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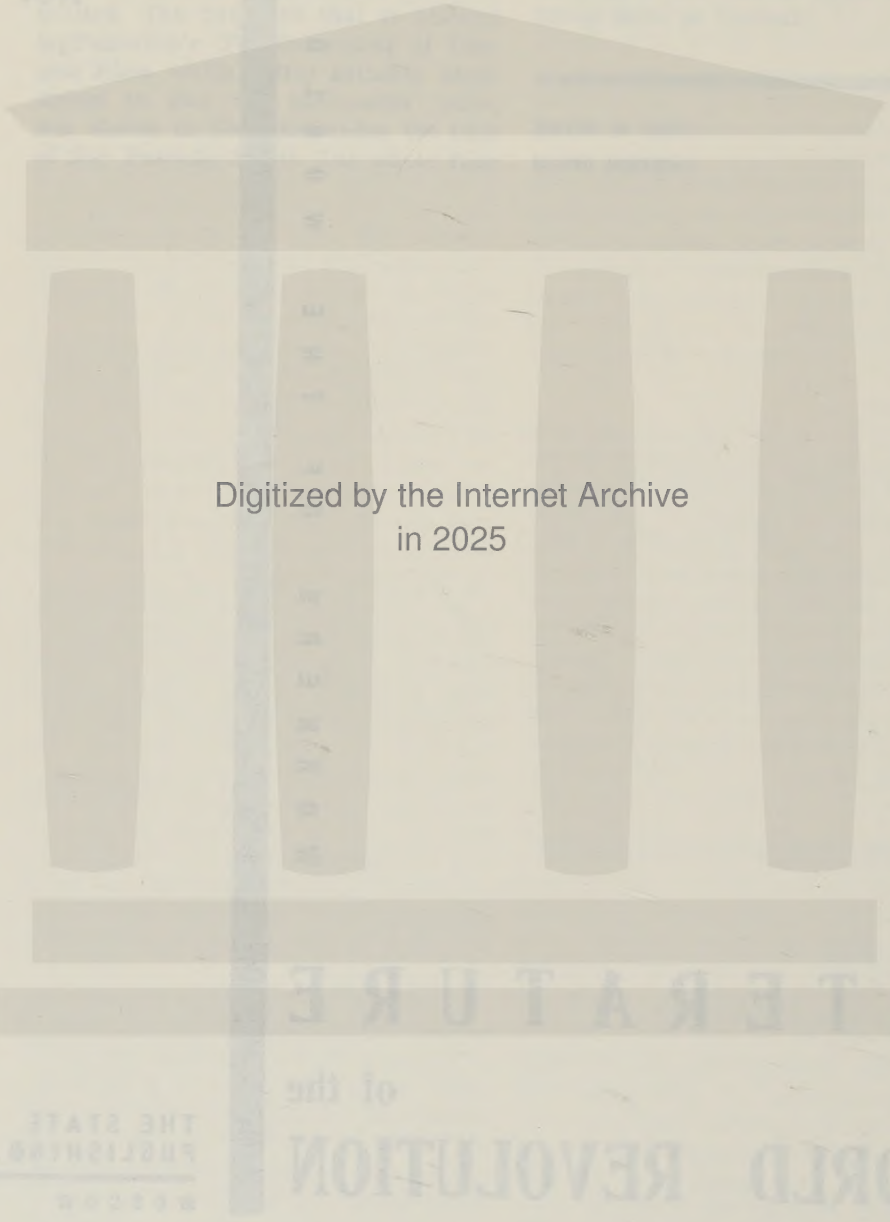


L. Ovalov

CHATTER

There, again! She's burned my notes again, just to spite me. As though she would somehow feel easier in her mind if I didn't write. How can I help writing? I mustn't write? For me it's quite like talking. But from my pen it'll be none the better for my wife, or god, or the foremen, or myself...

It never rains but it pours. This morning I got called "old fool." I admit you don't have to be very bright to step on your neighbour's foot in the trolley-car. But I wasn't able to bite my tongue in time and called her an "old bonnet." She took me literally, got insulted on account of the vegetable-garden which sat on her head, and added to "fool," "boor." Oh, is that so? All right then! The entire car took part in the scrimmage. But only the two of us got put off. I sincerely wished the old hen "Good luck" and since I don't have money to spare, I trotted along to the printingshop. I got to work on time, just the same. I hurried up to the type-case with the copy the page-setter had given me and carried away in my hands the lead letters, like swarms of lively gnats. It seemed as if they were humming. I got absorbed in my work, and did'nt waste any time fooling with my neighbors. And so I got it good and plenty from them. Why? For working too well! Have the kindness to observe that no one can keep up with me, and if it's easy for me to pound out my money, the rest are sick and tired of trying to stick to my pace — they can't come up to the rate I set. I wasn't stumped for an answer. You don't like my work? Well, I don't think much of yours. Toss your composing-stick, stamp your feet — you do that much better. In short, we quarreled. Until evening I was left to commune with myself, but such society did not suit me. I went along to the shop-meeting on improving our work. They were talking about their defects. Defects? Well, that's the place for me. Deficiencies? I can say a thing or two on that score. But I had just about gotten started when they announced: "Your time is up." My time? Not much time! Five minutes? In five minutes you can't say what you have on your mind. You didn't give me time to talk — I won't listen to you. So I decided to go and complain to the youth of to-day, to my grandson. My son has a lively three-year old youngster and a good wife (although I don't particularly like her). I must say, my daughter-in-law rubs me the wrong way: on her account my son moved to a new apartment. Well, maybe she was right. My basement is not too large and comfortable. Narrowness, mustiness, a rough and illiterate old woman — I'm used to all that—are enough to wear out even a less delicate daughter-in-law. Yet both wives, mine and my son's, there's not much to choose between them. But why am I gossipping about my daughter-in-law: she is my son's. I had to buy a bit of chocolate candy for the grandson, though. When I got to the house, I gaily banged the

door and snatched up the blooming little toddler, in my old man's rough embrace.

"Huh," said I, "how pale he is! Send him out into the street, into the frost — he'll soon be covered with a ruddy glow."

You should have seen the pining little fellow fairly leap with delight! But after all you can't let a nice little boy go out with a too common old man like me.

"No, Vladimir Petrovitch," my daughter-in-law, Nina Borisovna drily declared, "Leo won't go out, — the wind is too sharp to-day."

I answered: "Sharp? Thousands of children are playing in the street and there's very little harm done if one of them freezes an ear, — there's snow enough to go round, and there's no use in waiting for warm weather: with our climate children have to learn to like bad weather."

All right, he can't go for a walk, — let's console the grandson with chocolate candy. It was great fun to watch how gleefully the little devil took the penny present.

But Nina Borisovna interfered again, "We give Leo only milk chocolate. Take your candy back, Vladimir Petrovich."

Drat the woman! I took the candy, thrust it into my pocket, growled a good-bye, and without looking at the howling kid, cleared out in a hurry and went home. The old woman greeted me quite decently and did not even grumble through dinner. But, to my misfortune, I asked her to sew a button on my trousers — and she brought to light the half-melted chocolate in my pocket. Good lord, what a racket started then! I turned out to be an old, doddering, debased swindler; I snatch the last pennies from our family; by my thefts I devour an immense quantity of sweets (she's knows darn well I never eat sweet things). Well what if I did get drunk continually on stolen money — she'd understand that: all the neighbors do that. But eating candy on the sly! Honest to god, I grabbed the pants and pulled them on over my head. I don't know how I stood the whole torrent of abuse — there was no use trying to justify myself. But the conclusion she came to pleased me mighty well: she wrapped the mussy chocolate up in a piece of paper and shouted by way of reproach:

"I'll take this chocolate to our dear little grandson!"

Then I burst out laughing: "Take it to him, darling," thought I to myself, "they'll give you a warm welcome." After that our exchange of compliments began to lose its pep and without waiting for my daughter to come in, I flopped down on the bed, and my wife could then go on singing her little song to the accompaniment of the brasses and violins in my nasal orchestra.

Waking up was beautiful. A slanting sunbeam dodged about the floor, played on the table with thousands of merry dust specks and tickled my eyes. Today is Sunday. It is quiet in the flat. Everyone is gone; they have all scattered to tend to their little human needs postponed till the holiday. I am alone. The old woman is spending the morning in church, then she will hurry to the market. The market is more interesting than the church, — she will stay there longer, and on the way home she will take the chocolate to our grandson... Good lord, what a welcome she'll get! She'll get so angry that she'll go around to call on at least two or three cronies to pour out her bile against me, against our daughter-in-law, against the high cost of living, and, of course, against the Bol-

sheviks. My daughter Valentina spent a long time this morning twisting and turning before the mirror, tying her pioneer's necktie, and now with her whole brigade she is bawling out Young Communist songs — in our time the songs were better — and she will go on a suburban train to the first station for the regular Sunday skiing.

I am alone. What a blessing! I can get up leisurely, wash, snort and groan as much as I like, drink the cup of milk the old woman left for me, and sit down to my notes.

But to-day I can't find them. The stubborn old pest has destroyed them again, down to the last scrap. And what had she got against my notes anyway? It must be that she senses how much there is about her in them. Yet she must know that it is laid up for us all there, all fellows under the skin, — and only from love to me does she destroy a document which witnesses to my hostility to the world.

To spite her let's begin the notes for the third time.

Vladimir Petrovich, please shave! And indeed why not shave? During the week the bristle has grown to one and a half times the length of my fingers. It's a good thing the old woman and I sleep back to back. For what would it be like if we were to become young again, — she would get up every day covered with scratches.

I'm a well preserved man. There's no suggestion of baldness, my hair is thick, and it even covers carefully the healed patch over my left ear. I remember even before my marriage the few wrinkles on my face, — time has not added any new ones. It's true, I'm lean, but not from ill-health. My nose is too red, — well what of it, it is a bright and lively reminder of all the victories I have carried off against whole regiments of beer bottles, against the esquadrilles of north winds, against my fingers' explorations (yes, I enjoy digging at my nose with my finger). The small eyes hop quickly from spot to spot — so again the roving glance has followed a swirling cloud of sun dust, — look out while the razor nicks into the chin. Serve's you right: eyes front.

To-day I have a lot of free time. Let's dip into the past — I'm sick and tired of the present.

Uncle, how old are you? Damn it, I can't be fifty four? But my wife is — yes, you're right, it's a long time since she was a girl, — all of fifty seven. And what fidelity, what constancy! Involuntarily I look at our plain, wide bed, covered with a patchquilt. Old friend, how dear you are to me! We bought you before our marriage. For thirty years you have comforted our bodies, warmed us and blessed us, divided and reconciled us, you have groaned louder and shaken stronger than my wife on whom I bent to the attack in storm and weather.

When we were married, we had only you and a big-bellied commode which we burned in nineteen — it was your good luck that you were made of iron.

How dear old Anna howled on you, when she gave birth to our son! Praise to you, oh lord, Ivan has passed twenty seven and he hasn't left me without a grandson. Anna Nikolayevna [1] didn't groan so loud — and she was pretty late with the girl, — when she presented me with Valentina twelve years ago. Only two kids. Not many, but better than if there had been a dozen of them and ten of them had died. I've only two, but they're alive and healthy.

The boy didn't take after me.

[1] Anna Nikolayevna, his wife.

My father — may the earth lie light above him like a feather, — was considered one of the best weavers in Kondrashov's factory in Shchelkovo. He worked all in all forty years and would have worked another ten, if he hadn't drowned in the Kliazma River before his time. He had a lot of kids. We lived in a hungry sort of way and at thirteen a friend helped to get me apprenticed in a printer's shop. Hallo, papa! I've beat you, — I've begun the fifth decade at my work and if connoisseurs couldn't tell your velvets and neapolitans from those of Lyons, well, there aren't many typesetters in Moscow like your son. I won't pat myself on the back. My wages speak for me: two hundred roubles a month — you never saw so much money, as that in a year. And that's for eight hours' work! I still remember how you used to work for sixteen during the rush season. Times have changed: now the owner of the printer's shop is myself. Do you understand, old skeleton, — myself. And they can't take that away from me. And then there's my son. He began as a proof-taker, went over to the binding, but hearing the call "Workers, to horse!" went off as a volunteer to the front. In that matter the old woman and I were of different opinions. She said it wasn't worth fighting on account of the Russian printing-shop, — they would take it away anyhow. But we had a good make-up man, and of late our country has been set as it ought to be. My son didn't come back to the bench, though. In the army he became a communist and had no sooner thrown off his armycoat, than — it sounds like a joke! — he was appointed a member of the management of our printing trust. Just imagine, a worker like him, a specialist! He had spent something like six years at work, he had only just begun to get some sort of qualifications. But because you are a communist, kindly manage us, who have lost lungs and eyes on the job.

There's no use in fibbing: I have both my lungs and my eyes.

Ivan married a communist whom he met at the front. Nina Borisovna practically recommended him for party-membership.

Nina Borisovna was a communist when she married him. She worked in the agitation sector, in the theater, or gave lectures or something like that. But the lady in her was soon to be seen: plenty of money (her father, an engineer, still helped her); when the boy was born, she called him Leo in honor of Trotsky. Now Leo must not be out in the wind, Leo must have an enema. Ivan must have foreign made socks, she must have a servant and a concert subscription. Why, she finally hadn't enough time for life — it was just one full existence.

But they live well together, and love each other deeply, it seems.

Valentina gives me more pleasure — she'll bear her children bravely and she's not the kind that hides from the wind. No, she doesn't hide. She'll darn her stockings, but not sell her birthright for a customs stamp. And so learn, learn, little girl, it's a blessing you learn well.

You get accustomed somehow to the dirty little house after living in it for fifteen years. You get used to it and you call your feeling, which is after all nothing but a nasty litle habit, love. But while we don't mind wasting our weak human feelings on the trifles that surround us, we often don't dare to love our work. Many men are anxious to get away from the often dusty — who is to blame for that, except ourselves?— bench. They hurry home to the steaming diapers, take refuge in the familiar little room, lean their elbows on the chipped window-sill, and sticking out their head between the branches of the pale green, never blooming geranium, they breathe the dust of the street.

I love my printing shop.

I remember when it was small and belonged to a department imperturbable in its official placidity. I recall its slow, unbroken rise.

I have not forgotten its dark setting-room, with low ceilings, with narrow windows that let in the light stingily. It was not good to work there. You stood on the compressing-machine and touched the ceiling with your hand.

Now it has become better. Not much, but at least a little better. The ceiling brown with dirt, crisscrossed with beams, has been raised. The beams have been moved high up and hidden under an even white surface, and the ceiling no longer reminds you of a coffin-lid. Great windows have been cut out, — the narrow cracks have been replaced by panes of glass which let in lots of light and are washed clean.

But all is not well in the shop at present.

"It sure does wear you out," the women workers complain in chorus. "While you're washing the type, you can't breathe, your eyes flood with tears. And all on account of the turpentine..."

The whole printing shop is saturated with the heavy, acrid smell of cheap turpentine. Our director had a piece of good luck with the turpentine. I don't know where he dug it out, but you couldn't find worse anywhere. True enough, this sort of turpentine is cheap, washing the type costs the printing shop a bare penny, but it's no fun working — it's dangerous.

The printing department went to the director to complain.

"Do you expect us to sprinkle perfumes?" asked the director coldly.

Lots of dust. The dust is mean, annoying, hard to fight, — there are no bellows or ventilators. No ventilators? Don't lie, Morozov, don't lie. There are ventilators. They were put in a long time ago, and it's true it's pleasant to look at them from time to time. Oh, they don't work, you mean? Right you are. But none the less there are ventilators. Morozov, did you wink your eye slily?.. Rascal! You know, they are intended not for the fight against the dust, but for... Well let's pass that over. Perhaps, some day you'll say what the ventilators are intended for.

It's tough working evenings. There are few electric lights and like stars hopelessly far away, they twinkle away up high. They twinkle with a feeble reddish light — they are carbon. The incandescence is weak in the lamps and in us, — if they glowed more, we could get a clear light. We can't always avoid night work. Then you have to set type practically by touch and read the copy by pressing your nose against it.

But our worst difficulty is that things are not in place, they are disarranged, they get done only after a fashion.

You come to work in the morning, receive the galley-proof, — you have to correct by the author's proof-reading. You glance at the proof, there are few corrections. You praise the indolent author and — sigh; for in the upper left-hand corner is the mark "o. f.". That means, on the floor.

Our printing-shop is deluged with orders. The type setting department is not large. The boards with galley-proofs are heaped in corners, piled against the wall, thrown down anywhere at all.

On seeing the fatal note, the type-setter begins to crawl around the floor. The search for the necessary board continues for an hour or two. But let's hope, for god's sake, it's not a rush order! The director himself comes running in and begins to rummage in every corner. The page-setter helps the director. And the type-setter gets himself called a fool, gazes on the swearing director, on the page-setter echoing him,

loses his working time, and waits, waits exhaustingly until they at last find the necessary galley proof, after upsetting twenty boards.

There's disorder at our shop, fundamental disorder!

And yet I love the printing shop — my own, my good, my good-for-nothing printing shop.

They have just come to call us to the meeting of the cooperative building society.

I shan't go! This empty talking has got on my nerves. Pechkin stretches himself out at the table — he is a bookeeper in the Commissariat of Finance — folds his arms proudly, sniffs the air with his sharp little nose and begins his peroration:

"Citizens, citizens! The house needs repairs. We must repair the roof, replaster the walls, renew the window frames, put supports under the left wing. It is falling in. Citizens, there are no funds."

At this point Pechkin rolls his eyes, sighs and continues with a burst of enthusiasm:

"We shan't be able to do all this. But anyway let's give the house a decent appearence. Let's at least paint it on the street side. Let's put a voluntary tax on ourselves, one ruble per member, and paint it."

The clerk from the grocery store, that grumbler Samoilovich, always thrashing around in the back rows, shouts wrathfully:

"Burzhui! Not one ruble per member, but in proportion to the rent... You intellectual!"

"Yes, I am an intellectual," Pechkin replies with pride, straightening his flowered calico tie, "I am an intellectual and I'm for culture: at least let the appearance of the house be decent."

Samoilovich and Pechkin are absolutely bound to curse each other out. Everyone takes part in the quarrel. They will call each other "burzhui" and "boor," and without settling the question as to ways and means, they begin to vote whether to paint the house rose or green.

I shan't go to the meeting.

The bell. Time out.

My neighbor Klimov gave a determined thump with his composing-stick, the unfinished line jumped, — and he lounged off to the door.

I came up to him by the wash-stand and sideways, as if I didn't notice him, I squeezed in front and shut off the tap.

"Old, decrepit, and not tired of cutting up," Klimov grumbled reproachfully, giving me a pretty strong slap on the shoulder.

"Well, just imagine, little boy!" I came back at him. "Doesn't know how to stand up for himself. Let's see how you wrestle!"

"Maybe, you thought, I'd let you off?" Klimov asked mockingly.

Leisurely we washed our hands, blew our noses (how much filth gets packed in our noses!) and went back to our shop.

The lunch counter in the printing shop is crowded; when five fellows are stuffed in there, there's no room to turn around. Most of the workers prefer to eat their lunch where they work.

When we returned, the chequers game was in full swing. The lunch time scarcely begins before our Young Communists attack their game without any delay. There aren't any chequermen, — instead of chequermen they use squares or rectangles. They sulk over their chequers

through the whole recess. In one hand a bun, in the other the lead square.

Klimov carefully unwraps the bundle brought from home, takes out the bottle of milk, a sizeable hunk of black bread and a piece of boiled meat. He carefully lays all that out on the paper and, stroking his whiskers in a businesslike way, — his whiskers are beginning to turn grey — without any haste he dispatches into his mouth the bits of bread pinched off by his fat fingers, he drinks his milk, and in a leisurely way, while he eats, he converses with me, his constant neighbor at work.

We used to dislike each other. He is a sceptic. I believe in my work, I believe in the good life, I believe in myself. And Klimov is always making fun of me. But we shall see who will laugh last. We got tired of perpetually exchanging caustic compliments, gradually began to let fly spiteful remarks at each other, finally got used to our bad characters and now chat all the time about our work. In this respect Klimov won me over, here the sceptic came out on top. In our printingshop it is hard to believe in anything; you can't make head or tail out of such disorder.

Klimov waved his arm, shook his hairy fist in the direction of the door and not adressing anyone in particular, shouted out his old threat:

"Hey, go on, heap it on, put things to pieces — there's no boss, hang the foremen, the sons of bitches!"

Unexpectedly an excited voice sounded through the door:

"Senseless tongue-wagger!"

Kukushkin, secretary of the party cell, came into the shop. He's not a bad chap, but scatter brained. Well, like printing shop, like secretary. No, rather it would be truer to say: like secretary, like printing shop. "What's the secretary got to do with it?" my neighbors often ask me. Nothing, of course. But where the secretary is artful, everyone will work well. All the workers call Kukushkin "Cuckoo": they nicknamed him according to his own name but the nickname turned out to be true. The cuckoo is always beginning something, her head is full of devices, she lays her eggs everywhere but never hatches them; she doesn't bring a single task to completion. I don't say cuckoo is a bad Communist: but he was'nt cut out to be a leader.

Cuckoo came in, turned a scornful gaze upon us and asked as if displeased: "Klimov, was that you crabbing?"

"And suppose it was?" challenged Klimov.

"You're all like that, but you do nothing to help." Cuckoo reproached him. "You couldn't come to our production meetings, but spend all your time at work complaining."

In a glance Klimov and I came to an understanding, in friendly alliance we bore down on Cuckoo:

"They call us to the meetings?"

"Lash the waves with a whip?"

"What can you say in five minutes?"

"Learn from suckling babies?"

Cuckoo withered. He had no trumps left. Most of the workers had not the slightest understanding of the production meetings; they talked about all sorts of trifles, and as soon as the discussion reached anything concrete, Cuckoo himself would interrupt, "That's not for us to decide, the management will take care of that without us..."

Cuckoo said, as if to excuse himself; "Come to-day! Be sure to come. The meeting is called for eight; we'll be a little bit late, we'll begin about nine."

Could anyone remain polite at that?

I pitched in: "Oh, is that so! We'll begin at nine! Why don't you begin even later? Not one good workman will take part in your social work. At work to-morrow at seven? At seven. But in order to work well, you have to get a good night's rest. You haven't a comeback." I spoke still more sharply, catching Cuckoo's desire to object:—"Among Communists everything is different from among ordinary mortals. People sleep, you hold sittings, but in the morning you nod over your work. No, the party doesn't look after its members. If it were up to me I should order every Communist to be sure to sleep eight hours every night, but you do just the opposite — why, work all the twenty-four hours straight through. You don't notice that a man does less in twenty four hours' uninterrupted work than in eight hours after a good rest."

Cuckoo was about to object; but chance robbed him of the opportunity. An accordeon-player squeezed through the door of the setting room, settled down among the composing-sticks where the workers were having their lunch and began to play his sweet melodies. A playful waltz swept through the composing-room.

Cuckoo's eye-brows crawled higher on his pimply, white forehead.

"What is this?" he cried "Who let the accordeon-player in here? I shall immediately find out from the managing committee."

And he ran off displeased, pursued by bursts of sound.

"As a matter of fact, where is the music from?" Klimov addressed his neighbors.

"The works committee," the printer's devil, Loskutov, explained, "has thought up a cultural diversion for the rest period."

"But Cuckoo didn't know about it?" Klimov gloated.

"Evidently he didn't." I snorted.

"Gee, that's dandy," Loskutov burst out laughing; "Cuckoo is cursing everyone out in the works committee, oh God forbid."

And just as if to spite Cuckoo the boys drawled out their rollicking Young Communist song.

Attracted by the music our director, comrade Klevtzov, came into the composing-room. He is a man whom all esteem highly. Nevertheless some things could be said about him too; he could be jacked up a bit. Klivtzov knows how to work, there's no question of that, he's a good worker. But he imagines that he's got a head a yard long on his shoulders. Not a yard, but a foot would be about right. And so Klevtzov decides he doesn't need anyone's help and he doesn't want to listen to any advice. He wants to do everything himself, because he thinks everybody else is a fool. Well you won't do everything alone; the time will come when you'll have to ask the janitor how to sweep the street. One head is good, two are better. When Klevtzov catches on so that there'll be more order in the printingshop.

"Having fun?" the director asks.

"You bet," we answer.

"Well, go to it," says the director and goes on.

"Sure thing," we say to his retreating back as we go on with our song.

He asked about fun! No need to ask how we are getting on with the work.

Although Scotch whiskey is stronger than our vodka, it sits much lighter. You drink a bit too much vodka, and everything seems wrong

in your soul and a drunken maddiness keeps you from seeing straight. You drink a lot of whiskey, and your head is clear — but just you try to stand up! Your legs won't obey. It gets you in the legs, all right. If only it didn't smell of the drugstore, it would be a marvellous drink...

In our printingshop a number of popular illustrated magazines are put out. Making a good magazine is a great art. You must arrange the drawings with taste, distribute the text so as to make it attractive and give the stereotype block an edging that will make a connoisseur dizzy. A connoisseur would be even dizzier if he could hear us cursing over the composing.

