, several Mr. Basil Buntings. Has this Mr. Bunting perhaps recognized himself in one of them?) On the other hand Mr. Bunting speaks about Rudyard Kipling the imperialist, poet of Britain's robbery of the colonies, with evident sympathy and as much respect as his customary frivolousness will allow of. We have not thought it necessary to mention that he completely ignores all the most prominent representatives of modern revolutionary literature in America (he does not mention Dos Passos or Michael Gold). In order to complete the picture we may add that Bunting's article was written for the Italian paper *L'Indice* of which Gino Saviotti is editor.

For information as to the literature of the Soviet Union you choose, out of a large quantity of material, the single article *Ende und Aufgänge* by Viacheslav Polonski (No. 3, pp. 197—209). And why this article, if not because it had been thoroughly condemned by proletarian criticism as an opportunist interpretation of the literary situation in the Soviet Union.

Finally Comrade Norman Macleod's letter to the editor about the condition of literary and cultural life in the state of New Mexico, U. S. A., a letter which ends up with the pessimistic conclusion: "In short the literary revolution seems as far away as the social, but give us another fifty years for both and something will probably materialize." (No. 1, p. 25.) Such a prophecy can only be based on a view of the complete hopelessness of the prospects of the revolutionary struggle all over the world, and in particular in the U. S. A. and can only lead to abandonment of revolutionary activities. Is not Comrade Macleod here under the influence of the well known bourgeois theory of the exceptional position of American capitalism. If so, then the sooner Comrade Macleod frees himself from these false and harmful ideas, the better. After all we have a right to expect more of him than of the other members of the *Front* editorial. In the first place from the very beginning he has occupied the position of American editor, and in the second place, and this is still more important, he is a member of the John Reed Club in Chicago. Unfortunately neither as editor nor as member of an organization of revolutionary writers which is affiliated to the IURW did Macleod rise to the occasion, nor did he succeed in forestalling as far as lay in his power those glaring political errors with which *Front* is full. It is to be hoped that the John Reed Club will point out to Macleod his errors as one of the editors of *Front*. We hope that Macleod will realize himself that this is not the way, not the way at all, to defend and further the policy of the IURW in such publications as *Front*.

About what is going on in France you have printed nothing at all unless we count, which we cannot do, a few silly judgements of George Herbiet on modern art ("*Terreur de l'an 2 mil.*". No. 2, pp. 184—187) and a few scant extracts from the preface of Tristan Rémy to the antho-

logy *Douze Poètes* (p. 327)[1] But in France was there not a particularly large quantity of material for criticism on questions of principle?

The conclusions are obvious. Your literary criticism section is in almost complete harmony with that devoted to politics and publicity. Individual exceptions do not make it necessary to alter this general statement. Objectively your function is to create a "neutral zone" wherever the tide of revolution is beginning to rise. We must warn you however that there never was an instance where such a neutral zone did not eventually turn into a counter-revolutionary entrenchment. In order to avoid this what is needed first of all is to get rid of all those who are most zealous in defence of its inviolability.

A more discriminating approach is required with regard to your prose and poetry. What strikes one here is the conflict between opposing tendencies, and the fact that what from our point of view the correct tendencies are better represented (although they by no means predominate as yet). We have already mentioned the importance of the fact that you have published translations of various Soviet writers (although we emphasised that the lack of principle in your general editorial policy considerably reduces the value of their publication). We also congratulate you on having published extracts and stories from larger works such as Ernst Rathgeber, *Der Stolz des Jungen Proletariers* (No. 1, pp. 35—41); Robert Mc. Alton, *Green grew the Grasses* (No. 2, pp. 97—107); Herman Speetovr, *Bum's Rush* (No. 3, pp. 277—281); Ben Maddow, *the Life and Death of* (No. 3, pp. 268—276); Joseph Vogel, *Birth* (No. 3, pp. 263—268); John C. Rogers, *Fall* (No. 3, pp. 281—283); Paul Peters, *Scenes from two unpublished proletarian plays* (No. 4, pp. 341 — 351); Judah L. Waten *Food! Food!* (No. 3, pp. 289—291); John Dos Passos *The man who said he was Jones* (No. 3, pp. 255—262).

Needless to say by no means all of what we have above referred to can be said to belong to proletarian literature. In many of these stories and poems only the first indications of as yet uncoordinated though none the less interesting revolutionary strivings can be noticed. In the work of many of the authors one feels that their change of outlook has been caused only as a result of their having suffered from the economic crisis. They are beginning to reflect the terrible sufferings of the broad masses of workers and small farmers and the lower strata generally, on whom the full weight of the great disaster has fallen, but for the most part they fail to express the revolutionary thought of the advanced section of the proletariat who have succeeded in recognizing through the chaos of the great crisis the forces that are at work and the direction in which they are making. These writers show in their works how the great masses have come to see that it is impossible to go on living as they are now, and that the capitalist system with all its unreason is hastening to its fall, but they are not yet conscious as is the communist advance guard, of the only lines along which the hated order of things can finally be abolished. Consequently there is often nothing more revolutionary about them than that they indulge in morbid lamentations and rebellious murmurings. But it is just here, that there is a field for active educational work

[1] For some reason or other you thought it necessary to give a resumé in the text of the anthology, the political face of which can be seen from the names of such renegades of communism and proletarian literature as H. Guilbeaux, M. Martinet and V. Serge, whose works it includes.

and revolutionary organization. It is here that we see once again the tremendous political importance of the IURW minimum. It is only by taking matters firmly and courageously in hand, by setting definite tasks and establishing a strict control to see that they are carried out that revolutionary literature can win through.

But have you done anything in this direction? Absolutely nothing. Is it not significant that out of almost dozens of extracts from fiction only one "Conspectus of a Dream" belonging to Charles Duff [1] (No. 2, pp. 161—173) is on the problem of war? And is it just such material that we want in our fight against imperialist war? Do you really think that our cause is helped by a hotch-potch of teacherous Remarquist passivism and the cynical licentiousness of people like Ehrenburg lumped together with a collection of perfectly intolerable wordtricks whose only purpose is to paint a picture of war which turns it into a harmless and even amusing diversion. "Conspectus of a Dream" is an example of just that kind of treatment of the war subject which the IURW has to fight so strongly against.

Moreover you can not say that there is a lack of genuinely revolutionary works on war. Only quite recently a very fair number of good war books have been published. You might even have translated some extracts from Adam Scharrer's book. Nothing but good could come of widening its sphere of influence. By that means you would have been doing something towards keeping the reader from the kind of bourgeois trash which together with a number of sickeningly neutral works such as your André Coyatte or Roger Vitras form the greater part of the prose section of *Front*. What for instance induced you to print the extract from the bourgeois Erik Reger which we have already mentioned? What was it you saw in the disgusting sexual rubbish of Carl Einstein (No. 1, pp. 53—61) [2] and which we should say came from a colony of half-wits if we did not know that such things are a perfectly normal product of the putrefaction of bourgeois culture. And what were your motives in putting in the short story H. O. Munsterer *Der Segen des Strandes* (No. 1, pp. 79—83) and this at a time when the masses of the people are suffering from the direst poverty. And what was it that made you include *Simplicité* by Georges Dupeyron (No. 4., pp. 312—317) describing in detail and with relish how a conscientious French official, moved by some strange and mysterious incentive (known only to Monsieur Dupeyron) went straight from the arms of his wife into the nearest brothel. Or what was it that pleased you about the Freudian paradoxical *Au rebours* in the story by Herman Kesten *Der Mörder* (No 4, pp. 334—339) or in the purely psychological nonsense "A short Story" by Syd S. Salt (No. 4, pp. 359—363) not to mention many other instances of the same sort. The list that we have already given will suffice.

As regards the extensive poetry section of *Front* we can get a pretty good idea of what it is like from the prose, only that it is if anything a little more full of bourgeois estheticism, sexualism and mystical abracadabras. We shall not give a detailed account of the matter of this section as our letter is rather long as it is, but we shall confine ourselves to saying that the poem "Lascive" by Harold Salemson (No. 2, p. 110)

[1] One of the European editors.

[2] Only a foot note can bear the title of this article *Schweisfuss klagt gegen Pfurz in trüber Nacht* The title speaks for itself. Quotations are unnecessary...

in which this gentleman [1] dwells in detail on the interesting experiences he passed through during his last act of sexual intercourse, completely harmonizes with the general tone of *Front*. We might also mention the information given in the verses of E. A. Von Westphalen as to his having married... his own pencil ("Magic World", No. 1, pp. 76—77). We do not bring up these points from any motives of prudery, but because the history of the class war in literature and especially in the literature of the Soviet Union shows us that sexualism has always appeared as a part of the bourgeois contention that revolution and class struggle are powerless to alter the fundamental nature of human beings, and by human nature is always understood the unbridled anarchical play of the instincts, that is to say bourgeois human nature is taken as representing human nature in general. We always have fought and always shall fight against this insidous counter-revolutionary idea and will tear the mask from any Tartuffes, who like Molière's Tartuffe nearly always turn out to be secret upholders of sexual anarchy.

In the same line of sexual mysticism, estheticism, resignation, exoticism, that is to say in the line of drugging the fighters in the class struggle, are the poems of H. O. Münsterer, Edouard Roditi, Paul Bowles, Richard Johns, Sherry Mangan, Dudley Fitts, Ezra Pound, Augustus Tiberius, Xavier Abril and others.

A number of revolutionary poems by Norman Macleod, Joseph Kalar, and Shigeru Tagi hardly change the general picture. And not only that. The bourgeois influence can be noted even here. This is particularly true of Macleod. The majority of the poems written by him (and he inserted a great number) have very little to do with revolution and have every appearance of being written according to modern bourgeois models. Hence the "Nature," "resignation," "philosophical relativity," and "poetry" motives. Does he himself realize how dangerous his position is? Your magazine will undoubtedly be much better able to examine in detail the mistakes of comrade Macleod as a poet [2].

It is now time to give a resumé of our conclusions. We must give a definite answer to the question. What class rôle has Front actually played in the four numbers that have appeared to date. We shall give a clear answer to the question so as to help, as far as that is still possible, to put matters right. The rôle that *Front* has played has been that of a neutral zone, a "neutral" sump where the advancing waves of revolution given impetus by the daily more embittered class conflict, in life and in literature are caught and brought to rest. Where these waves have broken you have led them off into small channels from whence they eventually sink, their whole force spent, into the bourgeois sump. You try to place Maiakovski and Vishnevski, objectively, beside Ezra Pound and Carl Einstein, but in actual fact you succeed in giving them *diluted* with these writers. Who gains from this, if not Monsieur Poulaille and Monsieur Valois. These are some of the newest of social-fascist tactics. They do not always dare to advance straight against the raging torrent of revolution which can be checked by no ordinances or decrees, and so they turn to preparing the land for it and creating a

[1] A propos he recently published in the American *Left* (No. 1, 1931) an article "French Letters! Left Face!" in which he takes under his wing renegades and social fascists of every kind even including Istrati and Hamar.

[2] We give as an example the poem "Motion of years" (No. 1., pp. 22, 72) "Turmoil of Maladjustment".

system of neutral zones for use when a suitable moment comes for renewing their open counter-revolutionary offensive. Remember that in continuing along your present line you risk becoming one of the surest supports of *Poulaillisme*. Is it possible to prevent this happening? Certainly it is possible. What is necessary in order to do so? This is what is necessary.

1) Make it quite clear and definite by a bold declaration on the pages of *Front* on which side you stand and with whom and for what you are fighting. Make this declaration both in *Front* and in other papers, starting with the organ of the IURW.

2) Publish in *Front* the more important documents of the Kharkov conference, announcing your whole hearted agreement with them.

3) Renounce the policy giving rise to all the concrete errors in the first four numbers and publish a detailed criticism of them. In the latter work, the IURW will be very pleased to help.

4) Immediately start publishing articles and literary material answering to the demands of the IURW minimum and in doing so do not be afraid of reprinting on a large scale, for it is very much better to widen the circle of revolutionary works which have already frequently been published than, under the influence of the bourgeois journalistic ethics of printing only what has not yet been published (and as often as not what is not worth publishing), to bring the "original" bourgeois trash of some Carl Einstein to the light of day.