Just about the best page-setter among us is Pavel Aleksandrovich Gertner. Looking like a foreigner, glossy, obliging, he is always accompanied by the bland shine of large, hexagonal glasses. Nowadays every novice reporter wears celluloid glasses, black or yellow, they are all awful — you notice at once how hard the chap is trying to be stylish. But Gertner's are real glasses, not an imitation of foreign ones; they were ordered from Chicago — and the rims are of real horn. And nevertheless Gertner, despite his foreign glass is one of the boys, and pleasant, able to talk with the workers in their own language.

When he comes at night to set up the magazine, Gertner often brings whiskey with him. He makes himself at home in the separate cubby-hole of the make-up men, carefully places his coat and hat on the table, takes off his brown jacket and hangs it from the electric light switch, and with his blue pencil lies right down on the table, bending low over the grey proofs. From time to time he interrupts his work, comes out to the composing room to have a chat with us, quarrels with the page-setter and invites us to his cubby-hole. We are very glad to go — no one minds being treated to the nice-tasting Scotch vodka, and in turn, when we have any government liquor — and there's no use hiding one's sins, it does happen — we treat him to it. Gertner doesn't put on any airs; he drinks, and neither we, nor he ever remain in debt to the other.

That night we started up the usual conversation. Someone of us was complaining of his kennel of a mudhut. I also grumbled about my cold basement. Gertner sighed, cursed out his ugly little room: it was tiny and uncomfortable. Well, we would have fussed around a bit more and as quickly jumped over to another subject, aren't there plenty of things to fuss about? But Gertner jammed his hands into his pockets, humped up his shoulders thoughtfully and pronounced aloud the thought which came into his head: "But why shouldn't we organize our own building cooperative society?"

This marked the beginning of our house.

L. Ovalov
Chatter

It is quiet in the composing-room. The work continues steadily, each one is busy with his job; yet the place is unusually quiet. There is none of the intense, working fuss. Work is being done, and fine enough work, at that. When there is a hold-up no one bothers about it.

"Comrade foreman, what shall I do?" type-setter Andrievich addresses the page-setter, Kostomarov.

"Look and see if there aren't some space fillers somewhere," the latter answers lazily. "Sort out what there is."

It is quiet.

It is dull setting type without the cheery exchange of banter. A wide advertisement lies in front of me. To the accompaniment of cheerful

kidding the most beautiful type fronts would pass through my hands and in three hours or so I would set up an advertisement that would make the artists sit up and take notice. At present in the lazy stillness the work runs slowly and monotonously.

Involuntarily you listen to the neighbors' talk. You listen and you get angry, when you think how small-minded people are these days!

Well, look at them, two young type-setters, Mishka Yakushin and Georgie Borohovich.

"Yesterday Alex and I cleaned up on a couple of dozen bottles. Nothing mean about us!" George announces importantly.

"Well and how was it?" Mischka asks with a flicker of interest.

"I vomited five times," George boasts almost with pride. "I just had my blue suit fixed up, and now I dirtied it all up."

From boredom more than anything else I broke into the conversation.

"But did you enjoy it?" I asked George.

What kind of fun do you call that? Nothing but grumbling, George answered in a bored tone, wagging his hand in disgust.

Now George and Mishka are businesslike fellows. Drink? — well, they drink, but they come to work on time and don't work at all badly. They're not like Zharenov.

Zharenov is a noteworthy person.

For instance, when Zharenov came to work to-day he seemed to be sober. He stood at his composing-rack, he set type — everything was all right. Suddenly, as if the devil had given him a shove, he dashed his composing-stick to the floor, the whole set-up of course scattered to the dogs, and Zharenov himself let loose a torrent of careless, monotonous abuse.

Drunk. At once everyone noticed it, but no one got up nerve enough to go up to him. Zharenov when drunk is mean and strong.

Only Kostomarov stepped back a little and said: "They'll hold back your pay for to-day's business."

"Hold back?" whooped Zharenov and without any reserve began to call Kostomarov the filthiest names.

"Hold it back?" shouted Zharenov. "Don't you dare, I was at work, I was... Do you hear me, you such and such!"

Kostomarov lost courage. He agreed: yes he was, he was.

Towards evening the tipsiness left Zharenov.

We came up to him, Klimov, Yakushin and I.

"Where do you get the money to drink?" we ask him. "Payday was a long time off, but you're drunk every day."

Zharenov smirked and answered mockingly. "I get it myself and I'll show you too in the bureau for mutual aid."

"But how do they give it to you? Everyone knows you go into debt only in order to get stewed." Yakushin was surprised.

"I write down, for domestic requirements, then let them try not to hand it out!" Zharenov laughs.

Well, what can you say to him! Klimov scolded him up and down, and it made no impression.

Order!

But I am sore not at Zharenov, but at Cuckoo. This businesss disturbs him about as much as water worries a duck.

I sure got into a mess! Sometimes there's no way to get rid of the people that nag at you.

I am a non-party man. Not a non-party man like Zharenov who only watches for a chance to say "Well they've caught a rascally communist again..." Not a non-party man like Chebyshev to whom it is all the same whatever government is over us. No. I much more enjoyed setting a sheet in nineteen eighteen, printed on dirty grey paper, than luxurious collections of poems set in Elizabethan type — what a beautiful type! — I am for the communists, they are my comrades on the bench, my neighbors in the musty basement, they are all men like me, and was there ever a moment in my life when I didn't praise myself?

I had to take a look into the shop committee's room. All in one room: shop committee, party-cell and Young Communists. Here's what happened: at the table of the party cell sits a young fellow. I don't know. He's wearing a Tolstoi shirt and querulously scolds the secretary. I pricked up my ears. They are talking about me. Not about Morozov, they don't need Morozov! — but about the middle-aged, skilled worker: the young chap is laying out the secretary oï the party-cell for poor work in drawing the workers into the party.

"What can I do?" Cuckoo tries to justify himself.

The young chap shook his head reproachfully.

Cuckoo became silent with embarrassment, but to his good luck noticed me, rejoiced at being able to press the fellow from the ward-committee to the wall and flew at me like a buzzard. "You say we don't do anything. Well take Morozov for instance," he exclaimed triumphantly, grabbing me by the sleeve. "Say, old boy, how many times have we tried to persuade you to join the party?"

"I haven't counted," said I, sarcastic. I was getting ready for the regular attack.

The chap in the Tolstoi shirt ruffled up like a young rooster.

"How are you?" he said in a conciliatory voice and stretched out his hand.

"I'm O. K. How are you?" I answered him, sounding pretty fresh, I admit. I gave him a look which said, "You can't kid me."

"Have you been working long?" he began the conversation.

"Well, quite a stretch." I answered, looking at him maliciously.

"Fifteen years?" he suggested, trying to guess and to flatter me at the same time.

I waited an instant and said, "It'll soon be forty two."

"You'll be forty two?" he asked, puzzled.

"Oh no, I am already fifty four."

The young fellow was confused and did not find the right words. Then of a sudden he distractedly blurted out, just as if an old cat-keeping female were standing before him: "You look considerably younger."

I couldn't help saying sarcastically: "Oh no, young man, I'm quite an old woman."

The young fellow entirely lost countenance.

Cuckoo came to his aid.

"Come, Morozov, please tell us, why you don't join the party?" he began.

Then started! I knew that now they would swamp me with hundreds of rapid-fire questions, and that I should have to keep my ear sharp, shoot them down with other questions and force them to retreat.

And so it was: they rat-tat-tatted at me in two voices:

"Why don't you join the party?"

"Join us in putting production right."

"An old worker, yet you stand aside from the party!"

So you haven't thought up anything new? Well those questions are old acquaintances, I can answer them without even thinking.

"I am a communist, as I am," I stoutly declared.

"We know, we know: a communist without the party ticket," the young chap crowed. "Why do I need to be in the party anyway? An old excuse. Really, isn't it clear to you: a man cannot be a non-party man. That is a bourgeois attitude. Haven't you any interests? Don't they coincide with the interests of someone group of people? Look and see who these people are and what class they belong to, because that is the class you belong to also."

How I wished they'd get a new line!

"That'll do!" annoyed, I interrupted the young fellow, "All that we have heard and read; think up something new."

I was already getting fixed to leave, then I felt sorry for the lad; the poor chap must have crammed his arguments by heart for a week. I had quite disgraced him and in front of Cuckoo, at that. Cuckoo mustn't be allowed to get away so easily. I hesitated a minute and then, staring pointblank at Cuckoo, declared.

"And another reason I don't join the party is that I don't want to lose my influence among the workers."

"What?" The young fellow couldn't contain his astonishment.

"You bet!" I went on, "our party-cell promotes communists in the work of production to the point of self-oblivion. For instance, a young chap has worked a couple of years in the shop; then he enters the party, and at once he is moved up from the fifth to the eighth or ninth wage-rank. But in our printing shop non-party workers work for fifteen and twenty years, and they all but lower their rank in the wage-scale".

And having handed Cuckoo that knock-out punch, I immediately departed.

It would be interesting to guess what sort of student I would have turned out to be. I never got a chance to find out. Till I was thirteen, to my shame before my contemporaries, I did nothing except nurse my countless young sisters and brothers and out of the whole alphabet all I knew was the letter "B", and that because a filthy word, constantly in our use, begins with that letter. Although we were completely illiterate kids, we quickly committed to memory and learned thoroughly from older and more experienced hooligans to write nasty, smutty words. "B" was our favorite letter; we used to enjoy, tracing it with muck and our finger on the windows and doors of the houses of factory girls. When I was put to work in the printing shop at the age of thirteen they didn't so much teach me to read as to distinguish petit from cicero, renati from mediovali. Now I know how to read and write well, but I never got a chance to study. And I am curious as to what sort of a scholar I would have turned out to be.

Valentina figures well, but Russian is difficult for her. You couldn't do on purpose the mistakes she makes. In a year or so she finishes her schooling. Night before last I wake up at one o'clock: Valentina is sitting there with leaden eyes and writing more discouraged and slow than ever.

"Girly," I call out to her. "Why are you panting away there?"

"Don't bother me," she snaps back at me and goes on scratching the paper with her pencil.

If you can believe novels, young girls write love letters at night. If you can believe newspapers to-day, even a twelve-years old girl has a love correspondence. I don't like to believe either novels or newspapers. But if they are right — this we must check up — I would have to give my daughter a thrashing.

I crawled out from under the warm, cozy blanket, and shivering on the cold, rough floor, pulled on my underdrawers and went over to Valentina. The reflection of the green lamp-shade made the paper and the face of the girl especially pale, but even minus the reflection it was noticeable that the face was no rosier than the paper.

I bent over her thin, little shoulder and took a look at the notebook. The novels and newspapers lied. The twelve-year old girl was busy doing what she was supposed to be doing: she was writing a composition for school.

With a clumsy, childish hand these words were traced across the top of the page, "Serfdom according to the story Mumu."

"What is that Mumu?" I asked my daughter.

"Papa, don't bother me," Valentina objected with a sleepy voice. "Mumu" is a story by Turgenev. I am in a hurry I have to hand in the composition day after to-morrow."

"Turgenev?" I recollected. "Why yes I know that writer. You bet I do. He wrote *Notes of a Sportsman*, and then I read of a novel of his... Wait a minute, oh lord help my memory, yes, yes — *Smoke!* But Mumu? Though, it does seem as if I had read Mumu too..."

"Please don't bother me", she repeated. "Even as it is I can't seem to get anything down."

She was right. A few uneven, mixed-up lines were flung about in disorder, tumbled on top of each other, and every line below collided with the line above it. One look at the notebook was enough to tell you that Valentina was no great shakes as a woman of letters, — the girl took after me.

Perhaps it was wrong, but I offered to help her.

"When have you to hand in the composition?" I asked.

"Day after to-morrow," Valentina replied with chagrin, stubbornly scratching at the paper with the gnawed end of the pencil.

I didn't know how to begin my speech about proposing my services, but the girl helped me along.

"All my friends have litterate parents: a mother helps one, a father another," she complained, "and they pass. But I am alone."

"Aren't you ashamed to complain," I comforted my daughter, "And what about me? To-morrow I'll write your composition."

Frankly, I was curious to find out if I could write a composition. Well, by god, I had to help Valentina anyway.

"But can you?" she asked me, sceptically.

"Well I should say," I confidently reassured her. "I'll write the composition, all right."

After finishing my work, I hustled along to the library.

Dirty old Morozov had scarcely come up the desk, when a kindly looking, rather boney little lady plumped her elbows down on the counter and began to rattle off a greeting.

"Fine! You, I see, citizen, are *an industrial worker*. Give me your union card... Fine! I see you are a type-setter. Fine! I can recommend a book about the rebirth of our economic construction, *Cement* by Gladkov... Fine! The work of an American socialist writer Sinclair about the fratricidal imperialist war, *Jimmy Higgins*, about the position of the working class in Chicago *The Jungle;* besides have we a collection called *Cupola*,, a story by the proletarian writer Liashko, *Blast furnace*... Fine! I'll get you at once the work-story of the proletarian writer."

Without a pause she reeled off this speech learned by rote, turned and dashed to the book shelves.

"Hold on!" I brought the librarian to a halt. "Wait a minute, lady, I don't need any proletarian writers."

In a flash she wheeled round and — "by heavens, she's worse than my old woman," I thought, — again began to wag her tongue: "Fine! I beg you not to shout "Hold on! Save such manners for your club; this is a cultural organization. Since nineteen seventeen there are no more ladies in our country; you won't find any light reading here."

Suddenly she stopped, took a deep breath and, looking me right in the face, said: "Well?"

Then I distinctly and audibly rolled out the following: "Dear citizenness, be so kind as to give me the story by Turgenev [called Mumu".

She opened her eyes wide and rejoiced, again finding an opening for the expressions she had learned by heart.

Passing from shelf to shelf — she looked a long time, it must be that nowadays the demand for Turgenev is not very great — without stopping she went on addressing someone — maybe me? — in her vile dialect:

"Fine! The urge to the classics is a phenomenon to be explained by a number of convincing reasons... Fine! However, why simply Turgenev and not Aksakov, Gogol, Goncharov, Grigorovich, Dostoievsky, and finally, why not Tolstoi?"

Neither the library nor the young lady pleased me. She handed me the book and I was glad to get out into the fresh air.

After dinner I took the little round table out into the courtyard, set it by the window and sat down to read Turgenev.

Turgenev is a classic. What is a classic? Does that mean to write first-class? Yes, Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev wrote first-class. His simple, clear style pleases me especially. But the words! How well they are chosen. He writes beautifully and convincingly. People nowadays don't know how to write like that.

"Kapiton sat in his office till late at night. With him was some gloomy-looking friend. He related in detail how he had lived in Petersburg in the house of a master, who had every good quality, yes, and he was sharp on the way things were run, but had one little shortcoming: he used to drink a lot and, as far as the fair sex was concerned, he went in for all qualities... His gloomy comrade merely kept saying yes, but when Kapiton declared that, à propos of one affair, he must commit suicide to-morrow, the gloomy friend remarked that it was time to sleep. And they parted rudely and in silence."

"They parted rudely and in silence..." Those words say everything. Enough! The weak man complains, but when the subject of death came up, his friend notes that it is time to sleep. Right! Every man ought to

know that: if you ever want to lay violent hands on yourself, it's time to sleep.

Isn't this the way a working-man vents his grief?

"On the very day of the wedding Gerasim did not change his conduct in the slightest: only he came back from the stream without water, somehow he broke the jug on the way; but overnight he curried and rubbed his horse so zealously in the stable that she shook like a blade of grass in the wind and swayed from hoof to hoof under his iron fists."

And is this the way we ordinary people lose our beloved?

"Gerasim heard nothing, neither the sudden cry of Mumu as she fell, nor the heavy splash of the water; for him the noisiest day was silent and soundless, as not even the stillest night is soundless for us and when he opened his eyes again, the wavelets raced over the river as before, as if pursuing one another, as before they lapped against the side of the boat and only far behind him toward the bank, the wide circles of water broke and spread slowly."

Well written, very well written. I wouldn't mind copying the whole story. But still the story is bad. That story is not ours. A master wrote it, a real, life-size serf-owner. Just look! Gerasim is tripped up by fate, and a fine, harmless dog has perished, and the mistress of the house is a bad lot — and yet this squeamish mistress is dear to the author; for him Gerasim is only an unhappy, undemanding little peasant.

That makes me angry more than anything else! Why isn't he more demanding? There are a lot of villains around you? Rebel, then! I need to feel rebellion in an author, and not sweet, good-natured tears.

Our present writers have plenty of rebellion. It's only a pity that rebellion alone is not enough, you also have to know how to write.

However, I took up Turgenev seriously just as if I and not my girl had to write the composition. Composition? Don't say I bit off more than I can chew — I have to write the composition.

How they accuse each other! The seven deadly sins quickly crawl out from the hiding places of the human soul. Aleksandrov is celebrated for his gluttony: a holiday, vodka, herring, sausage, and — holy of holies — meat-pasties. Ivashchuk is miserly — the few kopecks he earns he stores up for a rainy day, an eternal rainy day terrifying man with its awful, cramped shadow. Sukhikh is arrogant — he never agrees with anyone; his opinion always has to triumph, and it is impossible to work with him. Nikolski is lazy. He won't bother himself with cooperative construction, he is too lazy to earn an extra kopeck for himself for bread. Taverin is irritable. Every trifle serves him as excuse for kicking up a row. Not a human being but a box of matches... Scratch and off he goes! Gliaser is envious, he always feels cheated, deceived — he could devour anyone he envies. Kosach is dissolute, — if a good-looking little girl chances along his way, he will drop from his shoulders any social work for the sake of spending a merry hour in carefree love.

How they quarrel with each other!

But stepping to one side and taking a look at the work we have contrived, we may say right out: there was unusually little quarrelling.

Abuse doesn't hang on the doorstep. To our task, to our great and serious task abuse has no relation: leave abuse to abuse, and work at your work.

The able Gertner speaks with reserve. On the sly he cajoles the workers a bit and you will notice that our chaps have calmed down, begun to talk around toward an agreement, and are already voting unanimously, all talking like one man.

Victory!

The beginning has been made.

We are going to have our house.

What a relief! Instead of that auful flat — my basement room, be you damned forever — I shall have a fine, spacious apartment, even with a bathroom. Hm... a bathroom? I never tried that sort of contraption in all my life. Is it nice? Gertner claims that after I've tried it once I will never exchange it for the public baths with its buckets, always full of dirt.

We are building a house. No joking: we are sixty. Sixty men who hate their nasty old flats.

Hate can turn the world upside down.

The regulations are adopted, the management elected, the protocol signed — the meeting is over.

So many meetings, so little real work!

It is terrifying to realize how all the life of man to-day is caught up in meetings.

It's true, at present no one does anything alone, but when two people have got together to talk things over — well there's your meeting!

But still we talk too much, unbelievably much — work must outstrip talk.

Some times it is profitable to recall the past. But you mustn't busy yourself often with recollections. If you do, they lay hold of you, they render you senseless, they streak the present with soot, but past days, days we disliked when we lived them become rosy, red, bright... if only red like boiled crab. And like crabs memories cling to you — sweet memories — and you turn into a corpse.

Sometimes it is beneficial to stop and recollect. It warns you against repeating your mistakes.

The Bolsheviks have made use of recollection in their own way: they have forced recollection to serve the future, they have put recollection to good use by inducing people to hate. They have taught people to remember not tenderly, not with veneration, but with hatred.

That was cleverly and keenly thought up: we old men have learned not to whimper, we do not return into the past. Warmed to work by our own grumblings, we strive, side by side with youth, to work forward into the future.

But youth, what has it to do with the past? Greed! As if the future itself were not enough for them... "No", they say, "let us snatch off a bite of this bitter, old men's past."

With secret ill-will I went along to the evening arranged by the Young Communists. It would be truer to say I didn't go. I was dragged there.

Tow-headed Garaska carried me away with his naive invitation. Garaska, aged sixteen, has not been working long — he came from the village not more than half a year ago. I know: time will go by, Garaska's nose will sag and if it doesn't take on Grecian lines, in any case it will lose its pug-nosed profile, the tow that grows on his head will,

lose its bloom, grow dark, both from dust and from the brilliantine plastered on by force in the barbers'shop. Garaska will cease to be: before he becomes the sagacious Gerasim such-a-vich, he possibly will be called George for some time.

I do not give in to invitations. I have a large supply of customary excuses:

"When do you expect me to sleep?"

"I still have to get to the corner shop in time."

"Well, you young chaps, you go ahead and have a good time..."

Garaska came to me, not with an invitation but with a request. "Vladimir Petrovich, aren't you going to the club?"

"No. But what is it?" I asked.

"We're having an evening of recollections. It'll be interesting to listen to, but I'm afraid I shan't understand everything. I wanted to ask you to explain the things I don't understand."

And I went along, not to listen, but to explain.

They transformed the club into a school of hate. They treated the girls and boys to stories of the past. Good lord, what a pitiful recital! The aim of the conversations was to inspire youth with hate for the past. But how awkwardly they did it! I felt as if they were benevolently and stubbornly treating the ragamuffins assembled in the club to doses of castor oil. The story teller they had invited — they sure found a good one to invite! — raved on about "pharaohs." So they had to go talking about the Egyptians!

Since I wanted conscientiously to interpret to Garaska the recollections which might be incomprehensible to him, I listened attentively to the report. And although the reporter spoke for a long time, everything was said briefly and so simply as to be ridiculous.

"The time of the tsars was a damnable time. The revolutionaries rotted in the prisons. Policemen and constables. Youth wasted away in labor beyond its strength... It was a damnable time, the time of the tsars."

The story was exhaustingly tiresome, and yet the young chaps listened like sparrows on the watch.

"Huh!" thought I, "if you lick up castor oil so obediently how cheerfully you would lap up fresh butter! And when I treat you, you'll get a big supply."

Usually in our club there are few who wish to speak: from the stage they invite the public; at length, after painstaking barking they close the meeting and go over to the musical and dramatic part of the program.

This time they found someone wishing to speak.

"Boys, look, Morozov wants to make a speech!" they greeted me with a burst of exclamations.

I began, as is done, with a wrangle.

"I didn't like the entertainment offered by this nasal fellow," I said and pointed to the speaker with my finger.

He took offence, half-rose from his chair like a bent stick of brushwood and nervously rapped out at me: "What did you say?"

I repeated, "nasal."

"What does that mean?" the speaker of the evening again asked me sharply, fixing his eyes on me.

"I'll answer personal questions after the meeting," I came back at him imperturbably and looked at the young chaps: many of them were laughing approvingly.

"Well," said I, "they've told you about the last days of the rule of the tsar. Well, there's no harm in knowing about that. But I'll tell you how the workers lived when the bosses went unpunished and we all were divided against ourselves — I'll tell you about my childhood.

"The swift Kliazma flowed smoothly. I loved our boyish pranks: a little fish sometimes getting into our hands; nets made from dirty and torn pants; stubborn clawing crayfish sticking tight in their holes along the bank: — all that was delightful and we were not sorry for our comrades who got lost in the whirlpools; we were not touched by the lamentations of our haggard mothers thrashing with all their might the children left alive and weeping over the coffins hastily knocked up of old boards.

"My snivelling brothers, my dirty sisters, the drunken, glassy eyes of my father, how I hated you! But more than anything else I hated you, Kliazma, with your girlish stratagems, tempting the half-grown boy with your fresh water, your tender splashing, your unforgettable, magnificent mystery.

"Beyond the river a sprawling circle of hills rose broadly from its very bank.

"You could go through the workers' suburb quickly — it was sullen and stubby — and, in going through the village, your eye might noteven pick out a single hut.

"The suburb was situated on the bank of the stream. Over the stream to the other shore stretched rickety, ever swaying little bridges — as children we enjoyed creeping out to the middle and making the rotten planks swing by the measured movements of our legs, — but beyond it, a narrow path, polished by thousands of feet, led to the house on the hill, to the factory of our boss, Sidor Panteleevich Kondrashov.

"It was hard to get into the factory — Kondrashov's house, warehouses, barns, the factory buildings were surrounded by an impassable wall of boards.

"The old men still remembered on the spot of Kondrashov's factory a decaying servile plantation, but the old men got mixed up when they told about the domineering, squandering lot of Counts Nekhliudov. For our fathers the Nekhliudovs were a thing of the past and forgotten — the boss of all the workers in the county was our perpetual benefactor, Sidor Panteleevich Kondrashov.

"The Nekhliudov plantation had many gates and entrances. The hands of the Kondrashovs closed up some gates tight, locked others strongly. The only entrance to the factory was down there below the hill, to one side from the road which leadas straight into the back of the old mansion of the serf-owners.

"Beyond the decrepit fence stood the wooden building, wide and low, with its brick chimneys.

"Kondrashov's business was run in a big scale: he had a lot of work people; his silks were sold all over the world. Before Kondrashov, Russian merchants used to import Italian silk, but Sidor Panteleevich was a clever man, he made a laughing-stock of all Italy and Russia too, by god. He began to buy enough silk stocks in Trans-Caucasia. Trans-Caucasian silk turned out to be no worse than Italian, and who knows but what the Italians used to get their silk in the Caucasus? Kondrashov opened up trade with Persia, — often the bales of Asiatic silk from Persia were dumped in the courtyard of the factory.

"And now I'll tell you how your grandfathers lived at the Kondrashov factory. Some of the workers, — for instance, the designers — were paid by the month; but the majority — weavers and printers — worked by piece-rate, or by the job-rate, as they then called it. The working day was not long: the men who worked by the month worked for twelve hours a day, but the piece-workers were given full liberty to dispose of their own time. For the sake of an extra kopeck — yes, yes not a rouble but a kopeck — they would work fourteen hours, but on rush work, before the holidays, for eighteen hours a day."

One of the chaps stubbornly fixed his staring, mocking glance on me. I looked at him. Alex Komarov, in plain disbelief, was squinting up his green eyes, making fun and saying with all his appearance: "Lie, lie, you old devil, don't go too far, paint the past black, but don't put it on too thick."

I stopped talking.

Then Komarov couldn't keep from shouting, "Lay it on thick!"

I actually flushed with anger.

"Ugh, you nitwit, I lie?.. I don't need to lie! What am I, a Communist? I have told you what I saw. Ask any old man you like, little boy! Or perhaps it's not interesting for you to listen to me?"

The boys clapped their hands, and I went on with my story.

"Well, they sometimes worked for eighteen hours a day, and here's the way Kondrashov paid for working time which is unknown to a worker to-day.

"There were more weavers than anything else at the factory and my father was reckoned among the best of them. And during the best season — and that meant when you could work for eighteen hours — a worker could not earn more than a rouble and seventy kopecks a week, dear comrade Komarov."

"But with what joy did they work in those days?" called out the line-setter Shulman, who was sitting beside Komarov.

"With the joy!" I replied contemptuously, annoyed at the stupid question which held back the current of my recollections, "that comes from wanting to eat."

"Pay-day came round, the full amount of return due to the worker was figured up, from it they deducted the value of calico cloth, flour, shoes and such that he had received and then they immediately carried out the pay-off."

I halted, caught my breath and before telling about the pay-off went to the table standing on the stage, took a glass of water and refreshed my throat.

"They paid everyone off at once not with money, because a factory hand may drink away money, but with goods: at Kondrashov's factory they parcelled out among the workers sateen, imperfect damask, and sometimes short strips of velvet.

"After being paid off, father would come home in an ugly mood. Mother always tried to be the first to meet him — he would take out his spite on her and thus mother saved us from his clouts. The next day mother used to pack the pay in a sack and leave on foot for Moscow to sell the imperfect damask and buy the necessary supplies. But sometimes we were pushed to the last gasp for money. Then mother would take four or five of her kids and go to the office to plead with Kondrashov himself.

"It comes back to me: the small, dark room, lined with book cases with a longish writing-table, of simple workmanship, behind which sat the boss, a long, meagre man, with a small head, almost always bent forward, with a reddish wig, and a high necktie encircling his lean, spindly neck. He always wore a dark coat, completely buttoned up to the chin. Before him on the table lay a pile of models of every possible sort of material and pattern, on one side towered a heap of account books, on the other a bale of opened letters, covered with account sheets. The writing table was surrounded by visitors dressed in varicolored costumes: there were peasants all dressed up in red shirts and plush trousers and some young people or others with bright faces dressed in pea-colored coats. Apart from them all stood the petty bourgeois citizens in short blue coats and seated there was a group of bearded men who looked like merchants, wearing either blue jackets, tied about with a red cord, or frockcoats reaching to the floor, with high boots pulled on over the trousers."

"He's sure recalled it, the old fellow!" Komarov exclaimed in delight. "And here I was thinking he was lying."

I didn't pay any attention to him and went on:

"I don't know why, but at the appearance of my weary mother in her worn out sarafan their lively conversation became silent and the men standing there stepped aside, leaving the approach to the table free."

"The boss still more kindly bent his head to one side and after giving mother time to make her curtsey, asked her coldly: 'What can I do for you?"

"Mother, instead of replying, exclaimed pitifully: 'Little father, Sidor Panteleevich, you know me surely, why I have the same request...'

'Namely!' Kondrashov asked again.

"Mother began to lament. 'Awfully hard for us, little father Sidor Panteleevich! Can't get rid of debts no how, little father Sidor Panteleevich. The boys have worn out all their clothes, little father Sidor Panteleevich. Have mercy on us, buy the damask back, little father Sidor Panteleevich.' "

"Kondrashov's face grew still longer. He objected politely: 'Nowadays times are bad... Pay week, I haven't any money myself, but here they all come to me... I cannot.' "

"Then mother, without undue haste, made all us boys whom she had brought along, go down on our knees in a line, took up her post beside us herself and gave the word of command 'Bow!'

"Glancing sideways at mother and measuring our movements according to hers, we began to bow without intermission until Kondrashov said, 'Well, that'll do. I'll buy it.'

"Then we got up and became merely witnesses of the conversation which followed our pleading.

'What will you sell it for?' asked Kondrashov.

'For a rouble ten kopecks, as they sold it to us,' said mother.

'But the damask is imperfect,' Kondrashov reproachfully remarked.

'But that's the condition they gave it in,' answered mother and hastened to add, 'But take it for a rouble.'

'I'll give you seventy kopecks,' Kondrashov named his price, and then taking pity, ended the conversation, 'Go to the clerk for the receipt, they'll take it for eighty kopecks!'

"Mother bowed once more, took the receipt and went out. We hastened after her one after the other, and on leaving the office, scattered in every direction..."

My throat was quite dried up, and I was tired of talking, — it is time to give the floor to the others. But I had to give a good ending to my speech somehow (on paper it turns out considerably better), although it sounded all right at that.

"Formerly people lived like that, but you say" — I said and faltered. But they all clapped in a friendly way. The girls even cried out, "Atta boy, Morozov, atta boy!" At that moment the light in the hall suddenly went out, — someone turned off the switch. They yelled at the end of the hall, "Quit cutting up, it's no time for that! Turn on the light, turn it on!"

I made my fist into a speaking trumpet and shouted out into the darkness, "Damn you, it's forbidden to turn off the light!"

To-day Titus Livius astounded me!

I've known the deacon for a long time. A good fellow. Honest man's word, a good fellow, but what a rotten worker! In this there can be no two opinions. A good fellow and a poor sort of deacon. I become excited over my type-case, I fall in love with the copy I am setting, although it is often, as my conscience forces me to say, very stupid. I admit it: even sorting out a text which has been set up, I rejoice for the people who are not going to read the usual nonsense. But the deacon is cold. He comes to church with dissatisfaction, cruelly and calculatingly curses out at the altar the priest who cheated in paying him off — I myself was a witness of this — and soothes himself with vodka poured out into the beautiful, rose-colored, sacramental lamp.

We became acquainted by fighting each other. Twenty years ago my wife, Anna Nikolayevna — good lord, here I've gone and mentioned her again — summoned to our cellar — no, indeed what sort of a cellar is that, why it's "our home" consecrated by thirty years of warm and well-fed living — she summoned the priest to read prayers. Easter served as an excuse, but as a matter of fact her heart was trembling with tenderness before our new wardrobe, which had been scratched up by its previous owners. I do not especially like long hair— it is an indication of untidiness, but I prefer sniffing frankincense to submitting to my wife's reproaches.

All right. You enjoy knocking your head against the wall; go ahead and knock it, I'm going to shave. And I could not be sufficiently solemn. I was ready to bet my left hand — and I did bet it as a matter of fact! — that he had been out of the seminary only a few weeks. The solemn and pathetic little priest let it occur to him to reprimand me. Well, a reprimand? In that case, clear out! Then my wife began to howl. The deacon, who had been standing on the threshold, interfered. I hadn't noticed the elephant. But the elephant resolutely stepped in on behalf of injured orthodoxy. Here goes! I collar the little priest and with an easy swing shove him out. Two! the deacon fetches me such a slap on the face that I, with everything swimming before me and not grasping much, seize hold of the slopbasin, filled with soapsuds like whipped cream, give him this dainty treat smack in his nice little face. The deacon turned out to be stronger than I, although with my temper up I could have tackled Hercules. An unpleasant recollection! Such an experience I never met twice in my life. That gloomy deacon threw me down and boldly began squeezing my best earthen soap into my mouth, passing sentence on me: "You

wanted to soap me up, did you, you son of a b...? Soap me up? "Try eating some of your own soap and see how you like it!" I did not swallow it, only because I choked.

Then the deacon straightened out his cassock, turned to Anna Nikolayevna and boomed out in a businesslike way:

"Give the fifty kopecks, mother, and may god be with you."

"What! without the prayer-service?" shouted my other half, her arms akimbo. "I won't give it. Say the prayers, and you'll get it. But I can look on at such scrimmages for nothing at the government liquor shop."

The deacon reflected for a second, then said with a gesture of his arm, "Well, the devil take you!"

He turned out to be right there. The insulted little priest had had time to run for the brass-buttons. They returned together — religion and police — to draw up the report. Now it smelled of gold.

But, to my great surprise, the deacon vouched for me.

"No blasphemy whatever," he insinuatingly grumbled before the brass buttons. "The little father [1] wanted to go out to the courtyard. But why he ran from the water-closet for first aid, I don't understand. I don't know. Can it be that he held himself in too long?" with this broad hint the deacon concluded my justification.

"Father deacon, what's wrong with you? How much have they paid you?" the astonished priest began to whine.

However, the game was up. I slipped the brass-buttons the fifty copecks which my wife had got ready for the priest, as a compensation for the annoyance, and all three of them, the priest buzzing like a gnat, the policemen calming down, and the gloomy deacon, departed in state from our "home."

The second time I met the deacon in a port saloon. He was in civil dress and playing billiards. After running into me face to face, the deacon called me aside to one corner and asked me not to give him away. I could not refuse; on the contrary, I was bound to treat him to beer. We talked, and from that time, from week to week, every Sunday we used to meet of an evening behind the little marble table covered with yellow moisture. He turned out to be a good fellow. Intimate conversations brought us close to each other. Sometimes I got hold of some magazine or other for him from the printing-press. In his turn he told dozens of all the wildest stories. And there were some pretty good ones in the lot, too.

During the war the port-saloon was transformed into a tea-room. The deacon and I used to meet for a pot of tea (vodka was sold in the teapot). Only the first years of the revolution severed us, and it would be untrue if I said that we did not have a certain hankering to see each other. The deacon's address was unknown to me, and he didn't know where I lived — somehow we hadn't found time to exchange addresses. And then, in nineteen-twenty-one, while passing by the house where the port-saloon had formerly been located, I saw over the entrance a sign-board "Cooperative Dining-Room." Recollection urged me to go in there, although I was hurrying home to have dinner, and at the nearest table I met my deacon. He looked as healthy and gloomy as ever. We shook hands, and as if nothing had happened went on with our interrupted conversation about the rascally archbishops, leaving the orthodox church without a leg to stand on, and about how few good and interesting books were coming out these days. Then the dining-room was again

[1] Little father, term of addressing a priest.

transformed into a beer-parlor, the billiard balls again began to click. Again the deacon and I began meeting every Sunday and carried on our heart-to-heart talks.

And then to-day my good Titus Livius astonished me with an unusual extravagance. He rose in front of me and declared coldly:

"Beginning to-day I am not Livius. I ask not to call me by that awful, indecent-sounding name any more."

Indeed, in the first days of our acquaintance I used often to forget this unusual name of his. But then I got used to it, and in my memory-box it solidly occupied its place. Titus I added to it later. Once, while setting a book which told of ancient Rome, I came upon Titus Livius. That was the second time I had met the name. But with the name Titus was connected in my memory the idea of a lazy man, heavy and gloomy. To a certain degree the deacon possessed these qualities. Well, I added to my first Livius the Titus which I had met. The deacon accepted that without objection, and from that time on I called him Titus Livius, thinking that a little time will go by and the deacon will become just as unreal a figure as a Roman of the old times. Yes, deacon, your profession, your name will soon cease to exist! So I thought, and then he himself hastened to forestall history, hastened both to confirm and to discredit my idea.

"My name is Ivan," said the deacon and slumped down on to his chair.

"Deacon! Titus Livius! You are mad!" I cried out, not believing my ears.

"My name is Ivan," the deacon repeated, so as to make it clear.

"My dear chap, but you are Livy just the same. You may curse your parents your whole life through, but at christening you were named Livy all the same."

"You are stupid and slow-witted," the deacon shouted in annoyance. "And in general leave my parents in peace — no use in cursing a lot of rotten bones. I went to the Registry Bureau to-day."

He stuck his hand into his pocket, got out his wallet and drew from it a fresh little document. Yes, there it was actually written, that in accordance with the petition of citizen Livius Dmitrievich Uspenski he has in the future the right to be called Ivan Dmitrievich Uspenski.

"And that is why I am no longer Titus nor Livius to you but Ivan Dmitrievich," the deacon again repeated with relish.

But still I stuck to my own opinion. In any case, Titus Livius has begun to go mad. Change one's name at fifty! How could it hinder him in any way in his sixth decade? Either he is turning foolish or something is hidden behind this.

We said good-bye, he with suppressed triumph, I astonished and doubtful. I could not help having a joke on my Anna Nikolayevna.

"Say, old woman," I asked her, "what would you say if I changed my name?"

Oh! what a cry she raised!!

At once she was going to divorce, she could not forgive me for betraying my guardian-angel, she asserted categorically that I had sold myself to antichrist and that the mark of Cain would immediately appear on my brow if I changed my name.

L. Ovalov
Chatter

The day began to warble in two voices. The transparent air condescendingly lifted the voices aloft and in a rain of varicolored words scat-

tered them over my head, and the shells of my ears turned to rose-color, trying not to let a single sound slip by. The boundary was the window. Beyond the small door in the window an unseen little bird was whistling away, stopping for a second and then continuing its tender little song even more delightfully — perhaps it was a sparrow. Within the room with a rasping and annoying voice Anna Nikolayevna was casting pearls before a swine — I was the swine. My fault was not very great, I was getting ready to go to the country just outside the city.

Our whiskerless singers were getting up a hike for to-day. They did not invite old men, for they wished to have a good time noisily and foolishly. I occupied a special position. After my recollections the young people began to entertain a great fondness for me: with me they conversed more softly, began to call me simply Petrovich and every minute came running to me for advice. It is not true that young people do not like old men: on the contrary, smart children are always glad to ask advice of us. We ourselves do not know how to welcome the young fellow, running to meet us, shouting, clattering his shoes, and we begin to grumble with displeasure: "Quiet there, for god's sake!"

I was sick and tired of going about as an old man: when they came running up to me with a shout I would meet the assailants even more loudly.

"Petrovich, stop! Our page-setter gave Nicky one in the mug on account of a comment in the wall-newspaper. He swears that we scattered a page for him," howled Garaska, running up to me.

"Oh you such and such," I shouted even louder. "Better to give up your extra type, but not to scatter work already set."

"Oh the rascals, Petrovich!" Arkhipka howled with pathos, as he appeared at the door. "To celebrate my acceptance into the Young Communists I have to treat the chaps, but the office has cheated me in counting!"

"Bite their soul!" I shout back at Arkhipka. "They are cheating you in counting! You're getting up a drinking-party? And you'll miss your day's work after the party? But if they deduct the slightest bit, you set up a howl, bite your soul!"

So you shout a little with each one, and find that the boys obey you.

Yesterday a delegation came to me. Three of our madcaps Arkhipka of course, Garaska of course and Gene Zhilin, invited me to take part in an excursion. You can't refuse invitations like those. To have a good time with the young people you can drop all the business with which you have long since become disgusted.

After getting up bright and early in the morning, I decided to go on the hike a picture of beauty. I crawled into the chest, got out a shirt with separate collar and for a long time — probably for two minutes — stood considering my neckties. I have two of them — a grey one with yellow stripes and a blue one covered with large white dots. The blue one is smarter — I decided on it, tied it, began to polish my shoes and awoke the old woman who was gently sleeping.

"Where a' you going?"

"To walk."

"Who with?"

"With the girls."

"What for?"

"I want a divorce."

After such an answer a terrific fuss burst on me. The old woman dropped her dry, bony legs on the floor, dragged her feet over to the open chest, cursed me for ruffling the linen and began to scold me with caressing words.

A rescue came in the nick of time. Garaska's head squeezed through the little door in the window. Arkhipka's reddish leggings came into view a little lower.

"Vladimir Petrovich, it's time," Garaska summoned me.

"Ready, ready," I said, pulling my cap down over my eyes, hastily.

"When people come into a house, they say good morning," remarked Anna Nikolayevna sarcastically.

"But no one has come into the house," Garaska came back at her mockingly, intending to begin an exchange of abuse, but noticing my wink, quickly disappeared from the old woman's field of vision.

"Let's go!" I said good-bye to my wife.

"You bum!" she sent after my back.

"A greeting to my friends!" I said good-morning to Arkhipka and Garaska, and we went along chummily to the trolley-car stop.

We had gone about a hundred paces from the house when suddenly I heard a penetrating and unpleasant shout:

"Vladimir Petrovich, stop! Stop, you sinner!"

Behind me there was Anna Nikolayevna mincing along. "So that's it, is it?" I said to myself. "She intends to go walking with me."

My heart contracted, tasting in advance the ruined hike.

But the old woman spared me that. She only ran up and slipped into my hands an enormous package, tied up with several strings.

"You take that, and have your lunch!" she grumbled and turned her back on me.

The boat glided lazily over the turbid surface of the water. The greenery, besmoked by the cigarettes of the thousands of humans walking there, made the banks picturesque.

While our gang was wrangling at the station, while all the members of the hiking-party were assembling, while they were buying the tickets, time moved forward unceasingly. The hands of the clock were on the level when we sat down in the coach.

Among the vociferous, laughing and curious eyes only one pair was hidden under a curtain of grey eye-brows.

The boys tried not to act as though they had honored me and by many little kindnesses and attentions sought to drive from my memory the impression of their friendly and fond invitation. Just like a man, who having made to another a valuable and necessary gift, is embarrassed without reason and begins to load the other with many petty and unnecessary gewgaws.

Joking at each other, we arrived without noticing it at Tsaritsyn, spilled out on to the platform, waited for the suburban public to pour over the light but strong trestle to the suburban houses with their tooth-like frames, and then we hastened to the park, to the water, to the boats and to the lawns.

We were not less than sixty young and hearty lovers of river and forest, and we quickly divided into two groups. I went with the boatsmen.

The boat was gliding lazily over the water's surface. The trails of cigarette smoke twisted upward. The drawling songs rolled out over the water, accompanying the boat on its leisurely way.

Several times those who had remained on shore called out to us and invited us to join their games. We were ready to follow their invitation, but the even-matched oars would not let go of their pale, muscular hands, and the water fondly soothed them with a little wind coming up from further down, tenderly urging them not to go on shore.

A rain came pelting down on us — a driving, ridiculous rain, pouring down in the sunlight and frightening no one.

We bent to the oars, turned about and went straight for the plank landing with its little yellow hut and its incorrect clock. According to our count we had rowed for about two hours. By the count of the pug-nosed chaps who had charge of the boats, it amounted to three hours. We argued, but argued unsuccessfully — the pug-nosed lads would give back the documents which had been left with them as a pledge only after receiving payment in full for the time they had figured.

In front of the palace we met with the company which had stayed on shore, and we all went together to view the building.

Who needs any extra proofs of the worthlessness of the tsars? No one does. However, looking at the Tsaritsyn palace you can't help exclaiming, quite purposelessly: "How good that there are no more tsars! They were poor managers. To let them go on running things would only mean increasing the number of unfinished palaces." Besides, I was thinking of one other thing: why does such a building go to waste? What a mass of brick aimlessly put together!

The palace did not please me: too little light — the narrow little windows struggle successfully against the occasional, stubborn rays of sunlight which force their way through the thick foliage of the park, the rooms are of irregular height, — the low ceilings of the lower floor would have deprived the doormen and cooks of air, the space is poorly utilized, on the area occupied by the long horse-shoe of the palace, you could have put up a much bigger building.

The palace pleased me: the walls, what walls! What masonry! You don't find such strength and thickness in our modern, thin-walled houses — on the third floor they are going to the toilet, but on the first for this reason they are not sitting down to have dinner; you may cut a man but through the palace wall you won't hear it. It's strongly built — for almost a century and a half the orphaned walls are rising there and nothing is done with them. If modern houses were built like that!

Then we played down below in the gardens, on the lawn by the pond and Arkhipka and I — we were playing in different groups, — turn by turn carried each other pig-aback.

"Hey, hey!" I cried out at Arkhipka panting beneath me. "I'll teach you to laugh at me that way! Now let me ride in my turn. Ho-o!"

Arkhipka ran with all his might, cut across the lawn and already drawing close to the shrubbery, tripped — a scarcely noticeable and malicious stump turned up under his foot.

We both banged down on to the ground, and I, flying over Arkhipka's head, luckily sprawled out on the low-growing bushes.

I raise my head and look about me: right in front of me are four chaps from our printing department — Snegiryov, Kachurin, Utkin and Nesterenko. The dear chaps are squatting Turk-fashion, pressing their legs beneath them, a newspaper spread out in front of them, on the

newspaper — slices of sausage, cheese, bread and two bottles of filtered vodka.

"Vladimir Petrovich, are you coming over our way?" Utkin asks faltering.

Nesterenko has already exchanged winks with the lads, pushed up to them and invited me:

"Do us the honor to enter our hut."

"Thank you!" I replied cordially, rubbing my bruised shoulder.

"You flew here by aeroplane?" Utkin asked slily.

"On what aeroplane?" I didn't get Utkin's joke.

"Oh, so you were climbing the trees?" Utkin repeated his question.

"Oh, it seems you are interested in the means of my arrival?" I asked. "Well I came much more simply, — I was riding on horseback, and I got thrown".

"What horseback?" Utkin was dumbfounded in his turn.

Meanwhile Snegiryov had time to cut the cheese.

"Shall we start the little one?" I addressed them, fondly slapping the bottom of the bottle with the palm of my hand.

"Pour it out, pour it out!" Kachurin gloomily agreed.

"A good idea," I assented, getting ready to outwit the young chaps who were treating me.

"It's good to have a drink," I began my manoeuvre from afar—— "only one thing is disagreeable to me..."

"What is that?" Nesterenko asked sympathetically.

"I don't want to drink up your money," I grumbled.

"Don't be silly!" Kachurin politely objected.

"What's silly?" I persisted. "I earn a lot, but you don't stretch up to a hundred roubles,——it doesn't look right for me to be treated at your expense..."

"Another time the treat can be on you," Kachurin volunteered

"Why another time?" I declared stubbornly. "I can do it this time... Here's what, boys: to-day I'll treat you, and not you me... I'll buy both bottles from you and treat you..."

"What sort of joke is this you're cooking up!" Nesterenko interrupted me impatiently.

"In that case I'm sore at you," I said with displeasure, getting up from the ground.

"Well, the idea, what do you mean!" Utkin stopped me.

"We don't want to get you sore," Kachurin began to speak in a conciliatory tone. "If you want to buy them so badly, so ahead."

The boys continued trying to persuade me for a couple of minutes, but, encountering my unconquerable stubborness, they agreed to sell the vodka, in the bottom of their souls having no objection to being treated free.

I hauled out my pocket-book, slid out two roubles and seventy four copecks. The lads at once divided the money among themselves, — obviously, the vodka had been bought on shares. I took a bottle in each hand and once more asked:

"In other words, now this is my liquor and I am full owner of it? You've been paid for the bottles? and they're mine too. Am I free to do with it what I like?"

"Thrifty old fellow!" Utkin burst out laughing. "By god, you'll take the bottles home to the old woman. All of thirty copecks for the family budget."

"Fine," I replied impatiently, standing in front of the boys and swinging the bottles firmly gripped in my hands. "The liquor and the bottles are mine? I am the full owner of them?"

"They're yours, they're yours," Nesterenko repeated impatiently. "Why all the talk — let's get down to business."

"Yes, you can get down to business, if the business doesn't hurt anyone," I exclaimed and turning my back on the lads, I jumped across the shrubbery and ran down the hillock.

"Where are you going?" I heard Kachurin's distracted voice behind my back.

"Yes, catch him, boys," I heard Utkins voice, cutting through all the other sounds.

There was a heavy trampling behind my back — the boys were trying to overtake old man Morozov.

"So I don't want to give in to them," thought I and dashed down the hill as fast as I cuold go.

The imperturbable pond was sparkling down below. I would rather have bruised myself to pieces on the planks than have fallen into the hands of the quartette who were chasing me.

There were still left about twenty rods to the pond when I heard at my back Utkin's catching, hoarse voice.

"You old devil, you won't get away!" he was mumbling.

"Will old man Morozov possibly give in to these snivelling little drunkards?" I kept asking myself.

I summoned my last ounce of force, ran on a few rods, with great intensity stopped, brandished my arm — plopp! — and one bottle plunged into the water, a few paces from the bank. I ran still farther ahead, on the run shifted the other bottle from my left hand to the right, stopped, again brandished my arm, and the second bottle cut into the water in the very middle of the pond.