5) Refuse the services of such people as Lamour, Beheim Schwarzbach, Reinhardt, Basil Bunting and other understudies of the social-fascists, careerists and imposters, who can only turn a publication like yours into an agent of literary stock-exchange of Monsieur Valois.

If you show yourselves ready and able to take these very simple measures, the IURW will give you every assistance. It has already done you a service in printing this letter in its leading organ.

Otto Bicha

A SOLDIER AND A MINER

To begin with, Ludwig Renn is on no account to be identified with corporal Degenkolb, the hero of his first novel *War*. Degenkolb was one only of the drab unthinking rank and file of the imperialist armies who "did their bit" in the "Great War" without knowing why they should nor for what ends.

Himself an officer, Renn came of aristocratic stock. He had but the vaguest notions of the working class: what he did know of it was obtained at second hand and at the distance from the workers his place as one of the upper classes entitled him to. And yet in the upshot he came to be one of the marchers in the ranks of the working class. At first he sheltered behind the peasant's stolid stoicism, the unthinking indifference of the soldier drilled and browbeaten into unquestionary obedience on the barrack-square, a man who had repudiated his own past and all its prejudices and for ever spurned the traditional values of idealism.

Slowly, haltingly, he gradually blazed a path for himself through the rank undergrowth of lies, slanders, and pre-conceived ideas that were once his own as part of his former bourgeois culture. In the end, however, he did break for good with the class whence he sprang once he had grasped the true nature of the relationships of society. He became a communist. His *War* had already seen the light before this second and all-decisive event in his career. It is the usual story of the recruit emasculated of all his personality, of any common ranker you like to take who is no longer a man but a number.

As Ludwig Renn, the author, himself says: "It is for this inarticulateness that the Nationalists like my book. The Ludwig Renns they want are men who will blindly obey them and who have no high goal before them."

In his *After the War* the problem is put in a different light. It is the literary production now of a communist. In it Renn no longer holds to the fallacious belief of making elementary experiences fit in with his own consistent forward development.

He describes happenings just as they occurred to him over a number of years; does so step by step and in their due order. *After the War* marks the road that must be trod by any honest seeker for the truth who is prepared to fight for the truth, by any clear-thinking man who has broken with his class and identified himself with the proletariat. Here you have one of the aspects of this novel which lends it its real weight as a thought-provoking war book. With events moving the way they are and entire sections of the petty-bourgeoisie losing the very ground from under their feet, it is particularly important to be able to find one's proper bearings in the drift of things and to pass from the one stratum of society to the other to which one feels one rightly belongs. It is a document

testifying to the intellectual development of more than Ludwig Renn alone—it is the story of a like development in countless others to-day.

What remains the most outstanding and valuable side of this book is the exceptionally powerful picture it presents of the revolution betrayed that called to life the most ill-fated of all republics and of the constitution formulated for its benefit when established. Nor is the picture spread over a limited canvas: it covers all aspects of this betrayal and its upshot in chronological narrative form.

Let us just imagine ourselves returning with Renn from the front. He comes home with the knowledge that he has lost all: his native land, his aim in life, and his ties with the past. He goes through provinces like Saxony and Thuringia to find them occupied by sailors, by workers, and by detachments of Red soldiers. The workers and soldiers are fighting for power. Renn is not of their number. He does not realise yet what they are fighting for. He has shaken off his past, but he fails completely to see any future in front of him. It is true that he is weighing up the situation as it is and its inter-actions. He does so carefully, mathematically, with the exactitude of a stop-watch. The army which shortly before had been doing battle against the enemy without the gate has collapsed. Its place has been taken by the army of "lor an' order" made up of all these many civil guards of the public safety committees, defence corps, sepoy detachments, and the rest of the murderous crew collected together by the social traitors of the proletariat. This army was an instrument against the Spartak League and its followers.

It is here that Renn acquires fresh experiences of a new kind. The scales fall from his eyes. Noisy exposures are no longer necessary. All too plain is the venality of Noske, Ebert, Scheidemann, and all that clique, and he sees evidence of it on every hand. A loathing for the social-democracy impels Renn ever farther to the left.

Much time is needed to get men like Ludwig Renn moving, but once they do move.it is to keep on moving. They begin by bringing the light to the darkness-bound masses and taking up activities in the trade unions, the reformist working-class organisations, and in the Social- Democratic Party. But they do not tie themselves to these organisations. They go farther, line up with the Red International of Labour Unions and rally round the Communist Party. While the Schupo or defensive police are marching on the Vogtland of South-West Saxony to fight against Max Hoelz, Major Renn throws up his command, leaves it. He does not state where he is going, and yet it is plain as the light whither his road will lead him.

"For the space of seven years my life had no ground on which to stand, no hope to mark its path until at last I found the road to Communism." These final words of Renn's in his novel are enough to incline one to the thought that behind them there may be a new book as yet unwritten. And we await it with interest. Heroic gestures are alien to Renn. He never tries to mask the facts with the frills f glorification stunts. His form is simple and straight-forward. He is a chronicler who reflects within the focus of a single petty life the greater events of the epoch in which that life is lived. For its simplicity and honesty in the setting down of the happenings it records this book has no equal. In the course of its 300 pages we find not a single metaphor, none of those tricks and flourishes so common to many writers.

Experiences long distant in time stand near once more and become the comprehensible things they were not when they happened.

With the scantiest and most modest of means a page of the faded past is made to live again. This style is entirely in keeping with the author's simple form and directness of appeal. Nor is every writer capable of writing thus: it is the natural function of this writer and his experiences. It is not yet, of course, the plain creative method of dialectical materialism towards which we are striving.

Only the man who consciously passes through the experience he is describing with all his senses on the alert can master this method. The road to its attainment is indicated in Engel's words: "*Dialectics investigates the connection between things, and not things in themselves.*" These same words likewise show what is likely to be the next stage in Renn's intellectual development when experience and full consciousness of experience coincide. From any such development by Ludwig Renn, Germany's greatest representative of realism in art, we are entitled to expect much.

As soon as Renn's *After the War* was off the press, Hans Marchwitza's book was announced, *The Storming of Essen.*

The latter book covers practicaly the same historical period. Here, too, we are shown a representation of the post-war period and are offered slants on its various events and prospects. The hard light of the critical observer, however, of these events sweeps a narrower field, that of the Ruhr, although the outstanding happenings of the times covered are by no means left untouched.

With the delicacy of a seismograph the class instinct of the workers in the Ruhr mines swings and reacts at once to the drumbeat of fascism. As it were an echo, they hear the marching of the Kapp troops on Berlin. They reply by fighting. At the pit-heads the winding cages hang empty, the fires no longer roar in the blast furnaces — the Ruhr is on strike!

Here you have the full thrust home the book gives to jolt the reader's mind. It is a tale of the lives and struggles of the miners written by a man who from the outset has consciously taken his place in their ranks. Who can say that he knows more of these things than Hans Marchwitza?

When he was turned fourteen his father took him down the mine. That was in Upper Silesia. He was a weakly, tired-out, pigeon-chested youngster. At sixteen he was mining lead. From there a labour agent recruited him for the coal mines of the Ruhr where he has passed the rest of his life since.

It is natural, therefore, that his life's path through poverty, war and slavery should have made of him a most bitterly hostile enemy of the prevailing order.

With him, too, we may pass through some of his experiences. He fights at the head of a Red detachment against the Reichswehr, the military organisation of the bourgeoisie for the defence of the new republic. No retreat does he allow, will not hear of it: he knows only one sure bulwark in all he does — the working class. Always and in everything he is class-conscious, confident, and striving ever to reach the goal of his class.

The miners are on the march. Stoppenberg is in revolt. Dortmund is beseiged by the workers. They are storming Essen itself. The Red Army breaks through the cordon of the White hordes: the red front flings out wider still. Suddenly there is an unexpected breakdown. Betrayal. The Hagener Committee ponders the situation.

Just as in Renn's book, we have the role of the social-democracy laid bare again — the part, too, played by the little tin gods of the trade

unions. It is the role of traitors, but traitors who know what they are doing and why, and do it consistently, logically. The retreat spreads from Dorsten to Essen. In vain does the Ruhr await the revolutionary solidarity of the country as a whole: General Watter drowns the revolt in blood. Essen, city of steel, once more furls the red flag. Weight and fire in his words, Marchwitza tells us of these things. The connections between events are drawn in bolder fashion and stand out clearer than they do in Renn's work. But is the presentation more convincing? That is a matter on which we may dwell at greater length.

In Germany the movement that is the new proletarian literature has passed its first stage. Almost the sole claim to consideration in its productions lies in their contents. It has now to pass to a higher stage of development: for it the question of the hour is seen in the problem of creative method.

Dialectical realism must finish for ever with the naturalistic-cum-photographic method of description. It must draw living men and women with all their inner contradictions that they still posses as a hang-over from a past not yet overcome. In the hands of the proletarian writer psychological analysis is by no means an aim in itself, as is often the case with bourgeois writers trying to save themselves from the contradictions of reality by escaping to some metaphysical hothouse of the "soul." In the process of waging the class struggle of the revolution the old mentality and outlook of the participants in this process are broken up and shaped anew. A newer human being is thus moulded in its fires who is the thinking and purposeful creator of history. And working-class literature cannot ignore this reshaping of people that is going on on such a grand scale: but, on the contrary, must itself become one of the immediate factors fostering this remoulding of men's minds. Renn and his books represent the solution of the problem for the intellectual who has identified himself in the end with the proletariat. His case faces us in all its bearings with the problem of gathering "reserves" for this proletarian literature, confronts us with the issue of the "fellow-travellers" of the working-class revolution — both questions which are being forced upon our immediate notice to-day by the sharpening of the class struggle. It is not many who can take this road so resolutely and with such marked consistency as Ludwig Renn is doing.

The miner Marchwitza furnishes us with an example of the opposite kind. In him we find a worker who has entered the field of proletarian revolutionary literature and stands as one coming from that immense reserve on which our literature is already drawing and will continue to draw for its writers.

BOOK REVIEW

LEFT, NO. 1.

Those readers of *Left* who accept the viewpoint of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers have reasons for welcoming the first number and the initiative displayed by its editors and publishers. Several facts justify this friendly attitude. In the first place the editorial statement of principles (page 3), which is inspired by rejection of capitalism *in totom*, states that "capitalist democracy is in world wide chaos." "The more intellectually honest," continue the editors "are becoming convinced that the capitalist system must be replaced by a collective state dictated by the proletariat and with its foundation on the principle of economic liberation and human happiness." In concluding this statement the editors appeal to all brain workers and artists to break with bourgeois psychology. It is pointed out that only in the world revolutionary movement to overthrow capitalism and build a cooperative classless society is there new ground for talent, new strength in affirmation, new ideology, new courage.

A number of poems and prose contributions would seem to confirm this editorial statement. Many of them are animated by a spirit of bitter social protest against the madness which is capitalism. They express, though by no means accompanied always with the requisite clear revolutionary deductions, those sufferings inflicted by capitalism and in particular its contemporary crisis upon the million masses of American working people, sufferings that are shared by those sections of the intellectuals that are least secure and least connected with the ruling circles of the bourgeoisie.

Several of these contributions are characterized by a sincere sympathy with the heroic revolutionary struggle and mighty socialist construction of the proletariat and toilers generally of the Soviet Union. The revolutionary reader will be the more ready to welcome the first number of *Left* as among its contributors will be found not a few comrades connected with the press of the Communist Party (*The Daily Worker*) and the revolutionary literary movement as represented by the John Reed Club and the *New Masses* (which form the American section of the IURW) and by the Rebel Poets (publishers of *Unrest* and *The Rebel Poet*). Among such might be mentioned Joseph Kalar, Norman Macleod, John C. Rogers, Harry Roskolenkier, Joseph Vogel and others.

The number contains articles on revolutionary cinematography in the USA and the USSR, written by S. S.

In the interests of the retention and further development of what are undoubtedly positive tendencies in *Left* it is essential that the serious mistakes and shortcomings that reveal themselves upon a study of the first number be submitted to brave and clear criticism. This is the more essential since the editors and publishers, comrades Georges Redfield and Jay du Von, in a letter to the secretariat of the IURW declare their entire acceptance of the platform of the Kharkov Conference.

We must commence our criticism with this very editorial declaration. It cannot fully satisfy us because of its extreme generalness and abstractness. The present international situation is such that a simple rejection of capitalism, or for that matter a statement of unity of purpose with the world revolutionary working class movement gives the right to no group or organ whatever to consider itself a component part of the international movement of revolutionary literature. This right has to be won by tenacious day to day work in the carrying out of those revolutionary tasks resulting from the present distribution of forces and positions on the world front of the class struggle.

It was precisely these considerations that the I. U. R. W. at its Kharkov Conference made its point of departure in formulating its new and *amplified* minimum demands, binding on all its sections, obligatory for its every member.

The minimum program of the Kharkov Conference is well known. It comprises: (1) struggle against the preparation of new imperialist wars, and in especial the defence of the USSR, the bulwark of the world socialist revolution, from imperialist intervention; (2) struggle against Fascism; and (3) struggle against *social-fascism*, against the outlook and practice of the 2nd International, the chief social buttress of imperialist capitalism.

How, bearing in mind the specific features of the American situation, should these demands have been reflected in the editorial declaration of *Left*? In any case, it were necessary to characterise the leading role of American Capital in the world politics of imperialism and in the preparation of intervention against the USSR, as well as to show clearly the growth of the Fascist menace in the USA. The foundations should have been laid for a policy of systematical exposure of American social fascism as represented by the Gomperist American Federation of labour and such "socialists" as Mr. Hilquit and his breed.

It also seems to us that it were only proper if from the outset the editors had expressed quite unequivocally their attitude to the motley crowd of renegades who for several years have indulged in counter-revolutionary slander on the USSR and the revolutionary movement, the adventurers of the type of Max Eastman, Jay Lovestone etc.

On the basis of such a statement of political principles, the editors should have formulated their conceptions as to the tasks of revolutionary literature; their attitude to the various class camps in art, in particular American art and above all to the John Reed Club and the *New Masses*. There is nothing of this to be found in the unnecessarily laconical declaration of *Left*, and as a result the impress of political ambiguousness rests on the entire remaining contents of the first number. True, in certain cases and in connection with certain questions, one finds a somewhat more vigorous and consistent formulation of political questions (e. g. "A Working Class Cinema for America" by S. S. pp. 69—75). But even all these features are utterly lacking in that pithiness, that finished clarity, that practical unfoldment without which any kind of adherence to a truly revolutionary line is inconcievable.

What is worst of all, as is always the case, is that lack of definiteness in fundamental premises opens wide the door for tendencies manifestly hostile to the proletariat in revolutionary literature, tendencies that are absolutely impermissible in an organ seriously claiming the right to participate in the world-wide movement of revolutionary art.

In the first place we shall dwell on the article of a certain Mr. Alexander Kaun—"Gorki and Lenin" (pp. 15—27) which forms an extract from *Life of Gorky* by the same writer which will shortly be published by Jonathan Cape and Harrisson Bell. The calibre of this Mr. Alexander Kaun can best be judged from the following: "Once in power, Lenin was willing to employ all sorts of compromise, and was far more tolerant of opposition than his puny successors are to-day."

In this there is a double portion of slander: first, the attempt to depict Lenin in power as an ordinary bourgeois liberal, secondly, an attempt on this basis to discredit the present communist leadership of the Soviet Union and above all, of course, that genial and true disciple of Lenin, the leader of the world revolution, comrade Stalin, under whose leadership the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union are going from victory to victory, under whose leadership the working people of the entire world are waging struggle against Capital.

Is it not clear that Mr. Alexander Kaun has from the very outset shown himself in his true colors as a faithful and miserable adherent of the clique of Mr. Trotsky, Max Eastman, and the rest of that rabble who together with world social fascism are playing their part in the dirty work of preparing anti-soviet intervention?

Is it not clear that the publication of such a sally in the pages of *Left* can be regarded only as a most serious political mistake on the part of the editors, as a step absolutely incompatible with the policy of the IURW.

It is to be hoped that the tendency to self-criticism (which one trusts is fully serious and earnest) displayed in the above mentioned letter of comrades George Redfield and Jay du Von will help them recognise and correct as soon as possible this most grave blunder.

A second and no less serious mistake is the publication of an article written by Harold T. Salemson, "French Letters, Left face" (pp. 34—39). This gentleman may be best characterised by the following facts: (1) He pours filthy slander on the central organ of the French Communist Party — *L'Humanité*; (2) He defends Trotskyst renegades in France, in particular, Henri Gibeau; (3) He enumerates among the representatives

of revolutionary literature in France that apostle of capitalist rationalisation, and accomplished social-fascist Pierre Hamp, who not long ago distinguished himself by an interventionist demonstration against the Soviet Union, as also that classical scoundrel, Panait Istrati and the agent of M. Valois, Henri Poulaille.

In conclusion Mr. Salemson announces his complete solidarity with the policy of M. Poulaille and the *Nouvel Age*, edited by him.

The American comrades should be quite clear as to who and what this M. Valois and his Poulaille represent. M. Valois is the hardest headed businessman of Social fascism. At first he propagated the ideas of Mr. Benito Mussolini and the *Nouveau Siècle* which he edited was nothing other than a literary organ of the Italian fascist reconaissance in France. M. Valois was put out not a little when this was discovered. He then changed his colors so far as outward professions are concerned and made public certain "little secrets" of his former patron. Now he is at the head of a successful publishing concern (into which enters *Nouvel Age* along with M. Poulaille) the political function of which consists in uniting all the literary forces of fascism and social fascism in the interests of Capital's offensive on the working class.

Some unexperienced folk may be fooled by the tricks of Valois and Poulaille; their talk about Social problems, their phrase mongering about "proletarian literature," their publishing of Russian revolutionary writers, and so on.

After all that has been said, it is clear how dangerous a collaboration with the like of Harold Salemson may prove to be for any group of revolutionary writers, or any organ of theirs.

We are glad to note that in their letter Comrade Georges Redfield and Jay du Von recognise the mistake they made in publishing M. Salemson's article.

This step, which though highly important may be regarded only as a beginning, must be followed up, firstly by a detailed criticism of this article in the pages of *Left* itself, and secondly by a systematic policy of exposing and fighting all conceivable varieties of Poullailism in literature, which has a significance not only for France, but also on a world-scale.

The third serious mistake was the publication of the article "The Need for Revolutionary Criticism." The author, V. F. Calverton, is regarded by a certain section of the bourgeois press in the U. S. A. as a representative of Marxist literary criticism. It would be useless to seek in this article (notwithstanding the rich promises of the title) a real definition of the class political tasks of revolutionary criticisism and literature. No, the whole point of the article is expressed in the following musings of Mr. Calverton:

"The revolutionary critic should demand as much of the art he endorses as the reactionary. No revolutionary critic, for example, should deny that art in itself, in whatever form, is a trade, just as potterymaking and as a trade it has a technic of its own which has to be mastered if that which is produced is to be worthwhile. *Revolutionary art has to be good art first before it can have deep meaning*, just as apples in a revolutionary country as well as in a reactionary have to be good apples before they can be eaten with enjoyment" (page 9, author's italics — M. H.).

We have not the opportunity in this short article to dwell in detail on the strictly theoretical side of these utterances. Later on, in a special article it will be shown that the "Marxism" of Mr. Calverton in no wise differs from the crude formalism of the most reactionary schools of bourgeois esthetics.

From a political point of view all this signifies paving the way for attacks on revolutionary art by bourgeois critics. From the point of view of Mr. Calverton, we must, *a priori*, prefer the "refined" stylistic virtuosity of the imperialist Paul Morand to the first weak artistic beginnings of a revolutionary proletarian whom hunger, want, continuous struggle for the means of existence have deprived of all possibilities of mastering the highest artistic culture. And this notwitstanding the fact that such a proletarian *inasmuch as he is a revolutionary writer* creates a type of art compared to which the peaches offered by the like of Paul Morand are as dead sea fruit, unsuitable even for manuring the soil of revolutionary art. No, let Mr. Calverton himself take delight in the fruits of this tree. Revolutionary literature will give a somewhat different solution to this problem.

It cannot be denied that the struggle for high artistic quality is one of the most pressing tasks of the revolutionary and proletarian writer. The proletarian writers of the USSR have made of this one of the basic slogans of their work. Unlike Mr. Calverton, they understand that the basic and indispensable prerequisites for high artistic quality of revolutionary creations must be consistency, definiteness, profundity of revolutionary class proletarian content, in correctness and richness of revolutionary

thoughts, deep-seated loyalty and devotedness on the part of the artist to the proletariat and its revolution. The acid test of his sincerity is day to day participation in the heroic struggles of this class. He, who like Mr. Calverton rejects this sole correct solution of the problem, is in reality a vanguard fighter for the bourgeois treatment of proletarian art as some sort of third rate stuff incapable of competing with the best achievements of bourgeois culture. Such a person pursues the social-fascist line of the 2nd International, a line which denies the existence of independent proletarian art, or to be more exact, which aims at liquidating it, of transforming the independent artistic policy of proletarian art into a policy of mendicancy, satisfied with whatever miserable crumbs fall from the table of bourgeois art. The proletarian literary movement of the USSR through the *napostovtsi* of the Russian Association of the Proletarian Writers has already carried to a successful conclusion a bitter and protracted struggle against just such tendencies as these. The names of Trotzky, Voronsky, Pereversev and other leaders of this liquidatory trend speak for themselves. And does not the fact that the voices of M. Poullaile and Mr. Calverton croak in unison also speak for itself?

We must greet the statement of comrade Redfield and Jay du Von (in the same letter) and their declination of the services of Mr. Calverton as associate editor and editor of the criticism department of *Left*. This is undoubtedly a wise decision. But we think that it must be followed up by a serious study of the true role played by Calverton in American literature.

While declining for the time being to draw our final conclusions, let us point to several facts. In an article on marriage and the family [1] this "Marxist" permits himself to speak about the "class blindness" of Engels and of revolutionary Marxism in general. The first number of *Front* contains an article by Mr. Calverton entitled "The Literary Artist in a Mass-Civilization." This article is based on the social-fascist treatment of most important political questions.

Finally a remark about the *Modern Quarterly*. This magazine appears very irregularly, and hence we have been unable to make a detailed study of it up to the present. But page 96 of Left contains an advertisement for the next number of Calverton's journal. Among the authors of the most imporrant articles we find Max Eastman and Henri De Man. This magazine which boasts of being "America's only revolutionary quarterly" includes among its collaborators the social fascist Max Eastman and that shameless slinger of mud at the Soviet Union, Henri de Man!

It is interesting to note that Mr. Harold J. A. Salemson, the follower of Poulaille describes Calverton's organ as "the greatest revolutionary publication in the world" (page 36). It would be worthwhile pondering the question as to whether Calverton in America plays a role analogous to that of Poulaille in France.

Such are the three basic mistakes of *Left's* first issue. Are these mistakes accidental? Our answer is "No". But are we justified in saying that they follow inevitably from the entire policy of *Left's* leadership. We have not sufficient grounds for saying so—just at present, anyway.

What is the meaning of the mistakes pointed out? The answer must be sought in the peculiarities of those sharp changes that are taking place at present on the front of literature.

The world crisis, the sharpening of the class struggle, the onslaught of capital against labour throughout the entire world all give rise to a wave of "fellow-traveller" movements.

But there are fellow-travellers and fellow-travellers. A genuine "felow-traveller" movement reflects a real radicalisation of those elements of the petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia being ruined by the capitalist crisis. It expresses a genuine collapse of all illusions as to the possibility of solving the contemporary social contradictions within the framework of capitalist society.

The crystallisation of the new consciousness is accomplished with exceptional difficulty, in cruelly contradictory forms; the boulders of bourgeois viewpoints, prejudices and illusions block this process all along the way. The functions of the agents of the bourgeoisie within this movement are to hinder the development of this process, to neutralise its revolutionary contents, to divert it from the proletarian camp and to betray it into the hands of the bourgeoisie.