Expecting a fuss, I calmly turned about to face the lads who now were catching up with me. But the good-hearted, laughing young people were running to meet me, — among them were our Young Communist girl Nastya Krasnova and the folder Golosovskaya and Arkhipka...

"Hurrah!"... Golosovskaya exclaimed, waving her arms about, like a frightened hen feebly flapping her wings.

"Atta boy, Morozov!" Nastya echoed her in a weak but hearty voice.

They all hastened up to me, seized me by the legs, hoisted me up, began to toss me and roll me in their arms.

Finally I couldn't stand it, and angrily and tenderly began to yelp: "You numbskulls, oh the likes of you! Will you let me down or not?"

Then the laughing company took pity and let me down. I shrugged my shoulders, was ready even to shake myself like a dog which has been bathed by force, and addressed Nastya with a question:

"Nastya, darling, be so kind as to tell me why they tossed me?"

"You're a queer one, why for your arm, of course, for your arm," she explained to me sweetly.

"I don't understand," I shook my head, puzzled.

"You tossed not only with my arm, but with my head and stomach... What is the reason for that?"

"You see, Vladimir Petrovich, of all our young people you turned out to be the best hurler, "Arkhipka joined in the conversation.."

"Many thanks for reckoning me among the young people, but I don't understand what hurler you are talking about." I replied, still not grasping the situation.

The whole company vied with each other in explaining to me the reason of their exultation.

Nastya Krasnova has charge of the Young Communist's cell work in military matters. On leaving she snatched up a few hand-grenades, wooden ones, into the basket of food, in order to practise hurling in the open air.

And while the lads down below by the pond were taking their running starts according to all the rules, waving their arms and hurling the polished wooden grenades and not displaying any great successes, up above grey-headed Morozov came into view, running down lickety-split with bottles he had found in the woods. "Petrovich observed our exercises from above, couldn't stand it any longer and took it into his head to display his art," the young folks decided. And just at that moment I came leaping down like a spinning-top and heroically hurled the bottles into the pond. I must in fact have thrown the bottles rather well because I aroused universal approval for the new talent suddenly discovered in me.

I didn't act shy. Praise is always pleasant, and it was no great effort for me to pat Nastya's back in a grandfatherly way and remark in a protective tone:

"Well, well, learn from the old men."

We returned late.

The new font of type, just brought to the printing-shop, is pleasing to the eye: the fresh letters, accidentally scattered on the black and familiar floor, shine especially brightly — the stars shone just so. A strong current of wind, beating from the buzzing ventilator, is especially pleasing to the overheated man — on that evening the feeble wind stirred more pleasingly.

On the platform the girls drawled out their songs with boredom, their eyes blinked sleepily, and only the red lantern appearing far off and darting through the night with an angry rumble, revived our interest in life.

In the coach Utkin moved over to me and whispered in a rage:

"You're a villain, and don't you forget it."

"But did you have to get drunk and spoil the excursion by acting like hooligans?" I said, angry and calm. "I'm no fool, young fellow, when it comes to drinking, but everything has its place and time."

Utkin raised his fist to my face and mumbled with irritation:

"But why did you steal our vodka?"

"You got paid for the vodka, and better quit joking with me," I calmly ended the conversation and with a sharp movement I moved Utkin's arm aside and went along.

At the station in Moscow they all dispersed, mingled with the crowd and without saying goodby wandered off home in different directions.

By the exit on to the square, under the big, lustreless, yet ever gleaming clock Nastya caught up to me. She looked at me with tired eyes, straightened up her red kerchief on her head, held out her hand and asked?

"Will you go with us next Sunday?"

I gently took the tender, girlish fingers in mine and said with pleasure:

"Why, of course, Nastya."

The work is wrong and life is wrong.

If they looked after the machines here,they would look after the people too. One is like the other.

Liza Strelkova began working at the composing-rack not long ago; she works fairly well, but she gets along better than many men.

The printing-shop din, enveloping the surroundings, imperceptibly swallows up all outside noises, and yet the monotonous autumn rain beating at the window glass like a wasp, sounded through the composing-room.

It was boring. Yes, the work is so arranged with us that as we work we may be bored, or gay, weep at the burdens of life and rejoice over the occasional successes. The work was getting along badly.

Chebyshev was amusing us — a proof-taker who has worked in our printing-shop from time immemorial and does not dream of bettering himself.

The morning had just begun. They had not yet had time to lug up to Chebyshev the galley-proofs or the sheets of copy, and leaning his elbows on his table, he was telling the entire composing department about Liza Strelkova.

"And, brothers, the girls nowadays don't recognize either the bridal veil nor the gilded candles, and the young lads don't recognize them either. But they don't recognize them because the people nowadays have become frivolous. Each one watches for a chance, fixing up his own business, figli-migli, trenti-trenti..."

Chebyshev broke off his story-telling, joined his hands above his head in a complicated semicircle and twitched his fingers mysteriously — the fingers were supposed to explain to us the meaning of the mysterious "figli-migli".

"And the boys and girls don't live according to god's laws but by human ones. But it is well known: as many dogs, so many commandments, what law I like, that one I take. And the unescepable contagion has gone so far as our little girl, to our friend Yelizaveta Konstantinovna. Liza's parents did not know, did not guess that she would not follow their example and would not want to dance around the pulpit. And how can Liza's parents lie quiet in their grave when they see what a careless daughter they have. Yes, if only they were living! Because every child is bound to hold its parents in honor, to give them in their old age respect and tea with currant jelly! But she went, nay, jumped into marriage not with a steady-going fellow, earning plenty of money, but with a young frivolous fellow, not having as much wages as his wife. Where have such laws been heard of, where are such customs to be seen that a wife should earn more than her husband. What sort of respect can she have to her head and master?.."

Chebyshev could carry on a story endlessly. He would become fascinated, his thin but audible voice, now lowered, now raised and on any subject he could talk for an hour, two hours, three, so long as the page composer did not come up to him, take him by the shoulder and shout right into his ear, "Take your proofs, damn your soul!" Chebyshev could not holt his rattling tongue all at once and would fire off a few more sentences. But you mustn't think that he would become too fascinated with his story-telling. Just let him notice the person about whom he was gossiping — he was very quick-sighted in that respect — and Chebyshev would shut up in an instant and fussily turn back to his bench.

And now he suddenly fell silent, quickly turned to his desk and stooped over as if examining a galley-proof that had just rolled off.

From Chebyshev's movement the compositors understood that Strelkova had come.

Liza nodded to us and hastily went up to her place.

If you haven't been a compositor you don't know what noise is — you may add this saying to the old one about the sea and fear. The bell-ringer finishes his work during his hours, and enough of the bell-tower! and the sounds of the bells are all known beforehand. In the composing-room everyone, who isn't too lazy, makes a noise, and rattles away all day without getting tired, but it's not worth saying anything about the night...

An approving shout went through the setting-room:

"She's come..."

"She wasn't late..."

"Quite surprising, all the same..."

"Well, Liza, how about it," Aleck Komarov addressed her, "your husband didn't make you late?"

"Hard work, all the same," Andrievich came back, "double work, both day and night..."

"Don't mention the night," echoes Mishka Yakushin, "she went tino the night-shift of her own accord..."

Liza bent still lower over her type-case, trying not to seem to notice their merry shouts.

"Well, Liza, how was it?" Komarov again cries out.

"Was it fun?" Yakushin completes his sentence.

A rosy glow begins to spread over Liza's face. A strand of fluffy blond hair, making its way out from her kerchief, annoys Liza, but she is afraid to put up her hand to set her hair to rights: every motion will attract unnecessary attention.

Liza's silence gets on the boy's nerves. It becomes a strain. They work on in silence for some time. There is not much work. Borokhovich begins to nag at Zharenov.

He drops his work, goes up to Zharenov, slaps him on the shoulder and asks:

"Well, brother, why didn't you come to work yesterday? Had a headache, huh?"

"Well, it sure ached," Zharenov, in surprise, agrees.

"By god, after pay-day, you went on a spree?" Borokhovich asks with a shade of envy.

"How shall I say..." Zharenov reflects. "A spree, well, I went on a spree, only my wife..."

"You didn't bring your money home?" Andrievich remarks mockingly.

"Almost didn't," Zharenov mournfully agrees.

"Come, tell us how your spree turned out!" Komarov worries at him.

"So, so," Zharenov darkly teases back at Komarov. "As usual. I had a drink or two. Took a woman on the Tverskaya. Then I drank some more. I sure did drink."

"Drank, drank... Stupid fun!" Komarov comes back at him contemptuously.

"With him it's always like that: no fun in drinking! not interesting to spend time with the girls," Borokhovich drily retorts, slily giving the wink to Komarov — he is challenging Zharenov to be frank.

Zharenov shakes his head angrily, like a horse killing himself with drink.

"So I don't spend my time interestingly!" he growls, angrily looking over his neighbors. "I could tell you... I could tell you... Only there's a woman here..."

"Nonsense!" Andrievich retorts. "Liza will turn the other way."

"No reason to turn the other way," Komarov puts in his comment. "She's knows all about it now."

"The question is not about Liza," says Borokhovich. "Zharenov has nothing to tell."

"What do you mean, Zharenov has nothing to tell?" growls Zharenov. "Nothing of the sort! Just you listen to what happened to me. I go out of the beer-hall and..."

"Take a woman on the Tverskaya," Komarov finishes the sentence for him.

"Don't interrupt, or I won't talk," Zharenov halts him. "I'm telling about the second time. So I go out of the beer-hall, I go down the street, and two girls come toward me. Not any of those promenading there, but honest-to-god little girls, nothing but kids. They take a squint at me and ask me for a nickel for bread. They had come to Moscow to look for work, had walked all day and had nothing to eat... Zharenov is a good fellow — I bought them a bun. They ate it up. I bought them an egg a piece. I don't know how the shell got away intact. They gobbled up the eggs in a jiffy. I began to feel sorry for them. It's hard to express how sorry I felt. I thought, thought I ,what will they do hungry in Moscow; so I took pity on them and offered them a chance to earn three roubles. I persuaded them. We went off to an out-of-the-way place. They got set. The girls did their duty by turn."

The boys crowed about Zharenov, as he told his story in a loud voice.

"The tears rolled off me, as I did it with them," Zharenov said to his auditors. "I was sorry for the girls, they were very young, nothing but kids..."

No one noticed when Liza Strelkova dropped her work and came up to the men listening.

Her voice rang out all the more unexpectedly.

"Come on!" Liza cried out. "You won't get away with that. Come on to the works committee, they'll tell you a thing or two!"

Liza's voice broke, her lips quivered.

I went up to Klimov and in confusion whispered to him:

"How is it we haven't paid attention to this rotter? The women have begun to teach you and me."

Klimov and I left our work and mingled with the general group.

Zharenov boldly shoved his hands into his pockets and impudently asked:

"Beg your pardon, Yelizaveta Konstantinovna, it seems, you correct geography?"

"What then?" Liza replied in agitation.

"Then instead of me, you'd better talk with your husband about Europe..."

"And about Italy," Komarov inserted his word.

"Better about the hemisphere" added Borokhovich.

Liza recoiled, flushed and went out, distracted.

No, I saw at once that it was no work for women to teach villains. And what has the works committee to do with this?

I pushed to one side Andrievich who was standing in front of me, brandished my fist and gave Zharenov a punch in the face with all my might.

He fell to the floor, but at once jumped up and rushed at me.

The boys around us fell off to one side.

Then I grabbed him by the collar, swung him away from me, bent his head down to his galley-case and began to beat his hateful face.

Honest to god, I wasn't sorry I beat up Zharenov, although he wasn't even able to leave the composing-room on his own feet. But after dinner a decree appeared on the wall, signed by comrade Klevtzov. I was reprimanded for acting the hooligan during work.

I didn't agree with this and started right away to the director's office.

"Sit down, sit down, Vladimir Petrovich," the director met me cordially. "It's not good, brother, to begin cutting up in old age."

"But is it good ,comrade Klevtzov, for a man to be a swine?" I asked the director.

"But that has nothing to do with work," Klevtzov again remarked reproachfully.

"Oh, is that so," I said to him. "They plague a woman, they thrash her, but that has nothing to do with work? Well, for example, Stepanov here carries out the work of a simple sorting-girl, but is paid as the master's assistant, but the sorting-girls Berzina and Rytova have the work of checking up, but no one thinks of giving them pay of the eleventh rank. That, comrade Klevtzov, of course has nothing to do with the work. The numbering-girl Kocherygina worked through seven thousand worth of spoiled goods, well, we deduct the loss from her pay. But what was the master and his assistant doing all that time? Kindly note that they were busy with political discussion. Again the woman is to blame. Splendid, comrade Klevtzov, you put up the reprimand against me, but I will go to a certain institution to have a little talk about this matter."

The director heard me to the end without interrupting. When I had finished, he held out his hand and said:

"No reason to lock up the stable now. The reprimand will be removed at once and please do not go kicking up a fuss."

In the corridor I met Strelkova hastening to the exit.

"Hurrying to your husband? Well, run along, run along," I remarked gently to her back.

"Go to the devil, you scoffer!" Liza snapped back angrily.

"Well, that's what you get!" I grimaced to myself, and opened my arms helplessly. "Just this minute I interceded for you women."

Valentina came in.

She silently held before my eyes the opened notebook. Under the last line of the composition a neat comment was drawn slantwise with a red pencil: "Well written, but the boldness of your judgment shows failure to understand Turgenev and in general a liking for judging things you don't understand."

"Well written" — good. Turgenev you can't understand, fine, I agree with that. But to write that I like to pass judgment on things I don't understand, — your humble servant, sir! Not at all! Can it be true that I pass judgment on things I don't understand? How disagreeable! Or... My guess is right.

I got out my wallet, slipped fifty kopecks out of it and gave them to my daughter.

"Well, buy yourself some sweets," I said to Valentina. "Well written — be glad. But as for not understanding — never you mind: this teacher will never understand me, just as I shall never understand him."

The three of us went along to the club — I, Anna Nikolayevna and Valentina.

It was a curious sight — an honest-to-god opera.

The actors didn't play at all bad: they sang, waved their arms gracefully and politely bowed again and again when we clapped. And we clapped no worse than they sang.

After clapping till our hands were sore, we got ready to break up.

Anna Nikolayevna couldn't wait to get home. She was worrying whether her chests were safe — it was seldom, very seldom that she left the flat under lock and key. Valentina put up a front, said she could listen to the entire opera over again: but at the end of the performance the girlie was nodding — she wanted to sleep. As for me, I am accustomed to go to bed early.

We were shoving along toward the exit. But just then Peter Yermakov runs up to me and whispers:

"Vladimir Petrovich, something awful has happened. Would you mind going with me to the corner?"

"What sort of corner do you mean?" says I to him. "Are you drunk or what?"

"Honestly, something's happened," says he again. "We want to ask you for a little advice."

I saw that something had really happened to the lads.

"Anna Nikolayevna, you go along home with Valentina," I said as I took my wife to the exit. "I've got to be held up a bit."

"What's the matter?" I mumbled irritatedly, going back to Yermakov.

"It's terrible, Vladimir Petrovich, it's really terrible! We were all so entranced by the performance, we lost sight of the actors' clothes. Connie Kuzmichev and Alex Stukov had been ordered to sit in the dressing-room, but of course they came down to the stage and, bored a little hole in the canvas and listened to the singing. During that time the whole dressing-room was stripped clean through the window. Just think they carried everything away to the last stitch, they even grabbed a couple of extra wigs. You can believe the actors are exited. More than that, they're damn angry... We've no idea what to do next..."

Yermakov's eyes fill as he tells his story. He is upset too.

There's an opera for you!

"Right now the main thing," says the lad, "is to calm the actors."

We clamber up on the stage and go into the dressing-room. Our lads, looking sour and gloomy, are crowded in one corner and talking to the policeman. The actors, in boyar costumes made of poor calico, are running up and down and back and forth. Only occasionally the heavy silence is broken by a plump, good-looking actress who keeps screaming.

"How awful, how awful! What shall I do without my pink jacket?"

We finally agreed to take the actors to the nearest cabs. First, we offered them our own clothes, but they refused. We couldn't let them go

out alone, there were too many hooligans in the neighborhood. And it was handier for us to haggle with the cab-drivers ourselves; after all it was our money.

The procession was a sight for sore eyes.

Down the middle of the pavement minced the disgruntled hollow-cheeked boyars and chatelaines. The boyars did not stop their grumbling for a single second, and the chatelaines uttered little squeaks and screams. The houses along the way reflected in their dull, weak-eyed windows, the unusual conglomeration of colors. Along the side, down the sidewalk, we went, silent and gloomy. From time to time one of our lads would cast a sly glance at the chatelaines who were breaking their heels on the cobble-stones, and would insult the morning quiet with a snicker. When this happened we all turned to stare indignantly at the vulgar fellow, and hissed our scorn as we struggled to hold back our own laughter.

How hard my life is! No, how easy my life is! I accept life as it is. No unpleasantnesses fall upon me unwares. I am ready for every thing. And, true enough, it's not so easy, this life of mine... Old man Morozov has experienced many painful, many hard things. Well, never mind. He has been through everything, accepted everything, endured everything. It would be simpler to say, become hardened to everything. That's why my life is easy, after all.

Life, life, you low-down old hag! You only go looking for a chance to play mean tricks on people. And there's no way to get back at you, nothing to say to you, to halt your unending race and make you stop and look at what you have done...

My poor boy! I am sorry for you. How can I help you?

Yesterday they called me away from my work. At the bottom of the stairway my son was standing, my comrade Morozov, my member of the Polygraphic Trust, and comrade Klevtzov went down with me from upstairs to see him. The director beat me to it, seized Ivan's hand and shook it for a long time, very graciously inviting him to come up to his office.

Ivan's appearance struck me dumb. He did not have the usual confidence of a man, the master of a fat portfolio, oozing with Power. His eyes, distracted and downcast tried to hide their distress; the director didn't notice, but I did right away.

"Father," Ivan said in a low tone, "I need you. I want you very much to go along with me now."

I saw: my little boy was in deep distress, but my work did not allow me to give myself up to human weaknesses.

"No, sonny," I objected, pretending not to notice his state. "I am not such a rich man that I can lose half of the working-day... Yes, and for taking a day off..."

Ivan interrupted me quietly and rapidly:

"Don't worry. I'll pay you out of my own money."

And I could feel that he wanted to go away alone, not any response on my part.

But then the director interfered even quicker.

"Why, why! No missed days, no deductions," said he and turned to Ivan. "Don't you worry, comrade Morozov, for you or with you I'll let the whole composing room off." Then he turned to me: "What are you talking about, Morozov? Go along and don't worry about deductions."

Going out of the printing-shop, my son and I went along a good while without talking, but keeping in step. He couldn't begin and I didn't want to force his silence. Wait a minute and the door will certainly open of itself.

We went along briskly and suddenly stopped at the entrance to a little, dirty, cheap-looking beer-hall. Without exchanging a single word, we went into the dark and musty hall, without a word I gave the waiter the sign with two fingers, without a word, we put to our lips the ruddy-colored drink, topped with a pale, weakish foam.

Ivan was silent, but I felt that within him was going on unceasingly the mad race of his thoughts, confused, chaotic. Ivan looked at me sharply with eyes suddenly fixed, and, almost like a child said merely:

"D'ye know,old man?"

The old man didn't know anything, but the old man could feel the call of — eyes, damn it! — his own kin blood.

As gently as I could I answered just as briefly:

"It hurts, sonny?"

Then, silent again, we got up, without a word I put the money on the table and my son took me along to his apartment.

On the way I thought over a lot of things. Embezzling? Nowadays you could think of that first of all. Ivan is not a fellow to turn embezzler. But if... No, he would not have needed me. I am sure he could have succeded in shooting himself alone. Fools and poisoned animals finish themselves with suicide. I wouldn't have shot myself. But I would never have embezzled. My son is weaker than I, he could have shot himself, but embezzle — never! So, that's out. Or has something happened to his wife and child... Or has the plague taken away his wife...

His flat was empty. Nina Borisovna, Leo and the servant were in the country. Ivan was left alone. Yes, he was left alone, and there was no one with whom to share his grief except with me,his old man, his faithful and rough old friend.

On entering the room, Ivan dropped on to the bed; he didn't sit down, he didn't lie down, he didn't let himself down, but simply dropped. And my boy burst out crying. My boy, my grown-up boy could no longer cry with the light, childish weeping which relieves the soul. No matter how much I wanted the big, shining tears to roll down his cheeks, no matter how much I wished he would wipe away the tears from his cheeks with his little fists, with his dirty little fists, no matter how much I wanted his little face to turn red and wrinkled... Well, I wanted quite a lot! His eyes were dry, his face was covered with a greyish pallor, and he himself was silent, and only a stormy breathing shook his shoulders. My boy was a man. And yet — could I help noticing it? — he was crying.

Ivan began to talk. His confused and distressed account was as painful and long as his silence had been.

I could never retell my son's story. Most painful distress and a great love were intertwined in him with a fiction woven by inflamed jealousy, justified by the naked, all-destroying truth.

The facts were simple and prosaic. On returning from the country on Sunday, only a few hours after parting with his wife, he sat down to write her a letter. The youthful flush of being in love had long since vanished from their relations. And yet on that very evening Ivan was overcome by a burst of great tenderness. His busy, hum-drum life fell aside — he wanted her, his beloved, wanted to caress her, to share with

her this burst of feeling, rare and remarkable for him. Unfortunately, he had no envelopes left, he went to his wife's desk to get one of her narrow, blue, imported envelopes. She did not like to have Ivan use her things. He would even have preferred to go out into the street to buy an envelope in a stationery kiosk. But it was late...

Opening the drawer of the desk, Ivan caught sight of two letters, addressed to his wife, tossed in on top of the clean paper, written in an unknown, unfamiliar, certainly an unfamiliar handwriting. Ivan almost never read her letters, and this time he picked them up only because, thinking all the time of his wife, he suddenly wanted, even by the intermediary of these letters, probably half-business letters, as he thought, to commune for a moment with her personal life. One letter, in fact, did speak of certain interesting books, of the theater... In a few short lines there broke through little notes of tenderness, there was much more tenderness between the lines, but the letter, as a whole bore such a hypocritical respectful air, that Ivan even smiled with vanity to himself, proud of his wife's fidelity and of that unknown man's envy of him — to Ivan who had such an interesting, clever and beautiful wife. The second letter no longer hypocritical. The second letter told plainly and simply of a new fascination of Nina Borisovna. No, not of love, but of fascination, binding people only by the bed. He read the letter through again. He pondered on it, sought for slips of the tongue, obscurities... No, everything was said there. There was nothing to hesitate about.. Ivan turned numb. Everything stopped in him. His heart beat with heavy, dull thumps striking his head with rushes of blood. The tumultuous breathing, now weakening, now growing strong and turning hoarse with anger, there was none of that. The race of thoughts, deceiving, quieting, confusing man's consciousness, stopped. He was a genuine man, in his life there was only the absurdity and confusion of life, his reasoning and lofty creative force, an iron ability to command and — this too he could do — to obey, were given to his work. The only party in the world which does not excuse even its best men's mistakes, trusted Morozov and valued him highly. To his wife he showed the unavoidable human weaknesses, all the unwasted tenderness of a genuine working man, the minutes of twilight, human waverings, all that was left over from the cause to which he had dedicated himself since those days at the front. You can give your life to the Party — everyone loves his own life, yet he can give his life to the Party even with joy, — but certainly you can't go running to the Party and shout: my heart is aching! You can't get up and announce: my soul is sad! But you could confide such things to the woman who shares your life; to her you could cry — no, not cry, for although you may shout when you address the Party, you talk softly to the little, beloved woman — to her you could complain in the quiet hours of night as the last tramways rattle by. But this woman is no more.

No, it wasn't his wife's infidelity that made Ivan turn to stone. The working man looks on these matters more simply, anything may happen and anything may be forgotten. It has not the infidelity, but the deception that cut Ivan so deeply.

A man is still a man, his injured masculine vanity would force him to suffer, but yet he could not help but forgive her — everything may happen. But deception is unpardonable. On that same unhealthy and nerve-wracked night Ivan sent his wife a telegram telling her that it was all over.

"I trusted you more than myself. You have deceived me. Everything is ended forever."

After sending the telegram, he sent her a letter. In it he succeeded in showing her all his great love for her — he thought he succeeded — about which he spoke little, rarely and drily.

For three days his beclouded human eyes could see nothing except two letters that wounded his love. For three days he waited for an answer which could remove his distress, disprove the facts, say that she loved him, that their life was a real life without deception.

His wife's letter was too much for his weak, human heart. Denying everything ill-temperedly, she only proved her deception with each one of her words about fidelity.

Ivan read me her letter.

His wife had sent him a mean, hypocritical letter. It was not the tone of the letter — proud and insolent — which dumbfounded me: it was the way she tried to prove her fidelity. Nina Borisovna wrote to Ivan that she could not have deceived him on Monday, because she was very busy, on Tuesday, because a third person was present throughout her rendez-vous, on Wednesday, because she was menstruating... And not once did she say that she had not wanted to deceive Ivan because she loved him, because she did not want to hurt him.

After Ivan had told his story, he crumpled up, and till my departure didn't say another word.

I got up.

"You're right, son," I said. It wasn't easy for me to say this. It's always better to deceive a man and make him believe that everything is O. K. But here the situation was all clear. He didn't need any advice from me. And what advice could I give him? I saw that a little spark of doubt was still glowing in him, and deliberately, just as people cauterize a snake bite, I roughly stamped it out. I said:

"Yes, she deceived you. You must end it all. But don't let go of the child."

Then I pulled my cap down over my eyes and went to the door. I had to leave Ivan alone. You can tell a friend about your pain, and I am proud I turned out to be a friend to my son, but a man can conquer his pain only by himself in solitude.

On the way out I stopped, and having seen a man almost killed by a great love, I said resolutely:

"That's no way to love."

I have nothing to write. I have been turning over the pages of my notes and I see how I keep repeating myself. The nasty little happennings, piling up from day to day in my notes, alarm the heart, which after each event begins to beat all the stronger.

Every morning before setting about composing I have to chase around the composing-room: you have to hunt up your composition and text, carry everything to the place of composing, move about the boards with the text from place to place, look for the type for the headings — so it goes on all day long, so it goes on every day, these last few weeks.

When Klimov took it into his head to ask Klevtzov, what he was thinking of doing to improve the printing-press, the director answered curtly:

"You don't have to know everything; I'm responsible for the printing shop."

Spoiled goods and breakage have become quite usual in our shop. Everyone who isn't too lazy spoils the orders — they spoil the print, the line-setting, and thebinding. There's no limit to the spoiling of goods, no struggle is carried on against slackness in our production.

Yesterday in the printing department Utkin fought with Nesterenko.

Of course, it's dull standing by the press all day. Nesterenko threw Utkin against the machine. The machine wasn't hurt, but Utkin's shoulder was. He had to stop work for six weeks.

The line-setter Lapkin, spoilt an order to-day. Who'd be brave enough to admit his mistake? Lapkin went to the foreman, growled out something about the order and got a new lot of paper. The order was spoilt, the second time as well.

Not a day goes by without something happening.

I come home as cross as two sticks.

Several evenings running Anna Nikolayevna has asked me the same question.

"Are you not feeling well, Vladimir Petrovich? Have some raspberry tea. It'll make you sweat everything out."

And I say every time, as I sit undoing my boot-laces.

"It's nothing you can cure with raspberry tea."

* * *

Morozov, is it to yourself you're saying that? Ay, to myself. I'm not given much to cursing, nor to reproaching myself. But this time I'll say: Yes, Morozov, you're an old fool.

I thought I could comfort my son. What comfort, indeed!

Two days after his confession I went and bought a bottle of vodka, and some sour cucumbers — does a worker always run for vodka and sour cucumbers when he's unhappy, I wonder — and I went off to my boy.

He was quiet enough when he met me. We sat down at the table and soon finished the bottle. My son is weaker than I. Most of the bottle was drunk by myself. I felt fine myself though Ivan was evidently feeling low. Then I started in to console him.

"You know, lad," I said, pulling myself together. "You're not the only one. It's hard to tell you about it — particularly hard because my wife happens to be your mother."

Ivan didn't seem interested in my opening remarks. I should have taken notice of this and stopped. But could I have held my tongue? If it had once decided to blather, you couldn't stop it for anything.

"Well, son," I went on, "there's nothing for you to torment yourself so much about. You're not the only cuckold. It wasn't very pleasant for me either when my wife deceived me. Your mother also wasn't at the height of her calling and there was a time when I was unhappy. But it's all past and gone now. All over, son, all over. It'll all shake down in time."

Ivan was silent.

Then I started to make fun of it.

"Seems to run in the family." I chuckled, deliberately, degrading myself. "It's nothing! If only people didn't get to know — they're always glad of a chance to laugh at husbands who've been fooled. But if they don't know about it, the people it's nothing. Muph, you think it's something unusual, do you?"

But Ivan never said a word! His silence tormented me, and so I resolved to startle him with the details of this, my own drama.

"It was simple enough" — I started my tale — "About twenty five years ago I happened to be pals with a maker-up called Gavrilov. A good fellow, a real pal, women liked him, and he could drink as well as another — in short, a regular fellow. We were great friends and he got into the habit of coming over of an evening. We'd sit and chat, have a drink sometimes. Anna Nikolayevna'd give us tea. We lived quietly, — and then once..."

I glanced at my son. He was looking away from me, not in the least interested in my story.

Ay, it's like that, is it? I had to listen to your story, read the letters from your wife and sympathise, and you just don't give a damn for your father's troubles? All right then. I'll make you feel it, I will that!

"And we had a compositor, Castrulya, and he was even greater friends with Gavrilov than I was. He used to come and see us as well, and liked his tea and vodka, too, along with us. One day we got an urgent order at printing-works. I was working that time on the day shift. The manager, Kusma Alexandrovitch Tishin, he's dead, now, god save his soul, he was a good manager — came up to us in the evening and asked us to work over, night-shift as well. I needed money worse then than I do now. I ran home, had supper, told the wife I wouldn't be home that night and went back to the printing-works. There I fell out with the compositor, not Gavrilov, he was off that night — but another one. It was about the imposing. The fellow swore at me and I at him, and this went on till we nearly came to blows.

"I got mad and cleared off home. As I got near the house I saw there was a light in the window of my flat. Funny thing, I thought to myself. Went downstairs, pushed the door — it was on the latch. The latch was a poor one and I was strong, — I pulled it towards me, flung it open and there before me — all three, Anna Nikolayevna, Gavrilov, and Castrulya. On the table there was a bottle of wine, opened, and they themselves, hear this! they themselves, all three — were naked!"

I looked at Ivan again, if he'd only show some sign — but he wasn't taking the slightest interest.

I couldn't stand it any longer. I seized him by the shoulder and shook him.

"Naked, do you understand?" I shouted at him: "Naked!"

He turned, looked at me vacantly and said:

"I'm not interested."

Well, what could I say to that? I said good bye and left.

Found something to console your son with, didn't you?

Just as if it could make him feel easier to know you're a cuckold, too.

I was a damned fool to have made up this story. As if I'd have let my wife do it! Just let me catch her deceiving me! No, he's not a cuckold, your father, only a fool. To comfort his son, deceived by his wife, by telling him that his mother was also a harlot. As if his wife wasn't enough? And then the story I made up was all so stupid. I slandered Anna Nikolayevna for nothing, and Gavrilov — and he was really a good pal to me — I dragged him into it... The three of them, the wine — naked. Gavrilov? And he had such a mug on him that horses would shy at him, when they saw him.

This time I proved to be the fool. When I remember the story, it seems so stupid... No, I'll never be an author, that's clear.

I can't understand modern paintings. The pictures are mostly made up of coloured cubes, with sharp, crooked lines, crossing over them. You've got to look at them a long time before yon can get at the secret idea of art. To-day I suddenly understood that pictures are being built up now like our new house.

I had to be on the building all day — a director of our cooperative has to be on duty there. We take it in turns. We don't understand a thing about building, — we can't set the lines of bricks, interleave them with mortar, bind the galley-proofs of the walls with steel hoops and impose the walls, the stairs and the roofs — but our eyes, the eyes of the owners, follow the work all the more closely, and hopefully.

As I wandered about the scaffolding, sometimes several paces away from the building, passing the heaps of bricks, I took a pleasure in the strength and colourful softness of the orange, grey, brown, and white geometrical shapes, cubes, squares, triangles as they seemed to collide with each other, to disappear, swallowed up all at once by some big new figures that would appear suddenly — and these in their turn would disappear, swallowed imperceptibly by the greater figures. Out of all these a house was arising.

The house was arising and it reminded me of the impressions of the many puzzling pictures turned out by our press.

My work at the building consisted of checking the bills. I haggled over every kopeck. I refused to pay the mechanic Nicheporuk for a working day, since he only came in towards evening. I sent away the private dealer who was trying to talk the engineer into buying roof-iron from him, and I sent for the iron to a government shop. But for all that I had quite a lot of time for idle thoughts.

Twilight came smoothly down in due course.

As I was going away the engineer caught up to me. A nervous chap, always in a hurry. He shook my hand as he went without halting.

At the wicket-gate I stopped and gave one more approving glance at the house.

A shout came from a long way off — echoing my thoughts. "The house is growing!" I turned. Out of the depths of the darkening lane cutting up the long light thrown on the pavement by the row of monotonous street-lamps came Gertner, waving his hat.

"The wife's been waiting a long time, Vladimir Petrovitch," he said cheerily to me instead of the usual greeting.

"Never mind, she'll have to wait," I laughed. "But what a house, Pavel Alexandrovitch, eh?"

"And what kind of a house would you call it?" chuckled Gertner, screwing up his eyes.

And I said:

"Our own!"

Early in the morning — I'd only just got up — my son came in.

Anna Nikolayevna had barely looked at Ivan when she gasped, and clasped her hands in fright — "God save us! Vanechka, what's up with you at all? You look like a ghost!"

"Now, now!" I said and stopped her — "Can't you see the fellow's half dead with work? Don't annoy him."

My old woman started on to me. I'd no time to argue with her, I was too worried about the boy. There was something wrong with him: his eyes had fallen in, his lips were dry and trembled, he kept fumbling with

his handkerchief. I was sorry for him but he got my back up, too. Fancy letting himself go like that on account of a woman!

The tea didn't taste like tea to me. Ivan didn't want to either eat nor drink — Anna Nikolayevna pressed him, but all in vain. I caught it hot from her, of course, it was me that was hurrying all the time and not making the boy eat the crisp fried drop-cakes. I was hurrying, but only because I could see that Ivan was waiting impatiently for me. I'd have preferred not to eat anything myself, but then the old nuisance would have suspected something for sure.

Moscow streets were long and empty, the morning freshness was ready to fly away after the first tram, the invisible sun drew wide pleasant paths on the boulevards.

We went by the boulevard.

Now Ivan would slow down, and then he'd run and I had hard work to keep up with him.

We met an occasional passer-by, hurrying sleepily along, and only the garden watchman kept bobbing about constantly before our eyes as he went round picking up the empty cigarette packets strewed along the way. At the edge of the boulevard Ivan stopped.

I thought that he wanted to sit down and I dropped down myself on a bench, all scribbled over with — the usual sickening names. But he didn't sit down. He stood, bending his face down to mine.

"I can't stay like this, I can't," he whispered, and there was a sort of hysterical quiver in his voice. "I love her, but I couldn't bear to see her now."

Then he straightened himself up, and clinching his fists, roared at me, as if I was the guilty lover of Nina Borisovna:

"I'll never forgive this! Never! Never! Oh! the bitch, the dirty bitch!"

Then he shouted out some particularly low curses.

And afterwards he muttered rapidly to himself, broken sentences, mixed up with his private thoughts.

"You know, I'm beginning to put separate facts together, I'm beginning to go over our past life together, and every little thing — that seemed to have no meaning before — tells me of her deception. Each new day brings up some new incident that goes to form a heavy chain of evidence. Every day the people we both knew come to see me and pity me, since they heard of the trouble. You understand what that is — they pity me! At night I'm haunted by terrible dreams. I don't know her lovers — some name this one and some that one — but I dream of her — in the arms of some stranger. I don't know what to do. It's hard for me, but I'm too healthy and I like work too much, to go out of life of my own free will.

"I'm not telling you this so as you'll console me. I don't need any support. I can boast before you, my own father, my father with the true, clean mind, that I've got just as strong a mind as you. I love her, and my love will give me the strength to put her away from me, to forget her and start a new life as if I'd never known her."

Over our heads the weak wind of the city stirred the pale, dusty leaves of the boulevard trees.

Ivan looked at me tenderly and shook my hand warmly.

"Thanks for listening to me," he said, "and now I'm off to work."

What a son I have! How I love him! Bravo, son, it'll all shake down. We're not the sort to give up when we're hurt.

The house is getting finished. Only little things remain to be done — the doors to be put on hinges, the window-frames to be hung and glazed, the walls to be coloured. But the rooms, the rooms we're going to live in, are ready now.

They began to start an inspection — who was the worst off as regards housing conditions.

I went through many flats along with Glazer and I can say truthfully — everybody was very badly-off.

I was in a house in Meshchanskaya Street; behind its pink, peeling walls several members of our cooperative lived.

We had to go up a steep stairs, slippery with filth, to the fourth floor. The flats hidden under the roof, looked out cheerlessly at their unwelcome visitors. They seemed ashamed of their own crowded darkness. Really, an uninhabited attic would look cosier, quieter and more inspiring.

We went in to Comrade Pavlishchenko's room. She is our folder in the printing work. She's consumptive but a cheerful person. We brought the rain with us. It beat on the window-panes, and suddenly I felt a drop from the ceilling a real drop of rain, on my funny red nose. I looked up at the ceilling: a damp spot was spreading on the greyish square — and along from the corner of the wall a thin stream dripped shyly to the floor.

Glazer followed the direction of my forefinger, shook his head and said in an unfriendly tone to Pavlishchenko.

"Hoping to get a new flat, I suppose. That's bad. Why didn't you speak to the manager of the house about the roof?"

Pavlischenko smiled sadly.

"Do you suppose I didn't speak to him?" she said quietly. "I've been to him several times." I'd say, 'Look here, when it rains in the street, it rains in our rooms, too!' And he'd say 'Well, what about it? The rain'll go off and then the walls will dry up.' Several of us went to him together. We said 'It can't go on like that, there are working women here with children.' And he just said — 'And how did you live before?' It was no good telling him that those times were different to now."

Glazer and I went round about fifteen families, and we saw the same thing everywhere. People lived badly, the damp walls and dark rooms rotted their lungs and broke down their spirits.

We all met together to divide up the rooms.

There was a lot of sharp talk. There were not enough rooms. Then they all began to quarrel. Everybody had hoped to get a dry warm room by the autumn. There were not enough rooms to go round, and I was not the only one who would have to stay another winter in my disgusting old cellar.

I was fully entitled to a flat, I said it myself. I'd paid my full share, my cellar was no good, I'd worked conscientiously on the building.

However, I refused. I stood up and said:

"I don't want a flat. We should give first turn to women with small children. And there are some without children who are housed a lot worse than me."

This brought forth an objection from Gertner.

He stood against the wall with his hands behind his back. When he heard what I said, he came forward quickly, looked at me with his wise eyes and remarked aloud:

"There's no need for you, Vladimir Petrovitch, to go about playing the benefactor to people. You're housed pretty badly and you've got every right to a new flat."

"No, Pavel Alexandrovitch," I said, "I've got something besides rights. I've got a conscience. That's why I don't want to accept a flat, and I advise you, Pavel Alexandrovitch, to do the same."

"You advise me to do the same?" Gertner asked warily, rising on tiptoes. "Why?"

"Because you're a bachelor, Pavel Alexandrovitch, your room's a small one, but it's enough for one person, and I think you could wait over the winter."

"Of course, of course," Hertner hastened to agree with me.

"But I think you might take into consideration my work in your building cooperative. I've put so much of my time and strength into it..."

"We're all spending a lot of our strength, Pavel Alexandrovitch," I broke in — "But it's not for ourselves alone we're doing it."

He had nothing to say to that. He looked at me without blinking for a few seconds, and then his eyes fell and he muttered "Oh, yes." After that he kept silent until the end of the meeting.

The plan drawn up by the directors for the distribution of the rooms was approved at the general meeting. Well, it wasn't quite the same plan, as they drew up — they didn't give me or Gertner a flat, but it was approved.

I went out satisfied. This house had been erected, others would be erected after it, and our lads, who had often seemed, in the little things of life, to be idle, proud, envious, stingy, gluttonous, or quarrelsome, turned out to be good lads who knew how to control themselves and were being extremely helpful on our building.

As I went out Petka Yermakov stopped me about something to do with the club — evidently things had gone wrong again and he wanted to tell me all about it.

He didn't have the chance to begin however. Gertner came up, and sent Yermakov away roughly. Then he took me by the arm, drew me towards the exit and began in a restrained voice to complain of the unjust resolutions made at the meeting.

Then I made a mistake. I should have tried to console and quieten him and instead of that I began to defend the meeting zealously.

"But I had the right to a flat. I was dreaming so long of having my own room there — I gave so much of my time and energy to this house," Gertner murmured despairingly.

"Oh, rubbish!" I interrupted sharply. There's no use talking nonsense, Pavel Alexandrovitch. If you were only thinking of your own good all the time, you should have gone to a private firm."

"Oh, is that so?" Gertner said angrily and turned away from me into a dark side street.

I looked down the line of lamps glimmering feebly along the gateways and the sound of Gertner's footsteps, dying away in the distance and it roused my pity somehow.

I shouted to him in farewell "Hey, Pavel Alexandrovitch, don't get lost!"

Anna Nikolayevna was waiting for me at home. She screwed up her eyes, that looked red round the rims, when she saw me.

"They'll be shifting the people into the new flats soon,I suppose?" she asked.

Then I put my foot in it.

"Well, it's like this, you see, there'll be better flats in the next house they build, so it would be better for us to wait." I lied to her.

"Lying again!" she grumbled. "While you were still on the way home Golosovskaya dropped in. I know now how you refused a flat. Ugh, you, such a benefactor, aren't you?"

"Oh, stop croaking." I said half-joking. "We'll have another house ready in a year's time."

The old woman never ceased scolding. She believed in the new house, but doubted my willingness to get a new flat for us.

And now it's me that's ready to howl.

After that last meeting with my son I worked well, in good spirits. Next day when I was in the printing-works, I opened the paper and read quietly, as if I had expected — although I never had or could have expected it — the notice of Ivan Vladimirovitch Morozov's death.

Half-an-hour after our meeting Ivan had been run over by a tram.

I did not go to the funeral. There was a place there for an orchestra, for a delegation of workers, his comrades, but not for me, his father and his friend. I needed him alive, what was his body to me?

I heard rumours that Nina Borisovna was going all over Moscow saying that Ivan had committed suicide. Many were inclined to believe it. Those, who had seen him shortly before the end, shook their heads, sympathised and expressed their sorrow for such a young and responsible worker, who had thrown himself under a tram.

It's a lie! He was run over accidentally. This is what I say and old Morozov never lies. Ivan would never have taken his own life. We're not that sort.

The young lads got the better of me.

The Young Communists in the printing-works go beyond all bounds in their zeal. There isn't one human feeling that they wouldn't try to remodel according to their own ideas. All right, let them do a whole lot of social work, let them call on us to take part in a chess tournament, make us play the balalaika in the music circle, but why touch our god. Leave him alone. There is no god, you say? Very well. Then why shout about him so much?

The printing-works Young Communists organised a "cell" of atheists. All right I can't stop them from doing silly things, but I'm not going to take part in them. And so it happened — but wait a bit, old chap, let's have it in order.

My good, old Titus Livius is such a fox. I suspected that he had some purpose in changing his Christian name. And I was right. That crook didn't change it for nothing. And who would change their names just for nothing when they were in their sixties.

A few days ago, Sunday it was, we met as usual. We got to the pub, about the same time. I'd hardly time to slam the door behind me. When I saw the tall figure of the deacon, slowly exhaling clouds of blue tobacco smoke.

"Livy!" I called out, and drew everybody's attention to myself. "Old pal!"

The deacon turned a cross face to me and shouted:

"Son of a bitch, you! I've had about enough of your laughing at me. I'm not Livy to you. I'm Ivan."

"No, no, my lad." I objected, pushing my way meantime to a free table near the platform. "You needn't call yourself Ivan. Ivan is gone. He's been cremated a while ago. So you might as well know, I don't need a second Ivan, I wouldn't have him."

"You needn't have him, either," remarked the deacon contemptuously. The chair he was sitting on threatened to break under his enormous weight. "But there are plenty of Ivans in the world and I'm one of them."

Devil take him! He's right, after all. There are plenty of Ivans in the world, indeed. The painful throbbing of my heart began to die down.

"In Dmitrevitch," I complained to my Livy purposely shortening his first name. "My son's dead." Of course the deacon replied in the traditional way:

"We shall all go there."

I shook my head in denial.

"There is no "here" or "there", you know it."

The deacon winked slyly — he was of the same mind as me — that there was no "there."

"And the point is, Livy," I went on complaining, forgetting he'd asked me not to call him that, "people get my back up. They say that my Ivan took his own life. That a healthy, strong fellow would go out of this life of his own free will! I know myself, how he loved life!"

"Do you really know?" asked the deacon seriously, looking me straight in the eyes.

I did not turn mine away.

"Take no notice of other people and what they say!" said the deacon kindly in reply to my complaints. Then he suddenly remembered something — and pulled his cap off.

I could not believe my eyes. Livy's head shone like one of the many billiard balls that he so often played at shooting into the pockets of the billiard table.

I tried to hide my surprise and said. "I say, old chap, after all this business of changing your name and shaving your head I begin to really suspect that your old head has turned into a billiard-ball."

The deacon laughed and shook his head.

"Well, what is it?" I asked. "Have the orthodox priests gone over to Catholicism? It'd be curious to see our priests showing their fresh tonsures to the hysterical female admirers. I should think there'd be a mutiny among the women. They wouldn't have to search for lice in anybody's heads then."

The deacon laughed but becoming conscious of my rising wrath, he suddenly frowned. He held out his hand a little sadly to me. "Goodbye!" he said but remained seated.

"All right," I replied with some dissatisfaction. I was vexed that he kept on hiding something from me. "I hope you'll be a bit more open with me next Sunday."

"There won't be any next Sunday," growled Titus Livius, very sadly this time.

"Look here, old fellow, you've gone quite queer. The next Sunday will come round after six days and then again after six more days there'll be another one and it'll still go on like that when there's socialism

all over the world and when our bones have gone to fertilise the cornfields."

"But there'll be no next Sunday for you and me," he objected obstinately.

"Livy, don't talk rot," I commanded him. "That's impossible. We haven't caught the cholera, we haven't been sentenced to be shot, and we're not such big people that the White Guards would throw a bomb at us. There'll be a next Sunday both for me and for you."

The deacon agreed, thoughtfully.

"Yes, there'll be a next Sunday for me and for you, but not for us both, together."

I couldn't understand him. One of us had gone cracked, it seemed. What was the matter? What was he talking about? No. I give it up.

And the deacon added in a still more depressed tone.

"You've lost your friend. You're seeing me for the last time."

Ah, so that's what it was. Now I saw everything. The deacon was offended at me for something, seriously offended, and had decided not to see me any more. That's quite all right. I'll make it up with him right now, I'll even apologise, if it's necessary, and everything will blow over.

But he got before me.

"I'm going away to the Narim district in the far north to-morrow," he said very slowly and clearly.

Aha, so that's what's the matter.

I always said the church leads people into mischief.

"What a fool!" I burst out.

"What did you go meddling in politics for? What harm did our Government do you? Leave the counter-revolution to idiots and blackguards."

No, I couldn't describe the expression of the deacon's eyes, we gazed at each other like a couple of enamoured frogs.

"What's up?" said Livy, dumb-founded.

"Oh, fool, fool!" I went on. "If you'd only told me about your political pranks I'd have been able to save you in time. Honest to God, you'd not have had to go anywhere. No, no, I wouldn't renounce you. Maybe, I'd have told the people who ought to know about the conspiracy. But I'd have demanded mercy for you. And now, blame yourself. You'll be exiled and it serves you right."

The deacon understood at last. Lord, how he screeched, bleated, whooped. I never heard such a row in my life. I'm sure that if there'd been a bit more space in the pub, he would have rolled about on the floor. A little longer — and he'd have had a fit.

I got mad again. A fellow's being banished to Narim and he laughs about it. Probably, the sentence had upset my old pal and he'd lost his reason. At last, gasping and chuckling, hardly able to control his laughter, he took me by the shoulders and shouted in my ear:

"I'm going to Narim of my own free will."

"Liar!" I shouted back. "Nobody goes there of their own free will."

"Yes, they do," he yelped still louder. "I'm going. I'm sick of swinging the stinking incense-burner. Sick of looking at the cracked old women, at the oily shop-men and the rickety little girls. I don't want it any more! I'm a fat twenty-stone boar — and I want to work, too. Understand, Vladimir Petrovitch, work — I want to work! But a former deacon can't get work in Moscow. All right. Do you think I sat down and cried about

it? I went and asked — where can a former deacon get work? They asked me: do you know book-keeping? 'Yes,' I said, 'I know that.' Well, they said, would you want to go to the Narim district. There's a book-keeper wanted there for the State Trading Company's factory, but it's terribly cold and there aren't many applicants. Good pay though. I didn't think long about it. The pay's not important, I says, and there's so much fat on me that the frost won't hurt me. Could you give me six weeks to put my affairs in order? They consented. I signed an agreement and I used the six weeks at my disposal, in studying, book-keeping, things like assets and liabilities and accounts. I've learnt them now, Vladimir Petrovitch and to-morrow I'm off to Narim."

Deacon, old lad, but no, you're not a deacon anymore, Titus Livius, let me give you a kiss.