It is self evident that social fascism is best adapted for fulfilling this task. Such is the function of the false counter-revolutionary "fellow-travellers." And the first number of *Left* with the articles by A Kaun, K. J. Salemson and V. F. Calverton is a brilliant confir-

[1] The compulsive basis of Social Thought as illustrated by the varying doctrinns as to the origins of marriage and the family. *The American Journal of Sociology*. vol. XXXI, no 5, march 1931.

mation of the fact, that it attempts to win over every new revolutionary trend in art.

Our first task is to separate the kernel of genuine revolutionary fellow-travelers from the dross of "Poulaillism."

This task consists furthermore in switching this movement on to the rails of proletarian ideology by means of educational work and criticism. And all this demands a merciless struggle *against the bourgeoisie and its emissaries.*

We want to see in *Left* just such a healthy kernel, capable from the very beginning of standing four square against Mr. Kaun and others like him. We shall fight for all we are worth for a strict line of demarcation. We need not be afraid of personal losses; the stricter the line of demarcation the more sure we may be of a new influx of truly revolutionary elements into our ranks.

The letter of comrades Redfield and Jay du Von confirms our hopes and proves thaf the IURW in its struggle may rely on the best elements connected with the journal. *Left* must however draw practical conclusions from this letter and from our criticism of No 1. This is the more necessary in that these mistakes are not the only ones. We shall point out one definition of proletarian literature in the article by Bernard Smith, entitled "A Footnote for proletarian literature" (pp. 10-14). This definition is given in connection with the German novel, *Kaiser's Coolies* by Theodor Plivier.

"*Kaiser's Coolies* is proletarian because it was written by a worker for workers; because it is revolutionary in purpose; and because it is working-class in character, which means it is blunt, direct, masculine, rough, a little crude, a little naive".

The author of this may have the best of intentions but his definition is of use only for the bourgeoisie. Bourgeois criticism is interested in setting up for proletarian literature any production of any worker, even though he be fascist or social fascist in outlook. For us, proletarian literature is that literature which views the world from the standpoint of the teachings of Marx and Lenin and participates directly in the struggle for the socialist transformation of society. This does not mean that we throw overboard those writers who have not yet fully mastered the revolutionary *Weltanschauung;* on the contrary, we help them in every way possible.

This we can do only by striking hard and mercilessly at all bourgeois attempts to turn proletarian literature into a Noahs'ark, open to any fascist or social fascist who can offer proof that he is a worker or comes from a working class family.

Joe Corrie, has as little to do with proletarian literature as Macdonald with Leninism or Marxism. But Corrie has the title of honor of a former Scottish miner. And it is no accident that M. Poulaille sticks up for the whole motley crowd of Corris.

We likewise cannot pass over without comment a poem by Ralph Cheyney entitled "Debs was Big." We find in it the following lines.

Debs stood up and bumped the sky.
Debs was tall as the Rockies are high.
He was bigger than the present or
the past
. . . . . .
Debs showed the way for the worker's
release
Let Debs was'nt war, he was peace.
. . . . . .
Debs has died, but Debs isn't dead.
Debs is buried in you and me.
Set Debs free!

This poem is a triple mistake. Firstly, the method of an almost religious fetishisation of an individual has nothing in common with true revolutionary art.

Secondly, the estimate of Debs given here is incorrect. True, in his attitude to the Great War he took up a more honest stand than the majority of his colleagues from the 2nd International. The government testified to this when they threw him into jail. Yet Debs did not rise to the truly revolutionary, i. e. Leninist understanding of the events of 1914—18 and all that followed them. His stand in these matters was largely opportunistic. While honoring his memory the progressive American workers nevertheless understand that not the name of Eugene Debs but that of Vladimir Lenin alone can serve as the symbol of their revolutionary emancipation.

Thirdly, what is most unfortunate is that Ralph Cheyney who, by the way, together with Jack Conroy edited *Unrest* and is one of the chief colaborators in *The Rebel Poets*, deals with the problem of the revolutionary struggle in the spirit of an ordinary pacifist humanist ("Yet Debs was'nt war, he was peace" etc.).

All this terrible unclarity plays into the hands of the social-millionaires such as Maurice Hillquit who, faced with the growing revolutionisation of the masses are ready to hide behind the back of the dead Debs rather than look into the countenance of the living Foster.

However we wait with impatience the next numbers of *Left.*

M. Helfand.

INTERNATIONAL CHRONICLE

U. S. S. R.

THE WORLD MUST KNOW THE HEROES OF OUR SOCIALIST RECONSTRUCIDN.

1. The Drivers of Machines.

We are going to talk about people. These people in no way differ from thousands of other tractor-drivers, mechanics, combine-drivers who have mastered technique, bridled the machine in order to make over, to built up in the new way labor and life. They are merely rank-and-file soldiers in the army of socialist agriculture.

The will to victory, the fire of emulation have moved them forward into the front rank of our fighters. And first among the first, moving along on his caterpillar, is the tractor-driver Bashta.

The world record in sowing — 81 hectars in one shift — has made the name of this farmhand of yesterday unforgettable. And moreover, Bashta has no idea of resting on his oars in easy pride. He promises to beat this figure next sowing.

Bashta is tall and deep-chested. The tractor groans and sways under the abrupt movements of his two-hundred pound body. Away off, farther than the roar of his sixty-horse power motor you can hear his voice when he sonorously lathers with the corresponding assortment of words the workers on his tow, when they gape over the work.

But here's Soboleva, she can't boast of her strength. At twelve Soboleva had already learned the bitter taste of a master's bread and the hard blows of the stranger's fist. At fifteen, the restless pangs of unemployment. Perhaps because of this, from underfeeding, from labor beyond her strength she remained for her entire lifetime so thin and frail-looking.

When Soboleva after the revolution became a cook at Tselin Station, this turned out to be the first step toward freedom, toward a place among men. Indeed, it turned out that from being a soviet cook it was only one step to entering the party, taking up the tractor driving courses, becoming conscious of herself as member of a great workers' collective.

In the sovkhoz Gigant the former farmhand and cook was given an I. H. 10—20 h. p.

In the harvesting campaign of last year, when Soboleva was transferred to a powerful caterpillar, she already firmly knew that the tractor is the best weapon in the struggle for independence.

The sowing days came on.

A distant section fell to Soboleva's share. After the regular, eight-kilometer race over the wearily even plain, she saw again and again her supply base, appearing dimly in its isolation with its pile of sacks stuffed with grain and a barrel of fuel.

The working day quickly flashed by. Well, there again from beyond the just perceptible hillock the bags have come into view and the next shift, sprawled on top of them, waiting for the tractor. The people have quickly run up to the seed-drills. They have poured in the grain. They have changed shifts. But there's no tractor-driver, he is late.

Soboleva lets out the machine down a new, eight-kilometer track. She knows well: the tractor must not stand still for a single minute.

When the machine again came up to its supply point, it was already growing dark. It had turned cold and was raining. The supply-boy was asleep, covered with the tarpaulin. There was no one to relieve her. Soboleva understood that she had a night's work ahead of her. She pulled the sleeves of her soaked jacket closer to her frozen palms, settled herself more com-

ortably. In the early morning it was unendurably cold, and the thin, weak hands of the tractorist were quite bloodless. The twenty-fourth hour came around, unbroken labor without food or sleep.

Again the supply-point came into view with its waiting shift. But there was no tractorist there. The drill-drivers, joking and swearing, exchanged places on the seeders. Soboleva, biting her lips, stood on her numbed feet, filled the tractor, oiled it and looked it over. They moved out into the track, and five seeders went on after their tower, impregnating the soil with cleaned grain.

This shift was a hard one for the tractorist. Hunger with its sharp teeth gripped her stomach, while retching rolled up into her throat. Sleepiness and fatigue stubbornly tried to snatch the levers from her hands.

Again it grew dark and the shift of seeders came up. The thirty-sixth hour came around.

The night went by in a stubborn struggle against swerving. The tractor's heart beat evenly and quietly, but suddenly it felt the weakness of the hands that were driving it.

"Hey, Molly, drive straighter!" shouted the seeders.

"O. K. Straighter," whispered Soboleva. And again the seeders moved on with an even, unending strip.

Toward morning a man on horseback came prancing up to the tractor.

"Hey, Soboleva?! Why haven't you given us any reports of the work for the last two days? Just you wait! We'll put you on the black sheet."

Three hours later the shift came on. This time it was an oiler, just recently put on to a tractor and ruining it in his first trip.

"Get along, before I give you one," Soboleva said to him.

"I'll die here but I won't give you the tractor," and she began desperately to wrench away his hands already gripping the handles of the caterpillar.

The fiftieth hour came along. At last the director of the section came galloping up in alarm. A shift for the forgotten tractor was provided, and the tractor-driver, under the embarrassed scolding of the director crawled down from the machine. She had got what she wanted: the tractor had not stood still for a single minute and the first place in the sowing campaign had been kept for her section.

Just like Soboleva, Joseph Datukashvilli came to the tractor, came to it from the soil, from the mattock with which he used to hoe out stones to prepare the future vineyards of Georgian princelings.

No one in the sovkhoz would get down to the machine earlier than he, no one listened with such love and care to the accidental misbeats of its motor. He was the first to throw out the slogan: "Keep up with the best," and he stood at the head of all those competing.

In the spring on the Alazan sovkhoz a shortage turned up. The courses had not been able to train and send to it the necessary number of tractor-drivers. With eighteen tractors, with 7,500 hectars of silvery cotton to be sown, there were only twelve tractor-drivers.

"Give me the men, I'll teach them," said Datukashvilli.

And working nights repairing the tractors, he also spent his days on the machines, stubbornly driving a knowledge of technique and the love of work into the heads of the lads from the kolkhozes.

At sowing-time forty-three new drivers went out to the machines and the sovkhoz plowed its 7,500 hectars in the time allotted; it led the blue water down its irrigation ditches over the fields.

Several prizes and rewards have fallen to Datukashvilli's lot during the past year. By the way, he never gave a thought to them—they came of themselves to him.

Vasilii Matveievich Chekalin is not a farmhand. He never walked with hanging head, as his father and grandfather had not done before him, as they tore out many miles of corridors in the coal under the dumpy little mining-village in the Donbass. When a drift had to be bored through a thin seam, they would lie down sideways and, twisting about, chop away with the butt of the axe, greedily panting in and out the air, saturated with coaldust.

The future tractor-driver and mechanic went into the mine at twelve. He would have been a machinist, a fitter, or a smith, if not for the revolution and the civil war. They cast him into one of the sovkhozes, led him to the tractor.

Chekalin quickly and easily got to understand the ins and outs of a tractor.

The Simferopol sovkhoz, where Chekalin worked, was hard hit by enforced stoppage of its machines, waste of fuel being an every-day phenomenon. People shrugged their shoulders and said:

"Theory is one thing, practice another. We haven't the Moscow asphalt here, but local conditions. 425 grams

of fuel per power-hour, that's nonsense. Twenty-one hours of actual work on the furrow, that's nonsense too. Just send your bookkeepers-rationalizers down our way. We'll show them."

But the "bookkeepers" were neither to be heard nor seen. In their place, the Donbass miner, Chekalin came forward, to defend theory which had been so rudely trampled upon. First of all he organized the replenishment service on the conveyor system. One by one the tractors came up to be replenished and oiled. The work of the replenishment depot went on swiftly, with every operation counted. Twenty minutes, and done! Next.

And the tractors took to working at the furrow for twenty-one hours.

Then Chekalin tackled the fuel question. He inspected very carefully all the carburetors, in which the fuel and air are mixed to be exploded in the cylinder. The tractor-drivers were strictly instructed to feed the motor with the thinnest possible mixture. The leakage of fuel not burnt by the explosion was punished by the rules on competition, as the plundering of the people's property.

As a result, 400 gramms per power-hour!

In the harvest of 1930 the miner took his seat on a combine. The outlandish machine weighed down with complicated mechanisms of the conveyor, the drum, straw-shaker, motor, cutting apparatus, did not all at once unfold its secrets to him.

But trans-atlantic technique was curbed and bridled by the iron will of the proletarian. Having acquired the mechanics of simultaneous reaping and threshing, he handed the combine over to someone else and in the role of instructor took on a whole brigade of the foreign machines. Chekalin flew from section to section, forgetting sleep and food, summoning the men to victory, explaining them the technique and strategy of the battle. In the dense sea of wheat the lower decks of the drums would break, the cylinder rollers of the blades would give out. But Chekalin would put in his appearacne with an assortment of spare parts and the combine would again bite into the solid mass of wheat.

The Simferopol sovkhoz was one of the first to finish the harvest in a swift and organized way. This was accomplished by the Donbass miner, tractor-driver and mechanic, Chekalin who knew how to transfer the boiling enthusiasm of labor and struggle to all those who, clamping their teeth, drove their machines to victory.

Not far from Chekalin, in the Crimea, in the sovkhoz of the Sadovintrest (Market-gardening and Wine-growing Trust), called *Khan-Eli* there works a tractorist-foreman, Emir-Ali Seidametov. Is it worth while relating his biography, which is just as simple as those that have gone before? Is it worth repeating the story of the heavy labor as a farmhand beginning at twelve?

In the spring of 1931 the sovkhoz *Khan-Eli* was sowing. The lack of moisture in the soil on account of the delayed spring forced them to hurry, to forget about rest. The agreement to compete with the neighbouring sovkhozes *Almachik* and *Komintern* inspirited, whipped up the brigades.

The first days everything went on well. The disk-sower of the sovkhoz *Khan-Eli* was giving thirteen hectars to a shift. *Almachik* and *Komintern* scarcely came up to nine. Already the tractor-drivers had in eye the very pleasant possibility of putting *Almachik* and *Komintern* on the tortoise, in the district newspaper, when a break in their work came down upon them.

On the 24th of March, in the morning, the tractor-driver, supervisor and mechanician, Emir-Ali Seidametov was carrying out the inspection of his column of twelve machines. On one of the tractors the magneto was playing tricks. The inexperienced drivers, not long since coming down from the mountain villages, poured more and more gasoline into the cylinders, generously soaked the stubborn tractor with fuel. Seidametov quickly examined the magneto. Set it right. Start her up!

The tractor snorted and suddenly went up in blue flame. The rain of fire, from the spurting gasoline, poured over the men who threw themselves every which way.

Seidametov tore off his burning shirt, leaped about from the unendurable pain on his scorched face and arms. He glanced at the tractor gripped by the flames. He must save it, the machine is going to ruin.

He ran to the water-barrel, seized the pump, leaving on it part of the charred flesh of his hands, turned the stream point-blank on the flames. Slowly and unwillingly, licking at its prey, it retreated.

In the hospital, in wich Seidametov had been laid bandaged from head to foot, bad news began to be received on the very next day. Without guidance, without the experienced glance of the mechanician there were only four machines left out of twelve. The rest are working with break-downs. The young drivers crawl under the tractors, creep

into the heart of the motors, gossip and guess: it doesn't work, they don't know how, they haven't the knack!

Seidametov got up from his cot. Making a wry face, he pulled on his clothes.

"Where are you going to?" asked the *feldsher*.

"To the tractors!" the mechanic answered short and firm, "To the brigade!"

"But, look, you can't see a thing, your eyes are bandaged up!"

"Never mind, I can hear the sound of the motor and tell them what to do. Can't do no different. The sowing won't wait, our *Khan-Eli* mustn't be left on the tortoise."

From all ends of the boundless sweeps of the Soviet Union the sovkhozes and kolkhozes are calling out the names of those who are worthy to fill out our list. Nadezhdin, from the Stalin agricultural combination farm; Vilganski, the mechanician of the sovkhoz *Pakhta Aral*; Mukhamedriarov, a combine-driver of Red Bashkiria; Olkhovskaya, the first woman tractor-driver of Agramysh; and together with them tens, hundreds, thousands of men and women who are mastering the technique of struggle and the strategy of the victory of their class. They have moved on like a broad avalanche; they are filling with their names and deeds the pages of new, heroic novels.

That's the way they work in the USSR, the rank-and-file of the heroic army of socialist agriculture. They work thus because labor set free, in the land which is building socialism, has become a deed of glory, a deed of honor, valor and heroism.

2. Two workaday episodes.

One springlike morning in May, when it seemed as if nothing could disturb the peaceful way of life in the *kishlak* (Turkistan village) buried in its greenery, there suddenly appeared at the village limit a bare-foor courrier and herald — the *jarchi*.

He had not been seen here, in this remote *kishlak* for exactly eleven years, since the time when the last emir had fled to Afghanistan — the last emir from the accursed race of Manghit which had clung with the vampire jaws of feudalism to the throat of the Dekhkan population of poverty-stricken, centuries-desolate Bukhara. If in those times a *jarchi*, a courrier on the service of His Highness the Emir had appeared in this same florid green *kishlak*, the women, foreseeing fresh extortions, would have raised their voices with their oriental, bowel-tearing wail.

But now the swarthy little children, jumping about in enthusiasm, with shrill cries and laughter, went leaping along after the loud-voiced, swift-legged courrier, the Dekhkan men and the women with veils tossed back came hurrying out of the co-operative store; in the village soviet the session of the presidium was broken off; from all corners of the *kishlak*, always full of life on the bazaar day, the people came pouring down to the square on which the *jarchi* had halted.

After sounding the enormous native trumpet, which was longer than himself, the *jarchi* roared out with the full might of his lungs:

"Greeting, hearty and glowing greeting to the kolkhoz *Yash-dekhkan* from the kolkhozes *Kzyl-Bairak* and *Ittifak*!"

"Together with a glowing and hearty greeting the kolkhozes *Kzyl-Bairak* and *Ittifak* send to their brothers, members of the kolkhoz, *Yash-dekhkan* this precious and dear gift and beg you to love and favor, to cherish and guard it..."

The crowd of Dekhkan men held its breath. The courrier, having paused for a moment, dropped his hand into the red saddle bag which he had tossed over his shoulder. Hundreds of eyes were fixed in expectation.

The herald threw both arms up high. In his hands, something or someone stirred sticking out its short little feet.

With his sonorous voice, with metallic notes full of mockery, the *jarchi* again cried out:

"In sending you its valuable present, the kolkhozes *Kzyl-Bairak* and *Ittifak* instructed me to inform you that in seven days and six nights they have plowed three times over, with the European plow, 231 hectars of land, have sowed it with first-class seed and within the week are going out to cultivate the cotton for the first time."

The metal notes in the emissary's voice rang out with more and more mockery:

"Having learned that you have fulfilled your plan of 130 hectars by 76% and that, in untiring labor and ardor, panting over the tea-cups in the teashop, are plowing $2^1/_2$ hectars a day, the men of the kolkhozes *Kzyl-Bairak* and *Ittifak*, as a sign of sympathy, have requested me to hand you this relative of yours. Yesterday she was captured by the children near the kolkhoz. Probably she lost her way because of fatigue from labor, as she was returning from the fields, and accidentally strayed over our way.

"Take her back, you people who plow $2^1/_2$ hectars a day and still call yourselves men!"

The mocking herald flung the living tortoise right into the arms of the dumbfounded president of the kolkhoz *Yash-dekhkan*, and after blowing a deafening blast through the enormous trumpet, ran across the bazaar square and disappeared in a cloud of dust.

Within an hour, in the village soviet was sitting an extraordinary assembly of the kolkhoz *Yash-dekhkan*. Since the building could not admit everyone, the debates were transferred to the open air under the shade of the huge cotton-woods.

Three days later the report went through the district that *Yash-dekhkan* had gone out to the field-work with all its families, women and children, and, working nights by the light of bonfires, days under the scorching rays of the torrid, Asiatic sun, in three days had finished the plowing and, having exceeded its sowing-plan, was feverishly getting ready for the harrowing.

The vice-president of *Yash-dekhkan*, accidentally running into a director of *Kzyl-Bairak* in the repair-shop of the Motor and Tractor Station, as if by chance let drop a sarcastic intimation to the effect that within a few days *Kzyl-Bairak* might see a special messenger from *Yash-dekhkan* with a very valuable gift...

"There is information that *Kyzl-Bairak*, having spent its ardor, is giving up on the harrowing."

The silver-bearded director, turning his back to the youthful vice-president, snapped out:

"You can't make a lasso out of anyone's tongue! We'll see whose harrowing is better and who will finish it first."

In Central Asia the struggle has blazed up high to put over the second Bolshevik cotton-sowing.

On the eve of the first of May, when people were getting ready for the field-work, for the new trophies of spring-time glory, in the Alagiro-Ardon section of Northern Ossetia, a tortoise of enormous size was brought from the neighbouring Digoria. This tortoise, made of papier-mâché and wood, was ten to twenty times bigger than the one which had been sent to the kolkhoz *Yash-dekhkan* from the *Kzyl-Bairak*.

They say, Caucasian blood is hot... But the district leaders of Alagiro-Ardon, to whose headquarters the disgraceful symbol of anti-Bolshevik rates of work had been nailed, did not explode in wrath, but, cold-bloodedly weighing their chances, reckoned up the remaining time. Riders went galopping off to the hills, spreading through kolkhozes and mountain *auls* the news that all Digoria from great to small was making mock of the people of Alagiro-Ardon! The field staffs of the Alagiro-Ardon people dropped their flags as a sign of mourning...

Gasi Misikova, the sixty-year old organizer of women's brigades for repairing the shoes and clothes of the kolkhoz workers, solemnly declared that she wouldn't return home until the last hectar was sown. If they didn't finish the sowing, they could take all the blame on themselves: they would flaunt from then on in torn trousers, then we'd see the faces they'd return with to the mountain *aul!*

The sixty-five year Gabanov in the kolkhoz of the village of Ardon bound himself in a skirmish of competition with thirteen-year old Kota Toguzov. The heroic lad dared, in front of Gabanov's very eyes, to hitch to the plow three horses instead of four, working over two hectars as compared with the standard of 0,8!

"I'll wipe the nose of him!" Gabanov was getting excited.

...The people of Alagiro-Ardon in four days went up to first place in Ossetia. The tortoise, chucked out with an inscription from the regional executive committee, crawled off to the boundaries of Digoria which only a few days before had been laughing exultantly at the people of Alagiro-Ardon.

Digoria took alarm! The party organization hastened to the masses, raising on its shield the slogan:

"Beat off the attack of the tortoise!"

The disgraceful simbol of anti-Bolshevik rates of work, the enormous tortoise made of papier-mâché and wood, at the very boundaries of Digoria came upon the steel plougshares of the kolkhoz plows. The tortoise seemed to be crawling off in the direction of the Right-Bank district, it turned its tracks toward the boundaries of the Dzaudjikaus section, but, met there by a kolkhoz towing-party come to help, crawled off backwards. The tortoise rushed this way and that — the gates of all the districts were closed tight.

Ossetia has finished the sowing a month earlier than last year.

CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION

Formerly, everything was very simple, or seemed simple. Parents gave orders, and children had to obey. The more

obedient a child was, the better he was considered. The child used to be brought up in the conviction that he was nothing, while grown-ups were everything. He was taught to obey his teachers, who were supposed to represent the highest authority. Even when the child belonged to oppressed classes or nationalities, its parents, without having any confidence in the teacher, taught the child to see in the teacher a mighty, if hostile, force, which had to be obeyed. The authority of teachers and parents was the foundation of education, as grown people looked upon it.

The stimulus to education was private interest — the child's "future." Of course, people talked about the fatherland and all kinds of general principles, but a child felt in fact that he was studying in order to be able to earn his bit of bread or, if it was a question of children of propertied people, in order to prepare himself for high positions.

Well, here's the first thing that must be grasped — the authority of parents and teachers has collapsed. That does not mean that any given child does not love its father and mother if they show attention to it or that it cannot become attached to a good teacher. Naturally, such an assertion would be ridiculous. But the child obeys its father or mother, or the teacher, *if* they are attentive and good.