Our numbers have increased. Here we are — we old ones. Somewhere abroad a fellow would collect his pennies all his life, and live on the interest in his old age. But there are none of that kind here. We've had misfortunes all our lives, we haven't always had dinner every day, we didn't always have the chance to warm our frozen hands, but never mind — we haven't fallen to pieces yet, we can still show these young ones how to work. And there are old ones like us all over the country, from top to bottom — from Bykov down to me.

"Titus Livius, you don't know how glad I am" — I said and laughed and squeezed his hand: I was glad I'd been meeting him every Sunday at the same table.

We got ready to take leave of each other and although maybe, and not maybe either — but for sure — we would never meet again, still, both of us were glad.

"So that's why you changed Livius for Ivan?" I said.

"Well, you can judge for yourself," he replied. "A book-keeper called Ivan Dmitrievitch Uspensky arrives, and nobody will bother about him — just do your work well, that's all. But if a Livius came, they'd ask immediately, what a funny name, were you a priest?"

"Well, now, shall I come to the station to-morrow to see you off?" I offered.

"No, it's not worth while," he refused in a kind tone. "My wife will be coming and howling. Let her howl with me alone, without any witnesses. She'll never see anything more of me, except my money, will she?"

I can't stand men kissing each other, as a rule, but we kissed each other this time. We didn't take each others's addresses. I've never written more than a couple of letters in my whole life and I'm lazy about writing. And what can you say in letters anyhow? We'll know without writing, that each is satisfied with his life, is working a lot and eating well.

I'm always ready to say that we old chaps are better than the young ones, and still, the young lads got the better of me.

Among those who go to church, there are many healthy folks. What is there unhealthy about Anna Nikolayevna, for instance? You can't give them up to the priests.

I went up to the Young Communists to-day, and, frowning on purpose, I asked:

"And which of you takes the applications of active atheists?"

The strawberries smelt, the damp green lawn smelt and memories of blue, blue cornflowers fluttered before our eyes. A notice appeared on our

brown door, the door that creaked viciously in its squalor, like an old hag. I don't like these cold, soulless scraps of paper, messed up with grey, crumbling pencil. To-day's notice was coloured — green, red and blue pencils had gone over the paper and done their work — they attracted our attention.

Tra-la-la. Of course, it was a notice of a meeting. But what lengths it went to! An open Party meeting, to which non-Party workers were invited, to be held in the dinner-hour. In the dinner-hour! These meetings are always so uninteresting, such tedious questions are discussed there, that not even a fool would agree to sit at them after work. But in the dinner-hour — right! — in the dinner-hour we're all free.

"Come on, Klimov, let's go," I called to my mate, and we went off.

We were just in time to hear the end of Kukushkin's speech about industrial discipline, about taking days off, of the necessity for improving, arranging and strengthening etc. The usual kind of clap-trap.

"Comrades, we must all take part in the new construction-work! Comrades, we must all fight for our proletarian state! Comrades, we must join forces to correct our deficiencies, count our successes. And so, com-, rades, all hands to construction!" That's how the Cuckoo-bird (Kukushkin) finished his speech. Klimov took a couple of steps forward and asked civilly:

"Excuse me, but to-day you invited the non-Party workers. What's demanded of them?"

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Kukushkin. "The whole mass of workers must take part in our construction-work. We expect comradely criticism from the non-Party men, and business-like suggestions."

Then Klimov shouted from his place.

"Then if that's the case, let's make a comradely suggestion. Not long ago we were brought about two hundred rolls of paper. They were laid in the back-yard. At night, comrade Kukushkin, absolutely against Party orders, snow fell, and then rain — well, and half of the paper was ruined. It was thrown away, Comrade Kukushkin. Some of the rolls were wet through to the wooden rollers and everything went to waste."

"What is it you want to point out, exactly, comrade Klimov?" Kukushkin broke in.

"I'd very much like to know," Klimov explained kindly. "Who's going to answer for this, and what measures the director has taken for the preservation of paper."

"Very well, I shall reply," Kukushkin said drily. "I'll answer all the questions at one time, and so meanwhile, comrades, go on with your questions."

"Can I...?" Golosovskaya began timidly.

"Comrade Golosovskaya will speak," announced Kukushkin immediately. "Three minutes. Begin, please."

"Tell us," began Golosovskaya. "On what grounds did the Mutual Assistance Fund refuse me help? I needed money so badly, I was pushed to the last extremity — and they refused me. And how they refused, let me tell you, my dear comrades! They said, we're refusing because we saw you a month ago eating a cake in the buffet! You must be pretty well off to be eating cakes? That's the whole story. And I had to go round and borrow the money, three roubles at a time, from people. The next time I need to go to the Fund, I'll have to put some soot on my face and not wash it for a week and then maybe they'll give me help."

"And I'm not going to speak at all," the boiler-man Parfenov started. "I'm not going to. Even if you were to force me, I wouldn't. Why are we only invited to-day? There were lots of party meetings, were'nt there? All the secrets were discussed, weren't they? If they'd only invited the non-Party workers just once. No, you Communists go over the mark altogether. If a fellow works a couple of years or so, and gets into the Party, he jumps from the fifth pay-rate to the ninth straight away. No, lads, that won't do. You've got to treat all workers with respect. That's why I refuse to speak."

"Well, you've given Kukushkin enough snuff for both nostrils as it is," I called out to Parfenov, and laughed as loud as I could on purpose to annoy Kukushkin.

And sure enough, Kukushkin stood up, severe, like a cock hopping round a hen on one leg and said:

"Your joke is quite out of place, Comrade Morozov, quite. And the rest of the time I must reserve to myself for the concluding speech. All the deficiencies mentioned came about as a result of circumstances outside our control and we shall take measures to improve these conditions. I think I have cleared up the misunderstandings and I declare the open meeting closed."

Hell! A thousand devils! I know my rights! There are no fools now! It's even strange to think of it: everybody is as slack at work now as if they were all agreed to kill off the printing works. Work is going to the dogs. Each one is busy with his own concerns, each one runs now and again to the works committee, and each regards the work to be done, as wholly unimportant.

At the meeting of the workers Kukushkin mentioned the word conservation — that means laying-off. He had a reason for saying it, too. If it was spoken about at the meeting then it meant that something had been said about it somewhere else days beforehand.

They want to shut down our printing-works. And we, like helpless fish thrown out on the shore — can only await our fate.

Everyone is sure that he'll find work. Don't worry, lads, you will find work all right, you'll be busy tramping to the Labour Exchange in Rachmanovsky Lane.

Everyone of us thinks about himself and of no one else: where's my composing-stick, who snatched it away — so! — but if there aren't enough composing-sticks, never mind, I've got mine, anyway.

If we think like that, each of us may be without composing-sticks to-morrow. Friend, keep to-morrow in mind. And lastly, what are we leaving to our children? The conviction that they had very ordinary, stupid fathers?

It appears then that yesterday when we shivered in the cold for a morsel of bread and chased round like horses looking for something to eat, we were capable of struggling for a better life, and now that we have fragrant French rolls (they are made in Moscow, how good they smell, so well-baked, they crunch under your teeth) now, I say, we work as if we were determined to lose them to-morrow.

At present they have decided to dismiss eighty men. Eighty — and out of these twenty compositors. And I'm among the twenty. I don't suppose they'll dismiss me, let them just dare to! I've worked too long and too well. I know that I've got the management behind me. The

manager most decidedly doesn't want to lose me, but the works' committee got on its hind legs and — it very seldom happens — but the manager had to give in. They decided about me like this: Morozov's worked here forty-five years. Morozov is entitled to a pension from the State; of course, Morozov does his work better than any of the young workers, but Morozov must be pensioned off, so as not to deprive one of the twenty dismissed of bread, and then only nineteen need be dismissed.

I wouldn't agree to that. I'm a kind enough chap, but when the question of my work comes up, I get very hard. I'll not give it up to anyone. They say themselves that the works would be sorry to lose me, that I do my work better than almost anyone else and now, out of useless and unnecessary pity they are going to sacrifice me so as to keep bread in the mouth of a man who can't work properly.

Out of all those dismissed the best were getting a hundred roubles a month, I'm the only one who makes two hundred, and sure enough, they don't pay me for nothing. That works' committee! Because I've worked forty-five years, because I'm what they call a conscientious, advanced worker, they want to take away the principal, the only thing I've got — my work. No, no, I shan't give up my work, I'll fight for it and I'll wring the neck of every man who stands in my way — sometimes I get beside myself with rage.

Night fell like a faded, dove-grey flower. I couldn't sleep. I tossed from side to side.

I hate lying in bed for nothing — either sleep or get up. I got up warily, dressed quietly, trying not to wake anybody, and went out. The light door shut behind me without a creak, a good thing I'd oiled the hinges with kerosene so carefully.

The half-light of the early morning veiled the sleeping streets kindly. There was no fog, but a transparent twilight hid the defects so glaringly ugly in the daytime. The houses seemed more even, the pavements cleaner, and the sky more beautiful.

It's glorious to think about your life in the small hours! But where am I going? Where has the devil taken me to, so early in the morning. Well, well! There's no use pretending, as if I didn't guess, where I was going. I was going to my house, to the house that I'll never live in now. For all that, it's my house — mine without any inverted commas — I built it, I paid for it, I swore at the foreman about it. Never mind if there are no free rooms in this house, there'll be some in the next. And just now I want to have a look at it.

There it is. Not a bad house at all, that our cooperative built. It's not tall — its four stories aren't soaring into the skies like hopeless dreamers, but they stretch out broadly and stand firmly on the ground, the straightness and whiteness of the walls is a joy to the eye.

It's ready now for its tenants, only a few little things remain to be done — to put the glass in a few of the windows and to white-wash the ceilings. The people who got these flats can hardly wait to start to knocking nails in the walls and hanging up pictures and coat-racks. They give us, who built the house, no peace. "Get on, get on!" we hear every day.

The scaffolding hasn't been taken away yet — like a dirty napkin it still covers our healthy child.

So that's that. Ignatitch, the watchman, was sleeping sweetly, wrapped in his sheepskin coat. It's not the first time that, instead of

keeping a sharp eye on the new building, he has given himself up to an old man's sleep. Once, when he was asleep, a thousand bricks were carried away from the building and another time several beams. Only the fact that some of the old grey-headed members of the board pleaded for him, was responsible for Ignatitch being allowed to remain. Lord, I'm praising myself again — the grey-heads on our board are only — yes, yes — there's only me. I'll say no more.

I didn't bother to wake Ignatitch. As long as I was here he might sleep in peace. I can't sleep myself and one man can keep watch, anyhow. I shut the wicket-gate behind me and went on to the scaffolding quietly. The boards rocked a little under my feet, a mild breeze carried the sweet smell of fresh timber to me.

And suddenly I heard a rustling, coming from the depths of the building.

That's it, then. Ignatitch had not been on the look-out. Some little crook had crept in and was very likely trying, with the help of a blunt chisel, to steal the door handles, striving clumsily and in the sweat of his brow to undo the obstinate screws.

I went in to the building. The walls smelt of fresh paint. The empty rooms seemed unusually large. The low ceilings were lost to view in the dark.

The rustling came from below.

Holding on to the banister I crept slowly from stair to stair. The third, the second, the first. Nobody. I stopped and listened. It seemed to me that the rustling died down and went slowly to the side and down.

This was not the sound a thief would make — it was strange and unusual. For the first time in my life the mystery of some unknown thing brought me to a standstill.

Forward, Comrade Morozov, forward, below.

My hearing has not grown weaker — the sound came from the cellar, from the place, where the boilets for steam-heating are kept.

Without trying to deaden my footsteps, I stamped with my heavy boots down to the cellar, the stone steps repeated the sound of my heels and it was clearly echoed from the vaults of the fourth floor.

Here I was in the boiler department, here there was a glimmering light. Under the wall knelt a black gloomy figure, and a lighted match wavered over the floor in its outstretched hand.

It did not look like thieving. It seemed as if the dark man was searching for a treasure. But what kind of treasure could there be in a house that was just built? No, it wasn't a treasure the dark man was looking for. It was clear: he wanted to set fire to my beautiful house. He, ugly, gloomy black, envied the beauty and light and whiteness of our child.

There was no time for thinking. What happened after that idea ocurred to me I'm unable to remember rightly and am still less able to describe.

With a movement so sudden as to be absolutely foreign to me, I threw myself on the dark man, twisted the hand that held the lighted match, seized the thin shoulders and threw him with all my force on his back. His hands flew up like the wings of a shot bird, the lighted match described a semicircle in the air, went out and fell on the floor, hissing softly.

I did not think, I thought of nothing at all in that alarming moment. By the dim, delirious light of the rickety lamp I struck the dark man savagely in the face, again and again — the unknown moaned, stretched

his head out of his shoulders and shrieked. He shrieked, and I recognised him.

It was Gertner, and I took my hands off him: I suppose he was weaker than me. I knew that if I ordered him, standing there trembling as he was, to lie down again — he would not have dared to disobey.

I stooped silently over the place where the match had hissed — the floor was wet. I passed my hand over it and then held my hand to my nose — the thick, insipid smell of kerosene confirmed my suspicions.

"Upstairs with you!" I ordered Gertner and began with him in front of me, to mount the stairs in the light of the winking lamp.

We went higher and higher, we got to the landing of the fourth floor and, without exchanging a single word, turned up a narrow staircase leading to the attic and the flat roof. As we came out on the roof it seemed that we'd come to a desert. Down below was the warmth of life, a varied life, the lonely passers-by, the clatter of the horses' hoofs, the innumerable lights of Moscow. And for all that, standing as we did on the roof of an uninhabited house, we were in the desert. Only the east wind joined in our conversation at times, carrying some words away with it.

I stood at the very edge of the roof. Gertner could easily have knocked me over, but I was not afraid of him.

Gertner drew himseld up to his full height, his shoulders shook convulsively as if from cold, and he gazed dismally over my head.

I asked him:

"Pavel Alexandrovitch, why did you do that?"

His face twisted, he put his hand to his eyes and only then I noticed how hard I must have hit him — the blood was running down his cheeks.

"Morozov, you know how we loved building this house," he replied, "how I strained myself over every detail. And I, you know, Morozov, how much of my strength, how much of my longings went into this house — then I couldn't get even one small room in it."

It seemed to me — he sobbed. But maybe not — maybe it was a word the wind had carried away.

"If I'm not going to live in it — then nobody shall!" he shouted convulsively.

What could I say? I reminded him of myself.

He turned away a little and said, hopelessly:

"Yes, but you, you're a worker, aren't you?"

Perhaps I acted rashly. By right Gertner should have been sent to prison, but I let him go. I knew: the hysterical fit of a small-minded man vanishes without a trace, he'll repent again and again. Thousands of little things turn the lives of weak folks into endless suffering. When the moment arrives for these people, they come into our ranks, but when the road gets steep, they grow sorry for themselves, sorry for the strength given to those who march beside them, and then the small man breaks up and falls down, down.

I let Gertner go and, alone, I watched for a long time how the morning sky came out clear from behind the night clouds.

L. Ovalov
Chatter

Our planet goes on revolving, but its revolutions leave no trace on our printing-shop: we don't move forward a single inch. The world re-

volves around the sun, and we around ourselves. Day follows night, night follows day with sickening monotony. Night with its mystery and darkness: day, muddy day, with its dampness, fog and filth.

There is no way back, and we are not going forward, we're marking time on the same place and spitting on it.

"The night is dark, I'm full of fear," Snegirov's cheerful voice rings out.

A care-free voice. It's dark night in the fellow's head.

We had a meeting to-day, a sort of unofficial meeting; a few friends came together for a chat.

The most comfortable room is the work's committee-room. It is always empty. The chairman is a very busy fellow, he has no time for sitting in the committee-room, and so anybody who is that way inclined can fetch in women, buy wine and enjoy himself in the empty room till he drops down dead drunk.

We are a friendly family there, all easy talkers, especially when you can talk frankly.

Klimov gets out a dirty handkerchief, wipes his eyes, strokes his moustache and then asks:

"What's the meeting about, and who called it?"

Nobody answers. Everyone is busy with his own private conversation and nobody pays any attention to his question.

We are waiting patiently for Georgie Borokhovitch.

Here they are, a drunken, singing trio, Georgie, Vitka Kostarev and Zharenov.

"We should like to have a talk" — says Kostarev — "about affairs in the printing-shop."

"So would I." Andrievitch seconds him.

Georgie and Zharenov stand with their arms round each other. Both smell strongly of vodka — they've probably taken a drop to raise their spirits.

"Well, who's called us all here?" asks Arkhipka.

"We." Vitka says in an important tone, tapping his chest. "We have resolved to liven up the old shop." "You have, have you? All right, let's see you," mutters Klimov to himself disapprovingly.

Zharenov, with one hand outstretched before him and the other in his pocket, begins to thunder all over the shop:

"We can't go on like this, it's impossible. Have we any Communists? No—."

Zharenov looks around, bewildered as if searching for Communists.

For instance, Kossach is a Party member. Still, you can't look upon him as responsible for anything. He's a small chap. The management will answer for everything. Yes, it'll answer for everything and meanwhile we small folks, are we to lie down and die? Provisions are getting dearer and dearer, beyond the reach of our pockets, nearly: money is never sufficient — we've got to ask for a rise. A rise, what else is there for us to talk about?"

Georgie interrupted Zharenov.

"We really can't go on any longer. Neither the works committee nor the Communist nucleus gives us a fair chance. There's need for a change in this place. We don't want any directors! We'll elect a manager ourselves and pop goes the weasel. We'll manage the show ourselves, the losses'll be ours, and the profits'll be ours."

What do they think this is, anyway? I'll show you what, dirty swine!

"Then it's you, Georgie and Zharenov, that are going to be the masters here?" I asked the speakers. "The masters here, one a drunkard and the other a pimp."

"What that's you say?" shouted Borokhovitch indignantly. "Georgie, pimp, pimp!" — I repeated right in his face.

The others glanced at each other, and exchanged remarks; some nodded their heads approvingly.

Alexei Alexeivitch Kostomarov jumped up from his chair impatiently. He was a maker-up and an honest Party Member. He shouted:

"Who are you listening to, lads? Zharenov's been chucked out of the Party, hasn't he? Of course he has. Membership cards, haven't taken away for nothing remember! Zharenov has been a rascal long enough, hasn't he? And you stand here listening to him. And one of these days Georgie'll be kicked out of the Young Communists' League. Fine people! They'll tell you to overthrow the Soviet Government next, and you'll listen to that, too, will you?"

"We'd very likely speak up then," retorted Andrievitch.

Klimov struk the wall with his fist and started to swear at Andrievitch.

"This," he shouted "is no time for talking. You've got to do some beating."

Zharenov laughed at him, "Shut up!"

"No, I shan't! We've got to do something and do it quickly!" shouted Klimov all the louder.

"What a fellow!"

"Get out of here! Go on!"

"I'll give you one in the jaw!"

"See this."

Borokhovitch made the customary gesture of contempt at Klimov.

As he did it, Mishka Yakushin picked up a ruler from the table and hit Borokhovitch over the knuckles with it hard.

Georgie yelped.

Kostomarov tried to shout him down.

"Don't you listen to these mischief-makers, boys! Let them talk their heads off. Come on home!"

"We demand a rise!" shrieked Zharenov. "Who's on my side?"

Georgie and Kostomarov moved over to him — all three stood together in the corner and looked at us challengingly.

Kostomarov laughed and said clearly;

"The mischief-bureau. That's what it is, a mischief-bureau."

"A bureau? Where?" suddenly came the voice of Shipulin, our quiet little chairman of the works' committee.

He stood on the threshold, holding a swollen portfolio in his hand.

"What kind of a bureau?" he asked the boys again.

"A mischief-bureau," Kostomarov explained, laughing.

"Are you just joking?" Shipulin chuckled, shyly and politely.

He went over to the table and began to search for something in a heap of faded papers.

"Why should we be joking. It's only you that goes in for that sort of thing," replied Kostomarov.

Shipulin took offense. "What do you mean?" he asked.

"Just that," explained Kostomarov. "You're not doing any real work."

Kostomarov spoke the truth. Shipulin was a quiet, rather stupid and insignificant chap. He was not respected by the workers and only kept his job thanks to Kukushkin, because he was completely under Kukushkin's thumb.

"It's a shame to say that of me," Shipulin said in a mildly reproachful tone to Kostomarov. "You know I'm busy all day long."

"Yes, but what are you busy about, just meetings?" jeered Kostomarov. "What were you doing on Monday?"

"On Monday?" Shipulin repeated thoughtfully. First a meeting of the Mutual Assistance Fund, then of the club board, then of the Society for Promotion of Self-Defense and Aero-Chemical Industry, then a Party meeting.

"And on Tuesday?"

"On Tuesday? The Education Committee, the Workers' Holiday committee and a meeting of delegates."

"And on Wednesday?"

"A Political Study Circle, the works Committee, the Education Committee, the Industrial Committee, yes, and then an open Party meeting."

"On Thursday?"

"The library Committee, the editorial Committee of the wall-newspapers and a works' conference."

"And on Friday, what?"

"On Friday? Nothing much on Friday. A conference of trade union delegates, a meeting in the Education Department and a conference of the young workers."

"Saturday?"

"Only the bureau of the Communist nucleus and the Workers' Association for Aid to the Villages. I even got time to go and have a bath."

"And what did you do on Sunday?"

"I was at a few meetings. In the morning there was a meeting of the cooperative delegates, and a meeting of club members. Oh, don't think I stayed there for the concert, though, I went home to read the papers."

"What papers?" Kostomarov asked continuing his cross-examination.

"The week's papers, I never get time to read them except on Sundays," replied Shipulin modestly.

This conversation went on before everybody and I didn't know whether to laugh at the way Kostomarov was making fun of the man, or pity Shipulin.

People were drifting away by twos and threes.

As I stood there with Klimov, Yakushin came up.

"Coming to the club?" he asked.

"What for? D'you think we haven't seen them do gipsy dances before?" retorted Klimov harshly.

"We'll be better in a pub!" I agreed. On the stairs we met the trio — Zharenov, Georgie, and Vitka.

"Went against your own, didn't you?"

Zharenov reproached us angrily. Klimov turned sharply, measured the whole three with one look and said:

"Against muck!"

The lamp flickered feebly under the ceiling. The deep black night settled over the printing-works.

The stairs go downwards, the stairs go upwards — the printing-works lives.

Night. The years roll on. The clock ticks out the seconds, the years slip by into the past. One more night by the composing frame.

The last night.

Not far from me stands Klimov. To-morrov, mate, we'll shake each other's hands, and say goodbye. Behind me Andrievitch is talking to Yakushin: they've got a difficult job to do — tables. Archipka is printing to-day — you won't have to hand me the capitals any more, old chap. Kostomarov, the maker up on duty to night goes on with his job with indifference.

"I'm cold. For the first time, I shiver while at work. And the silence. Why is it so silent? Why does nobody speak? Or have we lost all our words?

The last night. To-morrow I'll be saying goodbye. Dismissed. Pensioned off. In the future, only the old woman and me nagging each other, the building cooperative, Valentina's carelless replies to an old man's questions. Oh, the deadly weariness of it all. I threw down my composing-stick, went out to the stairs and looked down, down the whole flight. The square of bottomless gloom gave no promise of life.

I tore open the door of the setting-room, it banged wide open with a rattle of broken glass.

My mates, old like me, and my pupils were bent over their works. In their dirty blue overalls they looked like feeble little sparrows, pecking greedily at the heavy leaden letters.

"Stop!" I shouted and my voice sounded hoarse and strange. "Stop work!"

Kostomarov turned in surprise — "What are you talking about, Morozov?" he asked.

"About death." I answered gravely. The compositors were coming up to me. I knew that one word too much and I'd be laughed at. I had to speak so that every word would go straight to their hearts, so that they would each see red.

"You're going to be ruined, boys, ruined, and I can prove it to you. Forty years I've stood at the composing-frame and never once in all those years have I cheated my mates."

"What is it you want?" shouted Yakushin roughly.

"I want you to listen to me. They want to throw you all out, boys, and wipe out this printing-works. Wipe it out. I can prove it to you."

"Alright, Morozov, say what you've got to say, and I'll answer for the time lost." Kostomarov said clearly in his deep voice. "No, no, everyone must listen to me. The whole printing-works! Come on to the rotator-room!" I cried, rushed out of the door and ran downstairs. Behind me my silent shadow ran grimacing up and down the walls. A minute went by — I was running alone. Then the staircase filled with a sudden roar — the compositors' department, shouting and cursing, was running after me.

A thing like that could happen only in our printing-works: the toleration, the absence of discipline, and slackness of the management had led to such a state that a whole department would stop work and run to listen to an old lunatic.

In the rotator-room loud, juicy snores greeted us.

Night.

Under the tables on the rolls, on the heaps of waste paper the men were lying about. They were asleep. You could wake them only for something serious. Work in the rotator-room begins at three in the morning. Seventy workers who come in by the last tram were scattered about near the machinery in a troubled two-hour sleep.

"Hey! mates! up with you! The works is going to the dogs!" comes Andrievitch's heart-rending cry.

"What's going to the dogs?"

"Where?"