Nina's father teaches her to curse other children as "little kids." Must Nina obey her father then? — ask the children. But not all parents are backward; there are communist parents; shouldn't they be obeyed? — I asked. Molly's father is a communist, but he beats her mother and drinks. The little girls tell how Molly had complained against him, not only to the city militia but to the district control commission. (They know all the ins and outs, all the institutions which can defend their interests!) But communists like that, who beat their wives, are very few, they are the exception — I answered. Yes, but in the case of many communist children the father goes off in the morning to his work, comes home late in the evening, the mother is also very busy and concerns herself little with the children. The parents do not know what arouses the child's enthusiasm, what disturbs him, they often answer him impatiently, and the child does not see in them the highest authority. When they are more attentive to him, the child of communist parents who are trying really to be communists in relation to him shows more confidence in them, but even this confidence does not make him free of care. He does not feel in his parents a final, sure refuge. The children know that nowadays there are very many cases of divorce and in their eyes the family has ceased to be the firm basis of their future.

But what about the teachers? The tiniest children know that the highest authority in the land is the communist party. The measuring-rod of the social value of a man for them lies in the question, is he a party member or not, how does he fulfil his party obligations. They know that the ruling-class is that of the workers and this they cannot help but know, for here they are not dealing in abstract judgments and estimates but in the general structure of society which finds daily expression in scores of facts which operate directly upon the child.

The great majority of teachers are not party-members, and as for the older teachers the children know they used to teach under the Tsar. Many teachers even today, even with the best will, are not able to hide from the children that they have not entirely made themselves a part of the building of socialism. "They all say: revolution, revolution, but why aren't they party-members," the children said to me. I answered them that we cannot discard the old teachers, but we are re-educating them. I told them that the party is an organization of the most advanced workers, does not accept everyone and not every teacher who might want to become a member of the party could get in. "That means, the party does not consider him advanced, then why must his word be law?", the children say. There's no answer to give the child to this. You cannot ask the children to obey their teachers unconditionally, just as you cannot ask the worker to have unconditional confidence in his engineers. The fact that the worker is a grown person and the child a child does not change the matter in the slightest. The child too looks with open eyes and with his little head; he too thinks over what he sees.

Then, where is authority, without which education is impossible, and where lies the chief impetus of this education?

During the last three or four months it has fallen to my lot to visit a number of our schools, to hear them appraised by the children themselves, and to examine the situation in different groups and all this has led me to one conviction: only where there are good pioneer-brigades, where there are strong pupils' organizations among the children, only there do you find the fun-

damental stimulus, the underlying basis which makes it possible to exercise influence on the children.

But let me add at once: the heart of the question is not in agitation among the pioneer-brigades, though explaining thoroughly to the children what is going on under their very eyes has tremendous significance. Our life is still full of contradictions and it is difficult for the child himself to deal with many questions. There are even communist parents who complain against overloading the children's brains with political matters. But just try to isolate the children from such events as the trial of the counter-revolutionary saboteurs. Among the children I know, the pardoning of the saboteurs aroused a perfect storm of indignation. Why, how is this: they had betrayed their country, they wanted to condemn the workers and peasants to famine, and they were not shot? The child is not a dialectician. Only life teaches dialectics. He wants simple indications, for he only wants to know what is right and what is not right, but for him to judge the decisions of the All-Union Central Executive Committee he had only the conviction that counter-revolutionary sabotage is the greatest crime against society and that society must defend itself against it. Helping the pioneer-brigade, its correct propaganda, has immeasurable importance in this respect.

The child runs up against even more fundamental questions, which he cannot answer, which require the help of comrades able to show him all the complexity of questions of the revolution. All children see the inequality which still exists under soviet rule. And the more glowingly a child absorbs the fundamental ideas of communism, the more sharply he feels this inequality. But explaining to him that material inequality cannot disappear until classes have disappeared, that in conquering the bourgeoisie we have not yet eliminated classes once and for all, explaining to him the division of labor into intellectual and physical and the inequality arising from it, and so forth — all this requires thorough communist guidance of the children. And that can be given only by the well-led pioneer-brigade, which is nearer to the Young Communists and nearer to the party than is the body of teachers.

The pioneer organization constitutes a children's collective in which the children carry on discussions among themselves, discuss questions, learn to submit to the collective, work out their own discipline and act in common. The importance of the pioneer-brigade for discipline is one of the key notes of the new education. The children's public opinion judges those who break their laws. If the public opinion of the children is well-organized, if there is a firm kernel of convinced pioneers in it, the sentence of his society has tremendous significance for the child. Punishment from the part of the teachers is not authoritative in the moral sense, for the children in general consider that it is easy for older people to pass sentence on them, because they are little, and they do not see any justice in that. But if the sentence is passed by their own comrades and if these comrades have authority, the force of this sentence is tremendous. In case the children do not have regard for the sentence of their comrades, without knowing the brigade you may be certain that it lacks an authoritative kernel, that the boys, those little disciplined as well as the one who is at fault, sentenced their comrade, taking advantage of the fact that he, and not they, was caught. Where there is a strongly knit pioneer kernel, where its sentence has force, the child is forced to submit, he is taught to understand that he is not an individual, that he is not a "free" atom doing what he wants and able to enter upon a conflict with society, but that he is a member of society, bound to submit to it.

Now comes the question: what do you mean by a good pioneer brigade? A little girl pioneer, an intelligent and well developed child, is running off without her pioneer's necktie. "Why are you without your pioneer's necktie? You're a pioneer, aren't you?" "What sort of pioneers are we, anyway?" "What do you mean, what sort of pioneers?" "But what do we do?" the child answers me. I was dumbfounded. I answered: "You do what all pioneers do." "Last year," the girl answers me, "we collected sacks for the grain harvest, but this year all we have done is to write a letter to the German pioneers, we are waiting for an answer and clipping articles from the *Pioneer Pravda*."

I was thunderstruck: the girl had given the most important criterion of the work of the pioneer-brigade. The child not only wants events explained to him, he not only wants joint games, marches, speeches, he wants to do something useful for society. And here we come to the heart of the question about communist education of children and we come up against the tremendous revolution accomplished not only by communist thinking in the theory of pedagogy.

Here we come upon the tremendous, fundamental growth of socialist public opinion from beiow

The entire atmosphere of soviet society is saturated with the ideology of labor. The Five-Year Plan! What does it represent? A great program of labor, and to fulfil it the party and the government are calling through loudspeaker, press, radio, moving-picture, theatre by means of street-agitation... In order to fulfil this program the party and the government set going thousands of levers. Everything that is capable, everything that is manly in the soviet popular masses has tremendous faith in labor, a faith that is becoming the trait which distinguishes the progressive from the backward. Every day, every hour, the child hears how we are creating a new society by great efforts, hears that the man who works, the man who helps carry out the Five-Year Plan is a real man, but whoever does not help in this great cause is an enemy and parasite. And is it so surprising if the child begins to apply these criteria to himself, that he responds to the great summons of the country. Our future depends on how forcefully the hearts of tens of millions of children respond to the Five-Year Plan, tor it is not a question of a single effort at one time only, which will be over within a few years, when we have brought the first and second Five-Year Plans to their conclusion. The cause of communism is the creation of a society which labors joyfully. Can we say to the child: "You are little, you can't do anything. Learn, rival each other in learning in order to be able to labor well in the future." No, we cannot say this to him, for that would mean pushing away the little hand and the glowing heart of the child, which are drawn so strongly to the building of the new life. That would be a great untruth, because even he, the little one, can help the cause of the Five-Year Plan. There are thousands of matters useful to society which can be done by the children's collective as it becomes a little stronger, and organizing this work means strengthening thousandfold the lever of education, of emulation in studying, of rivalry in discipline.

In its program the party as if with a steel chisel has engraved in our thinking the great teaching of Owen and Marx about the importance of work in education, about the necessity of the polytechnical (vocational) education of children, of preparing them from childhood for work in society, and this very question of the child: "What do we do?" shows that the party has marvellously understood the lever of education under communism.

The first polytechnical congress, and the discussions among communist pedagogs about the polytechnical reform show us all the difficulties of carrying out the great demands set by the party, the program of Lenin's great testament; he so deeply understood the questions of education, although he was not a pedagog by speciality, because he was a great communist, believing deeply in the triumph of communism and therefore trying to think out deeply all the levers of communism.

The polytechnical reform is meeting with difficulties which it will overcome in proportion as our industry grows, as the soviet farm and collective farm provide a new basis for agriculture, as education is more and more based on real labor. But it would be a crime to figure that we must be satisfied with what we have until we are able to create real school-factories and school-soviet-farms. The experience of what I saw in those schools tells me that, while improving the productive basis and methods of the polytechnical reform in education, we must, most carefully, take into account even now the following: the child must not simply learn to work on the ground that he will do something in the future. Even now he must do useful things, for there is no stronger stimulus for his polytechnical studies than labor which is useful to society, even though done on a small scale.

That new thing in our children's work is the growth of social consciousness, of the understanding that a man should live not for himself alone but also for his fellows. This is the heart of the complete difference between the world of our children and the child's world under capitalism. Labor for society is the lever for the education of children. The children's society, like a young human society, is the authority which helps to overcome anti-social phenomena among children. I do not assert that the entire child world of the U. S. S. R. represents a socialist society. The vestiges of capitalism are still active in our economic life; they are alive in the consciousness of grown people and they cannot but exist in the life and psychology of the children. But what is new is not simply sprouts of the future. Just as in economic life the socialist sector is beginning to conquer, so, as we lay the foundation of socialism, the children's socialist society is growing from below.

Karl Radek

AMERICA

In the middle of June, under the auspices of the John Reed Club, a conference of workers in cultural organizations was held in New York with the object of bringing about a union of the various proletarian literary, dramatic and reading circles which have hitherto been working independently, and rallying them around the same political slogans. The message of greeting which we are publishing shows what methods were agreed upon by the conference for the development ef workers cultural organizations

GREETINGS TO INTERNATIONAL UNION OF REVOLUTIONARV WRITERS AND ARTISTS ADOPTED AT CONFERFNCE OF PROLETARIAN CULTURAL GROUPS OF N. Y. JUNE 14, 1931.

The first conference of workers' cultural organizations, meeting in New York, accepts the program and principles of the Kharkov Conference of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers and Artists as their platform. The representatives of the various workers' cultural organizations recognize that the impetus for this conference originated at the 5th Congress of the Red International of Labor Unions and at the Kharkov Conference which has defined concisely and accurately the major tasks of all proletarian cultural organizations.

The Kharkov Conference has shown how absolutely necessary it is to broaden all cultural activity by drawing in the basic proletarian elements and at the same time bringing nearer and nearer to us and including in our activities the radicalized writers, artists and other intellectuals.

The Kharkov Conference has also laid down the chief political tasks of the proletarian cultural workers and organizations, namely:

1. To defend the Soviet Union against capitalist and counter-revolutionary attacks and to work for the Soviet Union, the fatherland of the workers and peasants and artists of the world.
2. To fight against the looming imperialist war.
3. To fight against white chauvinism, in America, especially, against the lynching of Negro workers, whether "legal" or "illegal."
4. To fight against the persecution of the foreign-born workers.
5. To fight against fascism.
6. To fight against social-fascism.

Endorsing this program, this conference sends fraternal revolutionary greetings to the International Union of Revolutionary Writers and Artists and pledges to carry on the work in the United States in the Spirit of the Kharkov Conference.

CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

AN ISLAND OF PEACE AND QUIET

Czecho-Slovakia of the last few years in the utterances of its public men, illuminated by certain facts.

WOE UNTO THEE, BABYLON, THOU STRONG CITY...

We are living in an era of such historical changes as have not been since that transmigration of the peoples which brought the Greco-Roman civilisation to an end. Then, in the midst of terrible bloodshed, Christianity was born. The conditions for such bloodshed are always present at any period which marks a culminating point in the development of human society. The Soviets have seen this particularly clearly and on this lever they are pressing as hard as they can to loose the forces that will bring this calamity upon us, a calamity which we shall not be able to avoid.

Woe unto the peoples whose public men do not foresee the calamity. Woe unto the peoples whose public men foresee the calamity but do not pay enough attention to it.

The time is ripe for a world revolution. And if the rulers and the capitalists do not accept the law of Christ, the whole world will be bathed in red flame.

Papal Nuntio to Czecho-Slovakia, Archbishop Cordac. *Prager Tageblatt.*

Private property serves the common good. Private property, not of course in the absolute sense as the Romans understood it, but in the relative sense, for private property belongs to persons who are bound by the laws of love and justice to their neighbours and who make use of it for the common good...

To find a right solution of the labour question is a most urgent and pressing task, for if a solution is not found, the neglected social process will give rise to world revolution. The immediate cause of revolution is the dangerous division of human society into two camps: one made up of the relatively

few enormously rich people, and the other of millions of poverty-stricken workers...

Our parliaments in most of their activities show only a democratic facade in order to hide the absolutist authority of a few kings of finance. The financist press closes the eyes of a trustful people in order that they may believe a false public opinion. Human society is in danger.

Nuntio Cordae, in his message to the clergy on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Encyclical against socialists. (*Rerum Novarum* published by Pope Leo XIII).

I am convinced that now it is almost impossible to avert the disaster of world revolution, because no one has hindered the preparations for it carried on systematically and zealously by certain narrow groups of men. If we are concentrating our attention on this encyclical *(Rerum Novarum)* and on the principles there set forth, it is only that we may be able, when the horrors of the world conflagration are passed, to have a previously thought out plan of salvation, and a scheme for action for the time when the demoniacal forces and the men responsible for this conflageration have fallen.

Jan Evgen Urban in his magazine *Zivot (Life).*

M. URBAN'S FOUR PRINCIPLES FOR SAVING THE WORLD.

1) The principle of the necessity of turning private into public property is unjust and unnatural.

2) There are great differences between people from birth and therefore it is impossible even to think of perfect equality.

3) The greatest evil: socialists assert that people are divided from birth into two kinds, two human classes, the rich and the poor, and that they enter into the class struggle from the day of their birth. The very opposite is the case.

4) With regard to the workman: he should work honestly according to a free contract, in which he agrees not to injure his employer and not to use force in defending his rights.

J. E. Urban, *(Zivot Life)*

MOSCOW OR ZLIN

As regards final ends there is no difference of opinion. Both systems, communism and Batism (which latter is practically the same as Fordism) seek the common good. The opposition between them is only apparent and is due to the fact that their paths are different. Moscow wishes to do away with human envy. Zlin makes use of it as motive power for improving the general welfare. In Russia no one has the right to be a pan (i. e. a "gentleman") while with us everyone is to become a "gentleman." Moscow wishes to bring everyone at one stroke to a common level of well being by doing away with natural competition. We are, year by year, improving the well-being of our people in proportion to their natural talents and desires. I believe that Zlin will have reached its goal before Moscow.

Tomas Batja Boot and Shoe King of Czecho Slovakia. *Prager Tageblatt* 28. 3. 31.

Zlin — A small town of 30,000 inhabitants in Czecho-Slovakia where there is a Boot and Shoe factory belonging to Tomas Batja, the Czecho-Slovakian Ford. This "socialist factoryowner's" scheme represents one of the most perfect systems of capitalist exploitation. In January of this year as a result of the general trade depression, Batja threw out onto the streets 8,000 woman workers.

WE ARE YEAR BY YEAR IMPROVING THE WELL-BEING OF OUR PEOPLE.

In times past famine and poverty were due always to devastation and failure of the harvest. To-day we see famine and poverty appearing as the result of a surplus harvest and of overproduction. In the midst of huge supplies of goods young healthy people are going about who would willingly put themselves to work but are unable to do so as they are not allowed to take part in the process of production. Factories which have been constructed and fitted out according to the last word of science are closing down because their owners can not dispose of the goods that have accumulated as a result of the mad race to produce.

I. Kozina. Young People's Journal of Cultural Activities, *Nase Cesta.*

If we compare the statistics for 1930 with those for 1931 we shall see that in Czecho-Slovakia the output of coal fell 14,4%, that of brown coal 19,1% of coke 25,4%, steel 24% iron 23,3%...

...According to the statement of the minister Czech in January of this year the official number of unemployed reached 600,000, and in actual fact there were not less that 750,000. The number of partially employed is twice as great.

Comrade Gotwald. Report at the VIth Congress of the Czecho-Slovakian communist party. *Tvorba* No. 10.

THE EPIDEMIC AND ITS INOCULATION.

If there is no other way, then with guns.
President Masaryk

Quite normal unemployment in its social and political results resembles a growing epidemic. The process is not peculiar to the working class. Cholera, breaking out in the proletarian district of a seaport town, spreads through the neighbourhood and eventually makes its way into the most well to do commercial quarters''

Pravo Lidu 23. 2.

On the 4th February in the town of Duchova a delegation of unemployed which was making its way to the magistrat accompanied by a crowd of workers was held up by a squad of police. Without any warning the police opened fire on them. As a result three were killed and many wounded.

Rudy Vecer 4. 2.

The police were obliged to resort to their batons, and in the struggle five policemen were wounded...

Czecho-Slovakian telegraphic agency. 21 3.

The only possible way of resisting the widespread attacks of the anti-government elements is to arm all the government elements. They must join together — they are joining together. We may have different views as to the organization of human society, we are separated by mutually incompatible philosophies of life; socialists will always stand up against ideological and social reaction, but the moment the existence of the State is at stake all difference of opinion come to an end; then there exist only two camps — for the republic or against it. Against the 25th February, which cannot but bring disintegration and ruin, stands the united camp of all parties wishing law and order to prevail in the State now that this critical period of world economic depression makes it more than ever necessary.

Ceskoe Slovo, Central Organ of the National Socialists 22. 2. 31.

A CROSS ON THE MAIN WALL

(Maerisch Ostrau 24. 1 from our own Correspondent.)

In Koberżici, in the Glucinski district, a conflict has taken place between the progressive school teachers on the one hand and the *ksendz* and headmaster on the other. The matter arose from one of the school masters suggesting to the pupils that they should greet one another simply by saying ''Good day'' instead of ''Praise God'' which is the catholic greeting. This did not please the *ksendz* and the head master. The master was had up before them and the ground was prepared in the village for having him dismissed. But this did not satisfy them. A conference of the teachers was called at which they were all asked to sign the following statement.

Statement.

Drawn up in the presence of the undersigned teachers, in conformity with the traditions which have been observed since the foundation of the Ratisborski committee. The following regulations must be observed:

1) Work must begin with a prayer, namely ''The Lord's Prayer'' or ''Hail Mary, full of grace.'' These prayers may be replaced by ''We seek thy protection,'' ''Come Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of thy believers,'' ''Guardian Angel'' and others.

2) The teacher must himself commence the prayer and while praying must set the example by folding his hands in front of him.

3) The teacher must not forbid the pupils from making holy gifts and must not even indirectly infringe upon their deeply rooted religious feelings.

4) A cross must be hung on the main wall of the class room amongst the most important pictures.

5) It is forbidden to give lessons about the debated questions of the Holy Catholic church (about Huss, Siska etc).

6) In all cases of doubt the headmaster or the divinity master can be consulted with confidence.

signed...

The signing of the statement was made obligatory, but the teachers refused to sign. A complaint of insubordination is now being made about them to the Minister of Education.

Narodny Osvobozeni. 25. 1.

LIST OF PLAYS PERMITTED AND PROHIBITED IN CZECHO-SLOVAKIA IN 1931.

Permitted.

W. Horak — *Paste it up* (Farce).
Hereeg-Farkas — *Bar Shic* (A Cabaret Play).
Bacht — *Bobby is a clever Boy* (Comedy).
Bernard-Maran-Knison — *Would you like to kiss me* etc. etc.

Prohibited

F. Wolf — *Ciynkali.*
P. Manert — *Colgotha* Social Drama.
Gazenklever — *Marriages are made in Heaven.*
Irean, — *Blind Street* (translated from the Ukrainian.)

The court which deals with press matters in the district of Olomoicky

has confiscated the following old, well known workers, songs: "The Internationale," "The Red Flag," "He strikes on the Tambourine," Srameka's "Million Arms," Cublicka's "Bozhe, razya politseiski," and others.

A HUNGRY GODMOTHER HAS ONLY ONE THING ON HER MIND.

Although this proverb comes from a far country it nevertheless applies to us and we can learn a very good lesson from it.

Not long ago I read in the Berlin papers some very enthusiastic reviews about the Russian Bolshevist film "Earth."

I do not go to such tendencious things. It seems to me that their authors consider their spectators partial or complete idiots.

In "Earth" we are shown a Russian village at which a tractor has arrived. The bolsheviks hope to save the world with a tractor.

A fight between the young and the old develops. The old men and the kulaks, that is to say the real Russian peasants, plough and sow with oxen, while the young ones plough with tractors. The young people are led by a bolshevik, whom an old peasant kills. Then the bolshevist is buried with full honours and the kulak goes out of his mind. The tractor is victorious, the fields bring forth a miraculous harvest and the Russian village is filled with happiness.

They also use tractors in our country since here too machines are coming more and more into use in agriculture. We know all about such things.

And because we know all about it we are convinced that the Russian tractor mania, like all other manias, will come to a bad end. You, young people, will live to see a different sort of Russian film. You will see films in which are shown new, that is future, Russian villages, just like our own, and alongside the villages the rusty remains of American tractors, overgrown with grass. And the cows and oxen will graze peacefully in the "Tractor cemetry", as the concentration points of present day bolshevist agriculture will come to be called.

And this will be the song of the Russian countryside when the delusion has passed.

Then the sharp scythe came along
And mowed down men like grass,
But our land is an eternal land
And our fields can wait.

Ah, if only I could come among you, future generations, when you are singing this song of the land with your Russian brothers somewhere near Kiev.

V. Regor *Venkov* 24. 1. 31 (Central organ. of Agrarian Party)

THE LITTLE ENTENTE HAS THE GREATEST SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE PEACE OF THE WHOLE OF EUROPE.

According to what has been published in the press, in 1930 Roumania bought in Czecho-Slovakia alone 600,000 rifles, 30,000 machine guns, 150,000 hand grenades, 60 fighting aeroplanes, 500,000 gas masks and a large quantity of explosives, artillery amunition and field kitchens...

Pravda 21. 4.

I do not underestimate the idealistic spirit of the Slav, but what is nearer to my own heart is his strong arm.

President Masaryk in an interview with a Yugo-Slav journalist.

The army... and war will remain in spite of all the desires and strivings of one of the elements of civilization.

The Anti-militarism of the Czech soldier. *Sociologicke Revju* 1. 31

France for us as for other nations constitutes a natural counterpoise for the influence of Germany as a great power in the centre ot Europe. When Russia is in a normal condition, she will also constitute such a counterpoise.

E. Benes The Underlying Principles of our Foreign policy. *Soc. Revju* 1. 31

The Czecho-Slovakian government cannot express its opinion, or take up any definite position until it knows what is the position of the great powers.

Matousek, Minister of Trade. Speech made with reference to the establishment of a Customs Union between Cermany and Austria.

To speak of the military activities of Marshal Foche is not part of my duties, but I cannot help calling attention to the friendly and skilful way in which he united the allied armies during the war. I hope that this example of unbroken unity will be taken as a basis for a union between us and our former enemies. France must here play the leading part.

Prague 4. 31. T. Massaryk.

In all the different aspects of France's development, it can be seen how a fighting centre is being formed against

the Eastern enemy. It will not be very long before France makes an unconditional proposal to the remaining nations to form a united front and when this happens western economic individualism and separatism, (i. e. capitalism) will be correcting, although somewhat late in the day, its former mistakes (i. e. it will be making up for lost time by fighting against the Sovet Union). The Russian danger will eventually unite the European nations into a single family.

From the periodical entitled *Bankir* published by the Bankers'House, I. Lion, Prague.

BUSY PEOPLE.

The forthcoming congress of the national-socialist party is being called at the most critical period of the economic depression, and it will discuss before anything else a real and practical program for the future activities of the party, for the fight for peace and the daily needs of the toiling masses and therefore there will be no time for any academic discussions about social Utopias of Lenins and Stalins.

Ceskoe Slovo 28. 3.

After this it was the turn of the Russian emigrant Lazaref to speak. He thanked in the warmest terms the national socialist party and the congress for the sympathy they had shown towards his fatherland and for all the efforts that were being made for a revival of democratic Russia.