The printers all scramble to their feet and stare at the compositors in astonishment.

"Morozov'll tell us!" shouts Yakushin. "Come on, Petrovitch, let's get the boiler-man!"

We go in, Mishka and me, to the boiler-room. Folk there are splashing about and swearing, in water up to the knees.

"Hey, boys, come on up to the rotator-room—" Mishka roars out.

We turn and hurry back.

Oho! Half the printing-works is collected here. If we once start talking somebody will get it hot.

A feeble light throws strange shadows on the faces. Everywhere alarm, anxiety, weariness — not one quiet face.

Klimov raises his dirty hairy hand, waves it threateningly in the air and shouts:

"Comrade Vladimir Petrovitch Morozov is going to speak!"

I feel the burning stare of many eyes. I glance round. Kostomarov is looking at me with his hard, wary eyes. He makes a trumpet with his hands and calls out: "Don't put your foot in it now, old boy!"

And I spoke up.

"Well, are you going to shut your eyes much longer to what's going on?"

"What's going on? Talk sense!"

"They're going to shut the works down. Did you ever hear of such a thing, boys?"

Anxious questions flew like hailstones around me.

"Who's shutting it down?"

"What for?"

"So they've got to that, have they, bloody rascals?"

The water in the boiler boiled over. The lid should be raised and a little steam allowed to escape.

"You've all heard about the dismissal of some workers?"

They were all silent.

"You ought to know. This dismissal is only the thin end of the wedge. The printing-works is going to be killed off slowly. Hey, compositors, how do you like this?"

"To hell with it?" they roared.

"Hey, printers, do you like this?" "To hell with it," they agreed with the compositors.

"Folders! Binders! Boilermen! Engravors!" I called to all the workers in turn, and they all responded with curses.

"The printing-works is run at a loss. It's just a matter of days, and the whole shop'll be closed down and we'll all be chucked out to stand in the Labour Exchange. Don't shut your eyes any longer to what's going on, keep them wide open and be on the watch, watch every-

thing. Do you see? It looks like unemployment. Dust to-day, and starvation to-morrow."

Zharenov stretched out his neck till he looked like an angry gander and hissed:

"Got stung himself and started to talk the same way as us now."

"No, fool, not the same way as you." I said quietly. "It doesn't concern me, this business. I'll start drawing a pension from to-morrow and live like a lord, but what about you?"

I went straight to the point.

"It's bad management that's ruining the printing-works. The rotator-room looks like a common lodging-house at night, in the boiler-room, a flood, and in the type-setting room — a debating society. The ventilation is wonderful! Until November the rooms were ventilated by a very simple means, half of the glass in the windows was broken. We grumbled of course. Then they glazed the windows and sealed them up tight, and now we can't breathe. As to the working-overalls that were to be given out — have any of you seen them, mates? But if a holiday comes round, then there's no end to the trouble we take. The Red Corner had to be draped with red calico, and so Archipka and Garaska were taken off their work and ordered to do it. Five days of working-time the lads spent draping the Red Corner. With things like that going on in the printing-works we should send both the director and the works to — ." Here I added some of the choicest curses — Well! — even Zharenov gasped.

After this speech we had a real meeting. Everybody had something they'd been burning to say.

Now they cursed and swore. You, Klevtsov, take that! and you, Kukushkin, take that! Go on, lads, go on, swearing does no harm. Open your eyes to what's going on. The swearing to-night should do both you and the works good. The water is boiling over again in the boiler. Let it! Let it run all over the stove, the bubbling and the stink will draw the attention of the masters all the sooner.

Suddenly that kid, that pup, Yakushin nearly spoilt the whole show with his tom-foolery.

"Let's go on strike," he yelped all over the room. "Come on! Let's all walk out!"

"That's right!" a timid voice supported Yakushin.

Kostomarov stepped into the breach.

"What, all gone crazy?" he called out masterfully to the agitated crowd. "D'you think you're still working for a private firm?" The crowd was silent.

"The printing-works is Soviet, the government is a workers' government, the Party is Bolshevist." — Kostomarov shouted to the workers. "This isn't a bourgeois country, devil take you! You're the masters here, aren't you? Then act, devil take you, as if you were!"

Confusion. Everybody began to make suggestions at once. Little icicles of suggestions floated about in the flood of voices, struck against each other, crumbled to bits and melted away! Night faded behind the panes, — the electric light quivered, and became more ghastly against the background of the greying windows. The excitement was cooling down.

My heart beat painfully: a few minutes more and the end would come — everybody would go back to work and to-morrow would be the same as yesterday. I put my elbows on the shoulders of my neighbours,

and drew myself up on my arms! There was despair in my voice, I know, as I cried:

"Mates! are we going to keep on using our mouths as suction-cleaners for the cases? What are we going to do?"

The deep voice of the boilerman, Parfenov, greeted me like a wave of warmth:

"It's clear enough. We'll not let either the director or Kukushkin into the works any more! Just not allow them in. Let them say what they like, they can't do anything against a crowd. And meantime, well, let some of the boys, say, Kostomarov and Yakushin, go and canvass the authorities. Tell them we workers want a good chief and some better conditions to go on."

Again sillence fell.

The machines hummed in the morning as usual, thousands of printed pages were flung out, and the blue sparrows pecked at the leaden letters. But at the gates ten gay lads waited for the managers.

We let out catcalls. What fine! juicy catcalls!

We met the director, not, I would say very kindly, but civilly. He came up to the gate, but before he could make a step inside, the ten desperate fellows rose up like a wall before him.

"Stop!" they shouted to Klevtsov.

Wait a minute, somebody's coming out to speak to you."

Yakushin ran to call me and Kostomarov. We rapidly exchanged daring, alarming words with each other and ran through the yard. Yes, we ran. After all, there are hundreds of people like us and Klevtsov was the director.

"Good morning, Comrade Klevtsov." I greeted him for us all.

His bewildered glance ran past us, over the walls, into the printing-works. He was vainly trying to guess the reason for our strange behavior.

"What does all this mean?" he demanded at last, imperatively and irritatedly.

"We're going to put things in order, if you don't mind." Yakushin said rashly.

Kostomarov gave me the wink and I dragged Yakushin back by the slack of his pants. Kostomarov announced, briefly, the decision of the workers.

"Comrade Klevtsov, we are not going to let you in to the works any more. Maybe you've not a bad director. But here you're measured everything by your own yard-stick. Well, your measure's turned out to be wrong, a bit shorter than usual,in fact. You've ruined the works. If you were to stay another month — the works would be closed down. It'd be all right for you, you'd be made head of another printing-works,but we'd have to go and stand in the Labor Exchange. So the workers have had a meeting and resolved not to let you in any more."

Klevtsov went pale, his eyes narrowed. He asked civilly, even quietly:

"And who, may I ask, have you appointed director in my place?"

"Ah, son of a gun! You thought you'd catch us? We're not such small fry as to fall for that, though."

"Oh, you needn't come fishing round here" — I replied coming forward. "We aren't going to take the law into our own hands. The Head Office will see to the matter of a new director."

"Then why don't you make your complaint to the Head Office, instead of starting a mutiny here," said Klevtsov drily, changing his tune at once.

"Oh, we shall," retorted Kostomarov quietly, "but we're not going to let you cripple the works any more."

Yakushin's patience wouldn't hold out any longer, he sprang forward, pushed Kostomarov aside and shouted insultingly in the director's face.

"What are you telling us to complain for! Chucked you out, we have, now, bite on that! go and complain on us yourself. Clear out, d'you hear, and don't open your ugly mug any more, else we'll stop it up for you with mud!"

Suddenly, from behind the gate came an angry, commanding voice: "Who's that talking there? Stop it at once!"

Kukushkin stood before us with his nose in the air and his mouth pressed into a contemptuous little bow. He looked us up and down insolently.

"Oh, it's you, Comrade Klevtsov. Having a bit of fun with the lads?" he said in a milder tone. "I've got something to say to you, by the way. And now, lads, back to work. Look alive, now."

Several voices answered him, in a chorus:

"Be off with you!"

"Yes, hop it!" added Yakushin kindly.

"What have you got against me, boys?" Kukushkin spluttered, almost whining. He glanced inquiringly at Klevtsov, thinking probably that it was the director's fault we were in such a bad humour.

"It's mutiny!" said Klevtsov seriously. "I'm going to the Head Office."

Then he half turned to us and said, threateningly, pronouncing every syllable:

"Don't you worry! There'll be order in the works in two hours' time. The hooligans will have to answer for this."

We let him go in silence. Well, God knows, anybody would be offended in his place. A chief dismissed by his subordinates. What could he say? But I understood at once that he would never return to the works.

Kukushkin proved a bit more stupid.

"Mischief-making, eh? Trying to go against Party guidance?" he shouted, starting towards us. "I'll show you!"

Yakushin's hot young blood could stand it no longer. He caught Kukushkin by the shoulders, spun him round, and threw him out.

Kukushkin flew out of the gate. As he went off down the street, stroking the sore place, he called out:

"You just wait. I'm going to the Party District Committee about this."

"Go on, we'll be there before you." Kostomarov called in reply.

Mishka Yakushin put two fingers in his mouth and blew a piercing whistle after Kukushkin.

Now that we'd finished with the management, we sent Kostomarov to the District Committee, Parfenov to the Head Office and the rest of us went back to work.

Work went better than usual. Or did it only seem so to me? All the workers were excited. They were awaiting further development and so remained silent and absorbed in their work.

Twilight was falling; the lamps were lit.

I was to work on the night shift and so I spent all day in the works' committee room, talking over the telephone to Kostomarov, Yakushin, and Parfenov and waiting for visitors.

None of us went home. About seven o'clock in the evening, a motor-horn hooted before the printing-works.

The news ran through the whole works before the bell rang.

"They've come!"

In a few minutes all the workers had got together. They all hurried; nobody lagged behind. It looked as if the fire-brigade had come out at a signal.

The secretary of the Party District Committee and the general manager had come. Neither Klevtsov nor Kukushkin were with them.

The secretary of the District Committee was a plain sort of chap. His jacket was not of the best. He had on a black blouse and looked like a compositor. His face was greyish and unshaven. The general manager was much more dandified. He looked like a gentleman; a blue shirt with a tie, a plump rosy face, shiny brown boots.

After the usual greetings the general manager suggested that we should start.

"Shipulin, where are you? Come and open the meeting," shouted Yakushin.

We looked about, but Shipulin, the chairman of the works' committee, wasn't there; he had faded away. We'd no time to search for him and anyway, we couldn't be bothered with him.

"Comrades, the meeting is declared open," said Kostomarov instead of Shipulin.

"Never mind calling a meeting," the secretary of the District Committee said. "Let's just have a talk."

The smile that flickered in his eyes went out, and he said harshly:

"Well what sort of a mess have you been making? Tell us all about it."

He said it very simply, and yet it seemed he was speaking both to near comrades and to naughty children at the same time.

Then the boys raised hell. Everybody shouted at once, interrupted each other, complained of the bad state of things and criticized the director in the choicest terms.

They shouted until midnight. The secretary and the general manager didn't stop anybody, listened attentively to the clumsy speeches, to the impatient outcries, and took notes all the time.

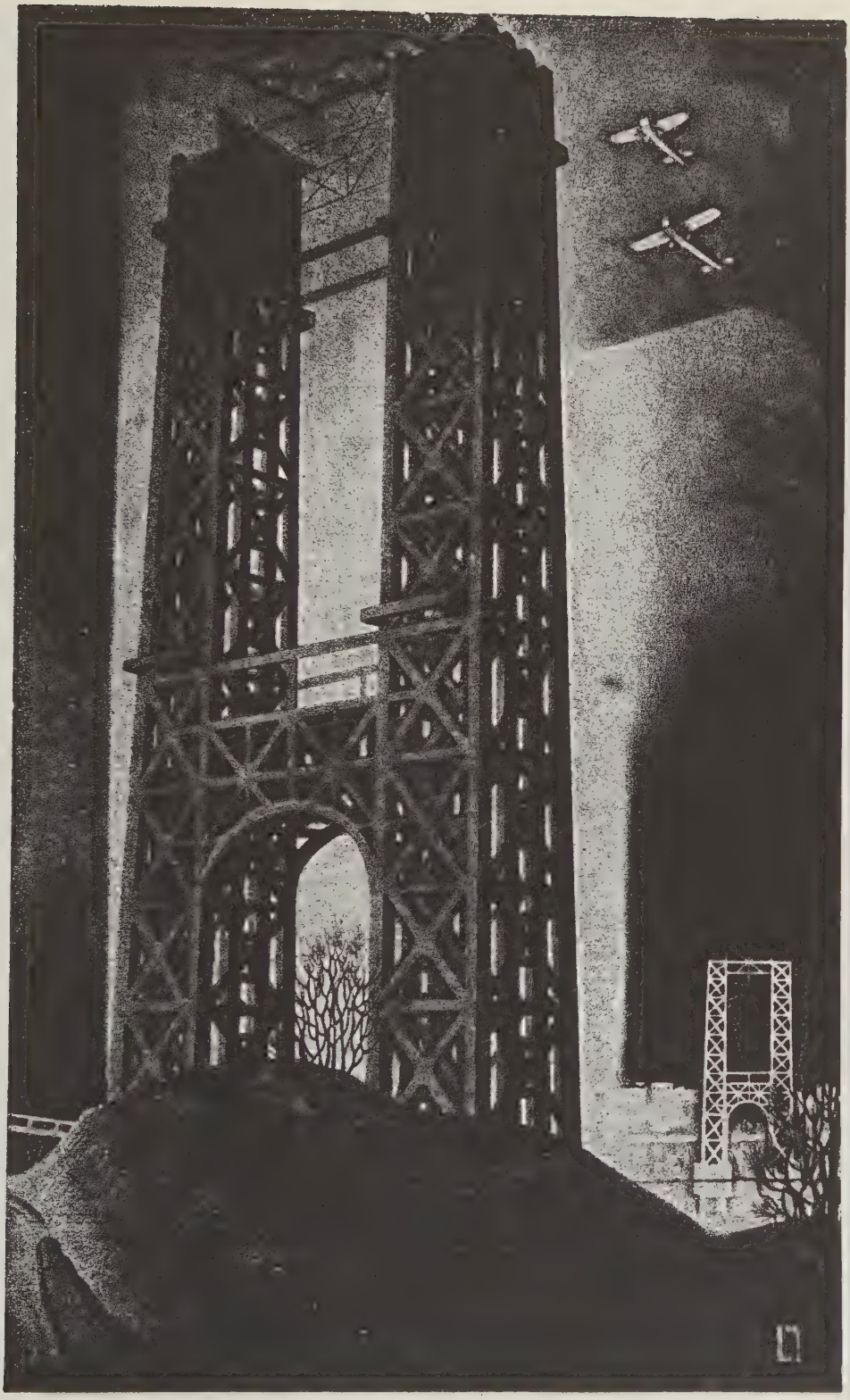
Towards midnight the boys began to dry up a bit. They could of course, have talked till morning, but weariness cooled their indignation and zeal.

The general manager tapped on the table with a smart colored pencil.

"It's perfectly clear," he said, "that things were going badly in the printing-works and that Klevtsov was a rotten manager, but why didn't you complain, why did you never draw the attention of the Head Office to this state of things? That wasn't right, comrades, that wasn't right; you lay low and said nothing and now you're doing the craziest things all at once."

I had been silent all evening though I was itching to say something. Now I could not hold out any longer.

"Excuse me, can I speak?" I said to the secretary of the District Committee.



Hudson Bridge Louis Lozowick

The Birth of a Skyscraper Louis Lozowick

"Yes, who are you?" he asked sharply — he asked everybody who spoke the same thing.

"Morozov, compositor, non-Party man," I announced.

"You aren't Ivan Morozov's father, by any chance, are you?" he asked and looked at me closely with his tired eyes.

"I am," I replied. "And now to the point. The general manager says we didn't complain. It appears, then, that it's we who are at fault while the Head Office is free from blame. All right, I'll tell you something about our printing-work. Let the general manager listen and make a note of it."

I turned to our lads: "Tell us, boys, have we got ventilation in our work-rooms or not?"

They all answered: "Yes!"

"Does it work?"

"No!"

"Then what is it for?"

I couldn't describe the roar of laughter that greeted this remark.

The general manager tried to guess and inquired in an undecided tone:

"For show, maybe?"

I signalled to the boys to stop laughing, and replied loudly:

"You're mistaken; it's to get a tariff reduction on social insurance."

Even the secretary of the District Committee smiled but it wasn't much of a cheerful smile.

"Well, then," I continued, "the Head Office seems to be a bit at fault, too. The ventilation was put in, the reduction on it was obtained, but the social insurance failed to find out whether it was in order or not. It was the same with the whole works. There was quite a lot of talk about it as well, discussion was indulged in, but the Head Office failed to notice that it was dying. The social insurance people didn't look after the ventilation properly and you didn't look after the whole printing-works."

The general menager tried to object.

"It's not our fault..."

"Yes, it is!" the secretary of the District Committee broke in. Then he asked us the last question "And now tell us, what is it you want?"

Parfenov came forward at that. He passed his hand over his tangled hair, stroked it and voiced our general opinion.

"We demand that the printing-works should be put in order. Give us a good manager. One with his eyes open. Kukushkin wasted his whole life in attending meetings. Klevtsov and Kukushkin must be sent off. And work must be put straight first, and then you can talk about reducing the staff. Mark my words, you'll have to get in new workers yet. That's all, then, the working-class is asking you for."

"Very good" — said the secretary of the District Committee.

"Now you listen to me. You should realize that you're not the working-class; the working-class consists of metal-workers, miners, textile-workers and printers taken all together and you in particular are just a small part of it, and a very troublesome one at that. I agree that the director was no good, that the Head Office didn't look after the printing-works; but you weren't in the right, either. The Head Office treated you bureaucratically. So be it. But the road to the District Committee wasn't closed, was it, to the Moscow Committee? It's a shame for people, like Ivan Morozov's father especially, to say such things. Instead of

talking about the ventilation you should have got to work and ventilated the problem of the printing-works in the District Committee. You're a good workman, and a clever chap, and still you let your son get past you. Your son has been a Communist for I don't know how long, and yoe're lagging behind. I agree that the secretary should have kept nearer to the masses and not hung round the committees so much. He spent all his time in meetings and you said nothing. There's no doubt, you're to blame for a great deal. The District Committee'll give you a good director, and a capable secretary for the Communist nucleus, but you look out, lads, don't make a mess of it this time. If you don't all give them your support, if you don't all start together to straighten things out, even the best of managers are bound to fail."

The fellow spoke a long time, but he talked business. I was offended at first, the way he said I'd let my son get in front of me, but what he said about the works was right.

Sparks of light dazzle the eyes, the freshness of the blustering wind catches at the throat, the fir-trees rock a little, shaking their great paws, bowing low, bowing to greet the winter, the sun, and me.

I feel my blood throbbing, it fills me with something of the boldness and carelessness of youth.

What a pleasure to be alive! Peace has come at last. But I feel there is something lacking. I brood a while. Yes, there's no doubt about it, I miss my son. But I mustn't forget — I've got a grandson. Now, suppose I just risk it and go to Nina Borisovna? No, I don't want to go there. It'll be hard if I see some sort of a conceited mug with a fancy moustache instead of my honest, tired lad. Ay, Ivan, who sits in your place now? And still, I went.

Nina Borisovna isn't so bad as I thought. She is not living with anybody. There are just the two of them, she and Levka.

She shook hands with me, gave me tea and let Levka go out with me immediately, without any more ado. There was no talk about the wind or about the chocolate. When she had got the pale little chap ready, she shook hands again in a friendly way, and I thought, maybe after all, Ivan was mistaken about her.

And how my grandson greeted me! A child's enthusiasm is almost unmanageable. Levka, my little rascal, how could I do it, how could I ever have spoilt our friendship!

We picked up his sled, waited patiently for the tram and went straight out to Sparrow Hills.

Both of us were equally happy. We kept on interrupting each other and laughing and each was as jolly as the other. The grandson sitting on his sled and waving a long twig for a whip and his grandfather, panting and breathless, dragging the sled.

We are running like mad and I do not notice anybody and fly into a whole crowd of kids.

"Way there, way!" I give a devil-may-care shout, breaking through the noisy crowd.

"You're having a good time!" I hear in a familiar voice. "What, it's my daughter Valentina! I say, how do you come to be here?" I shout to her, laughing.

"Skiing, skiing, skiing!" they all sing out in chorus.

"Very good," I say — "You've got plenty of time for skiing, and now I'll exploit you a bit. Be good enough to take your nephew for a run, I've no more strength left."

I put the little lad into Valentina's care. The whole company surrounds him and flies off merrily.

I stand leaning against a tree and look around with pleasure.

Laughing young faces everywhere, the snow crackles underfoot, the frost stings noses, and of course, my nose gets it worst of all.

I turn to the side from which Moscow can be seen and my thoughts go back to the printing-works once more.

We can't recognize it now, we the old workers, who know it inside and out. The new director came to us. He didn't give any orders, bless him, just stepped into the type-setting office said good-morning, and then stopped near my composing-frame.

"And now, let's see boys, if I've forgotten how to set type?"

He was all right; he set an ad. He's our own sort. We started to think more and more about the works. And how! Yakushin only just had to mention at the works' conference that some compositors were in the habit of hiding things for their own use and the new secretary got on to it at once. The time had gone by, he said, when fellows hid tools for themselves. Now, we all keep an eye on each other and just let anybody try to hide anything! Zharenov has been fined twice already.

I am setting advertisements. At the works conference I suggested that before setting an advertisement, a rough pencil design should be made of it. Next morning an order came out that no ad must be set without a preparatory sketch being made! Nobody does the same thing three times over now.

There are not enough machine compositors. The director picked out twenty hand-setters, and these lads rolled up their sleeves and started to learn linotype.

Now what's this! Am I going to meet people I know all day?

Nastya Krassnova, our Young Communist girl, is coming up. She's skiing with Arkhipka.

"Good morning, Vladimir Petrovitch!" they call out and, try to slip past.

"No, kids, that won't do!" I call out and beckon to them.

"What was it you asked me about yesterday?" I say severely to Arkhipka.

"You know very well," he says in a business-like manner. "I've always been asking you about it. I'm sick of printing, and you won't show me how to do type-setting."

"Asking me to show you, and you were trying to run off just now, weren't you?" I growl at him.

Arkhipka looks embarassed, Nastya blushes.

"Well, all right, all right, run off." I let them go. I'll take you on next week to hand me capitals. They don't wait to be pressed. They are off like greased lightning and I lose sight of them at the turning.

A fine lad that Archipka!

And the best of it all is there's none of that talk about a pension now. And how could there be, when there's such a demand for men at the Labor Exchange.

But it's cold.

I rub my nose and wait impatiently for my grandson to come back. Maybe something has happened to him!

No, here they are. Valentina's tousled locks are blown about from under her hat; she is panting, but laughing loudly. Levka jumps off the sled before it stops, tumbles head over heels and gets up all covered with snow. The wollen gloves slip off his hands, and hang by their strings as he toddles along quickly to me.

"Well, did she give you a good run?" I ask, nodding in Valentina's direction.

Valentina drags the sled up to me and runs off like an arrow, afraid that I'll keep her back again and ask her to do something else.

But Levka stops her:

"Auntie, Auntie!"

Valentina halts and calls out:

"Well?"

"Come to see us! I want to play with you again," he begs.

"All right, sometime," says Auntie, disappearing down the hill. My grandson shivers. It's cold, he wants something to eat.

Levka grips my hand hard, turns his rosy, snub-nosed face up to the sky and shouts persistently:

"Little sun, we're cold!"

"Never mind, old chap, spring's coming." I say to console him.

I lift him on to my shoulder and gallop off to the tramstop.

The blazing wood crackles cheerfully in the stove.

Sunday again, and again I'm at home, by myself. The old woman's gone to the market, and Valentina is off skiing somewhere.

The bright January sun, glaring on the dazzling snowdrifts, is trying to break up the window-panes into thousands of coloured splinters.

I'm sitting at the table, turning over the pages of my diary. So much has changed since I started to write down my thoughts for the third time. Life has changed, and I have lost a great deal.

Lost my pessimism, for one thing, because the printing-works is going on fine, lost my son, and lost my sharp tongue. But I've found something too.

Get your pocket-book out, Morozov. Take out the little membership-card in its yellow paste-board cover. Look at it and say — was this all you wanted then?

With a clear conscience I can reply to myself:

"Yes, this was all."

Now there is nobody ahead of me. Yes, comrades, I'm marching alongside you, although you may be leaders and I'm only a compositor.

It isn't that I've got more to do, it is that there isn't anything I am not responsible for.

I'm not content just with myself, but wait, wait, while I show you, Klimov, over a friendly pint of beer, the whole truth of the matter, and I'll make you follow my example.

And then again: I've no more time for chatter. I'll tear up my notes myself this time. Now I tear off the first few pages, go up to the stove and throw the scribbled pages into the fire. I stir them with a poker and the paper blazes up bravely. Burn away. You can go up in smoke for all I care.

I'll write the last line, put the last full stop to it, and the rest of the notebook will go into the fire.