He was deeply moved also in thanking our government and republic for the hospitality and assistance which had been shown to the Russian emigrants. At his words the congress broke out into cheers for their brother people, the Russians and the chairman, Klofac turning to Lazaref thanked him for the sympathy he had shown. Raising his voice he wished the Russian delegates an early return to liberated democratic Russia and added "I hope, my friend, that it will be soon." Professor Lazaref, greatly stirred, then rose up and cried "It will be soon." After this moving interlude the congress again broke into applause, crying "To the Russian People" thus again demonsstrating their love towards democratic Russia.

Ceskoe Slovo no 94.

It must be said that *Ceskoe Slovo* gave a full enough account of Lazaref's speech, but it left out just one small detail, which was that both Lazarefs's words and Klofac's answer were applauded by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, E. Benes.

Rude Pravo no 60. no. 4.

WE REPRESENT AN ISLAND OF PEACE AND QUIET

On Sunday 22nd March at 7.15 p. m. in Petakov Place in Pilzen shots were heard from the direction of the "National Liberation" Memorial. A twenty four year old clerk Antonin Picha from Skornjan had fired them. He fired three shots into the statue of Masaryk, and with the fourth he blew out his brains. the statue of Masaryk was damaged in three places, in the lower part of the stomach, in the chest and in the upper part of the head. Picha himself fell down dead at the foot of the statue.

From the Pilzen *Pravda*

LITHUANIA

THE THIRD FRONT

Last year there was launched a magazine called *Third Front*, the organ of the "Alliance of Writing Activists." In this alliance, there are united many Lithuanian petty-bourgeois writers including K. Boruta, A. Bentz lova, I. Radzhvilas, I. Schamkous and P. Tzvarka, who had formerly grouped themselves around social-fascist and national-liberal organs. These "activists" even now contribute to these organs and this shows their stand on political and creative question.

In spite of their apparent revolutionism and their criticisms of philistine-symbolic, bourgeois literature, these "Third Fronters" comprise the social-fascist wing of Lithuanian literature. With their "activism" they draw the attention of the revolutionary laboring masses and the radical intelligentsia away from real revolutionary struggle. It is true, though, that recent numbers of this magazine show a certain advance on the Declaration made in their fourth issue, in which it was stated that they do not want to destroy anything but engage in constructive work in the Fascist Lithuania of to-day. Particularly characteristic is the especial friendliness of the *Third Front* to the USSR and proletarian literature

They give favorable and unbiased information about Soviet proletarian writers, and also those of Germany, and their last number contained information on the conference of proletarian writers held in Kharkov. Nevertheless, this external sympathy of the *Third Front* at a time when most of their leading writers are hand in glove with the social-fascists can be lookedon only as a method of gaining the trust and esteem of the Lithuanian laboring masses with whom the ideas of socialist construction in the USSR and of proletarian literature are very popular.

The task now before the proletarian writers and the communist press is to disclose the real pakure of the *Third Front*.

NEW ORGAN OF PROLETARIAN LITERATURE

After *The Spark* ceased publication in 1926, Lithuanian proletarian writers had no organ of their own for a long time. This of course, hindered the growth of their proletarian literature and its fight against pseudo-proletarian literature and petty-bourgeois tendencies both within itself and other groupings. Recently, however, there has appeared in Moscow a twomonthly magazine, *The Anvil*, devoted to literature and social culture; this magazine is issued by the Lithuanian section of the Proletarian Writers' Society of Moscow. The first number appeared in April of this year, with Comrades Mitzevitch-Kapsoukas, Pranskous, Varnekas, and other as editors. One of the immediate tasks facing this magazine is to unite those Lithuanian proletarian writers who are scattered over the USSR, to work towards discovering and encouraging new writers from the ranks of the worker and peasant correspondento and also from among numerous Lithuanian revolutionary immigrants. It is hoped that they will be successful also in attracting Lithuanian proletarian writers from America, and also, as much as possible, from fascist Lithuania herself. The Lithuanian section of the Proletarian Writers' Society of Moscow has advanced the question of organizing a Lithuanian section of the International Union of Revolutionary writers or at any rate of having a special representative in the latter body in order to link up the Lithuanian proletarian writers in the USSR with those in America, and the beginnings of proletarian literature in Lithuania itself.

THE LITHUANIAN UNION OF PROLETARIAN ART IN AMERICA

For well nigh ten years the Lithuanian Union of Proletarian Art has been in existence. It unites Lithuanian workers, dramatic groups, choirs, literary circles, etc. (altogether 2 000 members). In their membership are to be found many worker poets and writers. This organization actively participates in the workers' revolutionary movement, and has its weekly page in the Lithuanian communist newspaper printed in the city of Brooklyn. Until last year's convention their Central Bureau had its headquarters in Chicago, and a weekly page, *Proletarian Art*, was to be found in the organ of the Lithuanian section of the Communist Party of America, issued in Chicago.

Until very recently the work of this organization, as well as its weekly pages showed many opportunistic mistakes (the staging of ideological hostile plays and sketches, etc., the publishing in *Proletarian Art* of unsuitable literary material, and finally the absence of sufficient criticism and selfcriticism) insufficient influence was wielded by the Communist Party. The chief work done was to help the workers' revolutionary movement by the staging of plays, organization of concerts, etc., but insufficient use of made of Art in the education of the working masses. And these shortcomings have not yet been overcome. One of the weak points in this organization is that it lacks necessary connection with similar workers organizations in America, with the workers newspapers and magazines, with the American section of MOPR and the "International Labor Defense." These connections must be established.

HUNGARY

CULTURE ACCORDING TO HORTHY

1

Budapest, Erzsèbetkörút 26. On the door may be seen this notice: "Entrance through the main stair-case prohibited to workers."

2

In the Gödölö District, Horthy's place of residence, a Judge, after a burglary, ordered finger-prints to be taken of some hundreds of unemployed workers.

3

According to information given by the Budapest Ambulance Society in December, 1930, 3 proletarian women gave birth out on the streets. For January, 1931 the figure was 99.

4

The courageous revolutionary Hungarian novelist, Sandor Gergely, appeared in court to answer a charge of "incitement against the State and Public Order." In the organ of the peasant-laborers, the *Peasants Newspaper*, which is now already closed, he wrote a number of powerful articles on the conditions of the rural proletariat, the bloody dictatorship of Hungarian Fascism, the overcrowded prisons, etc. He was sentenced to six months imprisonment, but this was later reduced to three. The fact that he was able to prove the correctness of what he had written did not help him in the least. The sentence was announced in the following classical manner: "Publishing information about existing abnormalities is equivalent to incitement!"

5

A letter published in the Fascist paper *Magyarsvag* states that in the Tapiosvag District the teachers have received no salary for over six months. It seems that it is harmful to corrupt future cannonfodder with learning.

Fascist Arithmetic

According to information supplied by the Hungarian Bureau of Statistics the number of enterprises with an 8-hour day has decreased, during the past 5 years, from 50,6% to 46,1%.

In Budapest, during the past 8 months, in comparison with the same period in 1929, consumption of bread fell by 33%

According to a report issued by the Metropolitan Charity Committee, hundreds of jobless and children collect spoiled vegetables along the Danube banks and on the market place, this refuse being their only means of subsistence.

Poetry and Prose

Fear not and heed not the winter cold
and grey,
Fear only the wind from the East
The bitter wind of March alone shall bring
you ill,
In March it will blow from its ancient shores;
It will rend you and ruin your homestead
old and poor,
Uprooting the trees as it blows
In its frantic course o'er the plain.

(from a poem by the Fascist poet Lajos Aprily in *Magyarsgag.)*

B u d a p e s t. Collision between unemployed and police; thirty workers injured; twelve arrested. Strange explanation by the Minister of Internal Affairs, in Parliament: "The Democrats have offended the executive power, and therefore there could be no question of mercy... The police deserve the greatest gratitude of bourgeois society" (applause).

Social-Democratic Don Quixote and the Mills

The Social Democratic poet, Lajos Fekete has had the following verse in the social-democratic organ *Nepsztva.*

Hungarian mills are standing at rest,
German mills are standing at rest,
Standing at rest are mills all over the world
Millions of mills are standing still!
Tempest! Catch hold of my pensive working
wing!
And you — gigantic mill-stones —
Rend in twain
The rotting old world.

N o t e: This social-democratic poet of course is not obliged to be in the swim as to the world's flour-milling business. But the fact that in the Soviet Union the mills have no time to stand idle but are instead working at full speed — this fact even a social-democratic poet ought to have known, if only through the slanderous campaign of the social-democratic press against Soviet "Dumping."

Plagiarists of Revolutionary Literature

The Paris group of Hungarian revolutionary writers and artists published in the Paris

Hungarian Communist organ *Sikrasz* an energetic protest against the systematic plagiarism which is being carried on by the Hungarian Social Fascist paper "*Itt az Irás*", (Here are writings), well-known in Paris. This social-fascist paper has on many occasions printed the poems of Hungarian revolutionary poets (including Antal Hidas), always printing them without signature or over a false signature. We perfectly understand the miserable and helpless plight of all social-fascist literary enterprises, including those in Paris. Having no revolutionary literature of their own, these social-fascist literature-mongers simply take what they need from wherever they wish. But is not this called "expropriation" — the very same expropriation which the social-fascist democracy is denouncing as the tactics of the plundering bolsheviks. This magazine, "Here are (Stolen) *Writings* should remember this once and for all.

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The Hungarian Section of the Paris *Monde* has printed in Hungarian a series of interesting translations *Chocolate* by Tarasov-Rodionov, *The Adventures of Svejk* by J. Khashek, and *The 1902 Generation* by Gläser.

In Baku has just appeared in print, in the Turkish language the first part of "Tissa is Burning" by Béla Illés (The Az-Giz Publishers). The press in Turkey, even the bourgeois press there has given much attention to this splendid novel of the well known Hungarian revolutionary writer.

CHINA

The Cultural Policy of Chan-Kai-Shi

From the moment Chan-Kai-Shi was appointed minister of Education the white terror against the left-wing cultural organisations became very much more violent. The writers of the left block, who during the previous few months had been working semi-legally, were hunted down and on the 7th. February were shot in Shanghai. There were four young revolutionary writers and among them a woman. Many writers were arrested and some of them were obliged to emigrate. Those who were able to keep on in an illegal position are living under extremely difficult conditions and are deprived of any opportunity of having their work printed in any form whatever.

All firms who publish revolutionary works are subject to the most cruel persecution. Some of them are closed and the others are deprived of all means of existence since it is prohibited to print left-wing literature and there is no demand for reactionary literature. The large publishers Chun-Hua are threatened with bankruptcy. Another large publisher has had to give up printing fiction altogether.

Nothing has ever been known to equal the arbitrariness of the Kuomintang censor. They confiscate all books with red covers. Even the harmless *Duel* of Chekhov has been suppressed on the grounds that the word "duel" in Chinese *tzue-dou* also means struggle and the Chinese censor sees in it a reference to the class struggle.

Soviet books are not allowed into China and their distribution is prosecuted by the law with the greatest severity. Nationalist literature, which is given every encouragement by the Kuomintang, cannot find any public. Not long ago the chief nationalist literary periodical *Vanguard* was published, and 2,000 copies printed, but it only found 20 subscribers so that practically the whole edition remained on the shelves. The firm publishing this periodical only exists by virtue of an enormous subsidy from the government.

Translated revolutionary literature is banned in the same way as that written in Chinese. Sinclair's works are prohibited if the translator is a left-wing writer (for example Go-Ma-Sho). Of the works of the well known Chinese revolutionary writer Lu-Sima, only his early books are permitted; all those written later than 1928 are prohibited.

A group of left-wing students made an adaptation for the theatre of Lavrenev's story *The Forty First*, and, in spite of great difficulties, succeeded in producing it in two universities. The performances took place in the presence of police agents who prohibited any dangerous phrases.

The Soviet films which find most response amongst the masses are prohibited. The only one that is allowed is Pudovkin's *The Descendent of Genghis Khan* which, after suitable alterations to suit the nationalist taste, was shown in Shanghai under the title of *The Patriotic Spirit*. The whole film was mutilated by the censor, not only by the cutting out of everything revolutionary and the alteration of the subtitles but also by changes of their own in the pictures (for instance at the end of the film the censor ingeniously replaced the red flag with the blue and white).

Left-wing organisations succeeded in showing a few Soviet films by advertising them as German.

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