Translated by Ph. Mosely and Anthony Wixley

Seikichi Futzimori

THE MAN WHO DID NOT APPLAUD

I suddenly noticed him.

Peculiar type, indeed, — why doesn't he join in the applause?

The whole assembly greeted the speakers' burning words with rounds of hearty applause. The sound of clapping as it filled the hall resembled a storm. Many cried aloud in their excitement.

"Right for you!"

"Quite true!"

"The police arrested all the comrades."

"They're increasing armaments, but unemployment insurance...!"

At this moment the police, who formed a cordon round the hall, brandished their swords menacingly. This had no effect on the meeting. The revelations of the speakers, who described the colossal growth of armaments and recited the astronomical figures for expenditure on the war industry, who exposed the preparations being made for a new bloodbath, all carried on under the cover of pacifist phrases and paper pacts, proved too convincing. This meeting of protest against the threatened war turned into a trial of its instigators, with the crowded audience serving as a jury. The heated addresses of the prosecuters, eagerly seized upon by the jury, left no doubt concerning the crushing verdict. The defendants were precisely these gendarmes, the cordon encircling the hall, the only visible representatives of the criminal system on trial. Were the gendarmes to attempt resorting to force, they would have to contend with this huge agitated mass of workers who silently clenched their fists and defied provocation. This, the defendants — the gendarmes — understood perfectly, and so they contented themselves with malicious glances and brandishing of swords.

The trial of the war makers continued in full swing.

But why is this one man so indifferent? He sat next to me. His pale face was distorted by a huge scar. And under his right eye there was a deep wrinkled cavity instead of a cheek bone. Apparently some shrapnel had smashed the bone. The right eye above the cavity had an uncanny stare. He wore the rough khaki clothes of a laborer, and in every respect looked like an elderly workman. His lips were pressed tightly and he stared at the speaker fixedly.

The scoundrel! Why does he stare so? Why does he record in such detail the speaker's face in the note book of his heart?

It's plain, the last war did not decorate him enough! Just look at that mark, the mercenary dog! I am sorry only that the gun which sent millions of honest workers to their grave didn't consign the whole of your ugly snout to hell!

I looked at him challengingly and stubbornly. The whole time he didn't clap once, did not make a single exclamation. It seemed as if the orator's words had no effect on him.

A strange feeling came over me.

Either he is a novice in the spy business or else a hardened old wolf.

"Look here," I shouted aloud, enable to hold myself and paying no attention to the speaker.

Just then a strange light seemed to shine in his eyes.

Funny! Surely the dog can feel *something*.

The man lifted his arm as if with the intention of clapping but it fell heavily onto his knees.

His eyes glared in the gathering twilight. In an instant the very blood frose in my veins.

On his knees were two artificial arms.

The man had no hands.

Translated by Padraig Ua Breaslain

SANTE

Our court is well exposed to the North. When the east wind blows, all the smoke from the high furnace chimney settles in the well. When it rains the well fills up with dirty water in a few minutes.

The court is narrow. There are in the court seven trees which have not managed to escape. But since they have tried, they have remained petrified in the form of their struggle.

The prisoners have wounded the trees and they should have died. Where are they to look for subsistence in the sunless court between these vice-like walls? Yet they keep on living. So do we.

Here is the testimony of the seed of radish. I planted some radish in a little piece of sod which gets a beam of light in the daytime from April on. I watered my radishes with assiduous tenderness. On cold mornings I had warmed water for them. After several days there pushed up a delicate pale wisp which writhed like a worm on the ground. Then the radishes sprouted — slim sprouts. These radishes never really became radishes. They were never more than chlorotic grass with fine-haired roots. This grass soon drooped over on its stem and died.

Here the earth is not really earth. It is only water, spittle, dust and coal at the bottom of a well.

Apparently the trees and we can still resist.

Because our roots are fastened in the antipodes.

Five o'clock. The thief who is a nurse comes into my cell to attend to me and take my temperature. I relate his story to myself, the story of how he "fell." He is a colossus built like an orang-outang.

"I got nothing to kick about, here in the infirmary. Only you oughtn't to be sore if I'm none too handy at the job. It was a sort of forced labor for me. I used to be at the Saribointere Hospital. I wasn't exactly a nurse there. Though I guess you might call it a nurse, at that. I was the waiter in the autopsy-room. Yes, I was busy with the stiffs, and I laid'em out according to their groupings, in the cold rooms. I'd rather work with death than with life... that's the way I feel about it."

"Well, don't inconvenience yourself."

The prison is in everlasting putrefaction. In every cell is a toilet above which is a copper spigot. The spigot is constructed so that it can not be used to hang one's self. Everything here is arranged to keep men from hanging themselves. Yet they do hang themselves; they may have to hang themselves sitting down or lying on the ground, but they hang themselves all the same.

The spigot is above the toilet seat. Does one have to wash in the toilet bowl? Why not...

This bowl dominates the cell. It has a horrible and irresistible appeal. I ascend through the sewer-pipes of this enormous digestive tube to the two thousand mouths which lie open in the two thousand cells of the prison. Then I go back, down to the big sewer, the road to freedom; it is the only exit and we think of it always. But we know it must be barred by one or more grilles...

Then I return to my cell. Everything is saturated, impregnated, rotting with this putrid stink. A tireless current of air, sweeping through the monster intestine, circulates the smells. I inhale the digestion of the thug and the bank embezzler, and the tramp, of the satyr and the pick-pocket, of the vampire and the safecracker, of the murderer and the communist. An odour of stool and soup so blended that you cannot easily distinguish where one ends and the other begins.

A sedentary odor of bureaucratic existence.

"The extent of so called indispensable needs, as well as the means of satisfying them are themselves historical products..."

I cannot read. It is Sunday. Visiting day... for the others. I listen to the footsteps. All the visitors to the right wing of my floor must pass by my cell. And in front of my door there is a plate of iron. Bing! Plop!

First, from very far off, at the very heart of the complicated arteries of the prison comes a muffled sound: the keys being turned and the doors opened and shut. Then the noises which echo from the stairs. Feet of young women who glide over the old decay of stones:

Heavy feet — the firm and decisive feet of workers, of comrades accomplishing their political task and marching like an army. Feet of old men going cautiously like mice, or shuffling slowly. Feet of children climbing the staircase, as if it were a mountain. All these feet pass before my door and make the iron plate ring: Bing! Plop! Children even amuse themselves by jumping on it with their two feet.

I ought to be able to know perfectly, by the sound of the foot-steps, at which cell-door each visitor will stop.

"...historical products and depend largely on the degree of civilization of a country and above all on the conditions under which is constituted the class of free workers..."

That makes two pages that I have read: 168 and 169. Impossible. I wonder what could have been? "...under which is constituted the class of free workers with its habits and special exigencies."

It's no use. I am in the corridor. I do not even know if my eyes, which have been reading without the help of my mind, were really in the cell... Yes, that's it. I recognize that step. That's the step of an old comrade from Puteau ...Ah? No, he isn't coming to see me.

...Bing! Plop! He has passed by.

"Contrary to other merchandise..." no, up higher: "The extent of so-called indispensable needs as well as the means of satisfying them..."

Bing! Plop! Bing! Plop! It's absolutely impossible to read. Two hurried steps of young women, a blonde and a brunette. They pass. Ashes in my mouth, ashes under my skin...

When all these steps will have departed, when the hour hand will have cut short the visits by reaching five, when the key will have been turned in the door, somebody will enter my cell and greet me with the devastating words.

"Well, what's new?"

Then, perhaps, I can resume my reading.

The prison barber comes twice a week. He is a boss barber and a professional pederast. Careful makeup attenuates his tired look him an adolescent air.

His presence makes still more sticky the slimy air of the prison.

"Just think," he says. "I'm a family man (I have a big boy of eighteen); I, a licensed business man — and in prison for corrupting a minor. It isn't just. Below my barber shop I had installed a library where my customers waited. What's more natural than that? Well it seems that down there were goings on that involve the question of morality. The bulls got in, passing for customers, and they caught a group of fairies and little boys. Is it fair that I should be responsible? Fortunately I'm under the protection of one of the canons of the archbishopric. He's a friend of Tardieu. And he understands the moral question. He'll get me out of this.

The prison barber takes care to remember whatever we say, and reports to the director. That is his third profession. In this work he competes with the men who have to help us fix our rooms.

When the prison barber gives you a haircut or a shave he rests such very very hot hands on your face, hands so insinuating that you want to break loose and hit him a good crack in the face.

The prisoner condemned to death is my neighbor. That is, he lives in the next wing, in the section that is watched specially. He is a Negro.

All night long an electric light bulb illuminates his bed. His hands and feet are chained. Because you can't allow a condemned man to kill himself.

The rule of the game is punishment.

But just the same one should act decently toward someone who is going to die. That is why Lafortune has been getting better food for the past three weeks — ever since he's been sentenced to death.

"He was pretty thin," a keeper tells me, "but he's picking up now. He's got a right to special treatment. He gets the same rations as political prisoners."

For Lafortune, who has resumed his taste for life, there are only two people who count: himself and M. Gaston Doumergue, President of the Republic.

When he gets his head cut off, Lafortune will be quite fat.

And now here comes Spring! That's all that was lacking!

Yesterday after-noon we here looking forward to new buds and since this morning the sun has been coming into my cell, hot enough to melt one's heart...

All the senses melt like snow. Work? You yawn. Stretch out on the bed? No, no — not the bed. Walk? Yes, walk around, run around in the court, around and around more. You get dizzy, and your knees give way. No better sleep on that thing they call a bed. No. It's impossible to sleep with such fevered hallucinations. No. Not hungry? No. Read? What? Nothing to read. Write? Too tiring. Paint? Yes, but here too is hallucination lurking in the sensuality of the colors... no.

Be free — the wall!

Well then, listen to the clock, think of nothing and kill life's minutes like bedbugs.

There are thousands and thousands of us spread in all the prisons of the world... All to-morrow is behind the walls.

P. Vaillant-Couturier
Santé

Hurry! Time goes by with terrific speed. Your imprisonment will be too short. You will never know enough. You will never store up enough resources. You'll never completely disinfect yourself from culture. Work, work. Stop the clock. You haven't yet finished the day's work. March with the serenity of being new. Catch yourself in the flagrant act of being old and retrace your steps. Be worthy of what they are accomplishing back there in the USSR. Be worthy of membership in the youth of the world. Kill eloquence. Learn to be violent with the patience of revolution.

Bury your old individualism in your place and escape.

Fever. One, two, three, four. The watch dial has twelve hours, making fifteen digits and the minute dial has six figures, making twelve digits. The fever gallops over the seconds. Hop-la! Hop-la! Sixty seconds equal so many beats of my heart against its prison of ribs. Intensify production. But you must see the factory! In the cell there are two double rows of floor laths. Yes, I counted right. No, I have to count again. The technique of the floor. What do they do for the last lath? I've forgotten the last laths which are only halves and those which go under the door. That makes fourteen. Between every lath there is a crack at each end. How many laths does that make in order to have how many cracks between them? Pulse 120, temperature 38,9. In each row there are forty-two laths. — I could do the multiplication, but there's no pleasure in it. What I would like to do is an addition of additions, an emulation of addition. How many fingers have I? How many times must I change hands in order to count on my fingers four times fourteen times forty-two? And what is going on around Paris?

It is perhaps an hour after the first night round. I wake up. There's a noise in the distance. I listen. Is it on the Boulevard August Blanqui side? Yes.

In the neighboring cells the comrades are awake too. Knocks on the walls and doors. I jump out of my bed on to my table, in order to get close to the window. I clutch the bars to lift myself up to the noise.

Indistinct cries. A noise of shoes running on the asphalt and on the pavement. At last I can make it out. From the deafening tumult leap certain voices which overlap each other...

Arise, ye children of starvation.

A breathless International, surg off tune, cut short, picked up again, galloping forward. For us.

— Forward, comrades! Go on!

All of a sudden cries, the shrill of whistles. Police strategy. Blows in a struggle. Nightsticks and the bones of fists on the meat of faces.

Oh to be outside and to fight. Our International leaps through the bars.

Spread out through the streets the International answers us more shrilly. Further away we hear the honk of motor horns. Cannons arrive all around the prison. They stop.

Cries, more cries. Pain and anger — all this is stirred up. Goes away, comes back, disperses.

That's all.

One, two, one two. The rythm of footsteps approaching. Order scales the wall. Order is trampled into my ears by these feet.

And I cover my head with the sheet so that they will not trample on my head.

Translated from the French by Bettina Sinclair.

Ed. Falkowski

IN A BROWN COAL COUNTRY

(FROM A MINER'S SKETCH BOOK)

TOUGH DAYS

The iron fist of hard times crashes through flimsy prosperity. Three days a week toils on the grimy factory, its presses clattering brown-coal briquettes for no market. No black corkscrews of murk release themselves from the smokestack barrels. Loose men hang around the third-class beer joint of the company hotel. The drum-faced clock pounds away pensive hours. Hollow echoes circle the strokes of the factory-clock, too. Once these clocks meant temp — rising, lunch-time, quitting-time. They rang in pay-days and Sundays; now they clang in desert silence, measuring hang-dog hours.

"What shall we do?" stamps itself on every face.

Ripe old men stand in the market place of the model company town, teeth clamped around bony pipe-stems. Voices drawl through biting tobacco smoke. "Never saw such hard times," one shrugs. "What's to become of us?" Another grandfatherly man studies the church-clock whose minute hand seems stuck on center. His shoulders lift up in mute comment, eye brows forming crescents above his wondering eyes. Others drag in, the dead pace of hard times in their movements. No dance-master could improve their sluggish crawl, but it is speed for a world that has ceased to live.

For what lives here any more? The wheels are stopped. The chimneys spit out no more gobs of smoke. Throbbing briquette presses, their clickety-clic, the village's heartbeat, are silent. No chugging engines pull out trips of loaded cars, diminishing down the tracks with ecstatic roars.

Things move on in an empty ring of dead purposes and meanings. How suddenly everything has lost its significance! Streets, houses, free hours, newspapers — nothing means anything any more. For these belong to the world of the active living. Here is a barren universe of idle men, dead men. The hours belong to eternity rather than to a lifetime. The town is a cemetery of unburied corpses — useless men whose hours acquired meaning only from the thunder and roll of the factory and its adjoining lignite pits. What is to put meaning into them now?

MODEL COLONY

When brown-coal factories first horned the blue with insistent smoke-stacks, it was fifty years before the sanguinary carnival of the World War. Unimportant as the industry seemed then, it has had a twentieth century development, the war particularly stimulating its leaps into maturity.

To-day German brown coal competes for soft-coal markets. Slowly its encroachments prepare the way to permanent footholds. More presses,

more rationalization steam up production. The glory of brown coal sings itself a chant of dividends triumphant, of mechanization militant, as cyclopean dredgers displace workers, and strikes slide into the background, as the company union waxes, commanding all strategic positions, insuring successful scabbing.

The *Werkesgemeinschaft*, as the yellow organization is called, is a "sump plant" of 1926, a strike year. While the organized workers took to the streets, the yellow union took to the plant. Clerks, engineers, the director himself, pitched in, and — the spirals of smoke curling out of the factory chimney signalled the defeat of the strikers. The obscure company union won recognition over night. "It's one union I can sympathize with," the ruddy director said, not objecting to becoming its nominal chief when the scabs looked for a collar and tie to put around their treason.

Meanwhile, poverty has not been outwitted, even for those who have crushed succeeding strikes. Poverty continues to picket for the revolution. A model colony, built for visitors instead of the people who must live here. What goes on behind the painted house-fronts, inside those cubicles called "rooms", is not pointed out to curious ones. A tourist to Grube Marga will see the church, post-office, hotel, stores, a few ostentatious homes for officials; the director's villa with its stables and garages, and curving streets of bulky houses with miniature turrets and green shutters and red roofs, with a paragraph of garden before, and a row of water-closets behind. A misty back-ground of distant trees and fields, a faint smell of human sewage announcing spring to one's nose as stubborn acres get their dose of manure, fill in the picture.

For one must admit that towns "sit" for their portraits as well as persons.

CHICORY AND PATCHES

Inside these taciturn houses, so model and so sullen, families struggle to exist in spite of the seeming determination of the world to the contrary. The workers live in a continuous state of emergency. Barley coffee supplants the expensive "bean-coffee." Some chicory is always added to give the blond liquid a dark coffee-color "that can endure the milk better," as one worker explained.

Cocoanut oils replace lard; margarine has earned the reputation of being "the proletarian butter;" when money gets low, horse-meat does duty for the costlier beef; special Gristwurst, a sausage composed of odds and ends, substitutes for more respectable sausages.

Only the cheapest clothing is worn. Woolen suits that lose hair; pants that acquire rapidly an aged accordion effect; "sunshine" coats that all but vanish after a rainy baptism. Furniture is of the scantiest, with poverty as dictator of taste. Usually a kitchen and bed-room suffice, the kitchen being the general sitting-room. If a third room is had, it is used as a general lumber room, or a chilly parlor where a set of gaudy, fat-limbed furniture poses in a attitude of petrified contemplation.

There is sewing, patching, studying out the meals, and how to get the largest "performance" out of the everlasting quarter-pound of meat serving too often as the *pièce de resistance* (that is, translated, the main thing to look at while you're sitting to a meal consisting chiefly of potatoes). Workers buy everything only by the quarter-pounds. Otherwise, their money will not stretch until next pay-day, and company-

stores, the only stores permitted here — don't grant credit to common people.

Grief and discontent, keen suffering, the weary, almost banal tussle with unrelenting hardships, surround the brown coal worker with smothered drama. If he rebels, he is torn from his job, flunge out of his company owned house; followed by the long arm of the company's vengeance even after he departs to distant regions, trampling the bitter tramp of the jobless. For the brown-coal companies do not tolerate rebels in their midst. They agitate for the "sanitary plant" — a plant revealing no symtoms of cancerous radicalism. Implacable persecution of one malcontent provides the others with a practical example of how similar exigencies in the future are to be dealt with.

"GIVE US BREAD!"

Best times in Grube Marga, as in all brown-coal colonies, were not easy for the average worker who earned twenty-eight marks (seven dollars) weekly, and usually begged for Sunday work with which to eke out his starvation income. But hard times are simply intolerable. Within a short time the silent cry of hunger shouts dumb protests in the model streets. Children in school cry for want of bread. An unspoken despair broods over the settlement as the kitchen becomes a strange and quiet part of the family *Wirtscharft*.

Up the street, pedaling bicycles, tall crimson plumes waving above brass buttons approach. Pretzelly instruments wind around shoulders. The company band has had a rehearsal (for which the musicians are paid by the hour.)The haughty uniforms take on tremendous dignity amid the windjackets and patched trousers of the workers. The band plays for company union feasts. Once in a while the company tries to raise the cultural status of its employees, using the band as spiritual pullmotor. Company-union speeches sound mighty good after an uplifting concert in a town where other bands are not allowed to play. Into the hotel go the workers, its green-tiled corridor prefaced with optimistic bulbs shining merrily into the gathering gloom of an unsettled spring evening. Women in kitchen dresses, greasy and tattood with soot; collarless men chewing quids, sucking pipes and cigarettes. A village meeting. Hard times as the *Leitmotif*. The dead silences emanating from a silent factory penetrate even here.

A man of defiant girth, rimmed goggles framing his minute eyes, a dab of black mustache clinging desperately to his upper lip, the majority of his hair having paid the penalty of profound thinking, leaving a slippery cap of pink skull to catch vagrant beams of light, reads in priestly chant from a sonorously written document. This man is the president of the village council. Banner-loyal Social-Democrat, particularly fond of the symbolic gold striping of the national emblem.

Everyone listens to his neutral voice pronouncing the results of an afternoon conference. Their poverty had been looked at in arithmetical light. The mathematics of misery had been talked over, challenged and drunk over. Grandiose final results! The country grants one loaf of bread each week to each worker and each member of his family, as a relief measure. This will last as long as the half-week schedule of the factory... All satisfied? A few hands wiggle in the tobacco smudge. Good, it's settled then. The obese great man walks through the crowd like an ice-cutter through whipped cream, to the bar where he tilts whiskey and

beer into his capacious mouth, meditating the whiskey slighty with his tongue before he swallows.

End of the meeting. The crowd sifts out into the green-tilled lobby with its wicker-chairs, and its standing lamps wearing bonnets of old-gold pouring down-ward light on round tables at which stout company officials sit in the final stages of boredom, crystal-gazing at glasses of beer which they drink perfunctorily, and without thirst; at platters of cold sandwiches munched without hunger. Officials drawing 300 to 600 marks each month, living in roomy houses amid upbolstered furniture, vaguely amused at the outgoing parade of miserable men and women. "Yes, it was always this way," they murmur. Only natural that hard times clamp the lid down on them. Whose else is to suffer any way? Isn't enduring everything also one of the functions of the workingmen?

Something queer about the very word "workingmen"—as if they were creatures of another planet. For a moment the two worlds brush together, one stealing out into the night to discuss in sweeping circles of talk the monotony of its misery, the other slumping into the sickly dejection of animals overfed. Mike Novak goes to his eleven children in one room; the director to his no children in eleven rooms. All is well in Grube Marga!

THE FUTURE

The corporation plays rich uncle to its yellow-brotherhood. Werksgemeinschaft means Christmas presents, a favorable wage differential, a sheltered job. The director meets its membres on a "democratic" level; the company donates occasional kegs of beer for its social evenings. The benedict seeking a nesting placejoins the yellow union that he may earlier be granted a company dwelling in the company village. This makes him all the more servile in his company job.

Meanwhile, "radicals" are hunted down with merciless hand. Within four years the communists have melted from 500 (in a total of 1,100 employees) to invisibility. Even Social Democrats, managing still to swing an apparitional upper hand in moments, must walk to the next village, a mile away, to hold a meeting. The director forbids the use of the company hall for the purpose. Loss of work means instantaneous loss of dwelling, and the probable impossibility of being hired in any other brown-coal mine. For the secret black-list still goes the rounds.

With slight kinks and variations, this is the life of the 80,000 workers employed in German brown-coal mines, producing almost thirty million tons of briquettes in 1929, and over one hundred and seventeen million tons of raw coal. The industry pays dividends ranging from eight to twenty-five per cent. Ilsa, one of the largest concerns, declared a twelve per cent dividend for 1929; Eintract, another, ten per cent. Its growth has alarmed Ruhr coal kings. The year 1930, however, was the toughest year ever experienced by the brown-coal workers. A mild winter coming on top of a bad world situation, paralyzed activity. A similar crisis afflicts the Ruhr coal region.

The yellow union boasts complete control of all strategic posts, with enough man-power to take care of the situation in case of strike. Over a third of the employees of some mines are members. But in the sullen faces of thousands of hungry workers one reads the challenge that will come to-morrow. What can the yellow unions do toward solving the crisis that hangs over Grube Marga and over all Germany

beyond? What can the fine-smoking director, for all his boast of power, do to give the workers jobs and food for their emaciated children? The bourgeois world of Germany is appalled by the problem that is bigger than Germany — it is a world problem involving the stability of the capitalist system itself.

The consuming bitterness and hatred growing in the breasts of the workers will become arms and throats challenging the powers that have doomed them to death by slow starvation. The silent protests, the legalized beggary, the intensified exploitation will burst in a crimson tide of vengeance over the land, and the red banner of Revolution will be flaunted through its iron streets.

...In the cheery Gasthaus the factory officials sit around half-emptied beer-glasses. There is nothing to talk about, but they feel lonesome, drinking by themselves... The lean mysterious figures passing up the street do not concern them. For in the meantime they feel sure that all is well in Grube Marga.

W. Stein

PRISONS IN PALESTINE

(REPORTAGE)

Twice a day the prisoners are counted. Twice a day the execution of political prisoners takes place. When they are being counted they all have to kneel down. The political prisoners refuse and so they are beaten and tortured. The officers and policemen beat them and incite the other prisoners to do the same. In the interval between the executions the long Palestine day passes. In the Jaffa prison there is a lot of work to be done. The lavatories must be cleaned, the cells must be tidied up, the yard must be swept, the officers horses must be groomed, rubbish and sewerage must be thrown out... At five o'clock in the morning buckets of excrement must be carried from the prison to the sea — several minutes walk. The buckets are filled to the brim, the warders drive us on crying "yalla, yalla" (hurry up, hurry up). We run as hard as we can — we get covered with it — the awful smell sticks to us all day, and then in the morning we start again...

They beat us. They beat us because we won't let them bind us in chains when we are being led into court. They beat us because we refuse to put on prison clothes. They beat us because that is what warders have arms for — to beat prisoners, especially Bolsheviks.

There is a "cloak room" in the Jaffa prison. On one side hang the prison garments and on the other, parcels with labels on them — the personal clothing of those who have come in from outside. In the "living quarters" there are thick walls and a still thicker iron door. Here you may shout as hard as you like and your shouting will not penetrate the thick walls. Often, very often you can see the door close behind a prisoner accompanied by a policeman and see it open again 10 or 15 minutes later. The policeman wipes sweat from his brow, but the prisoner — blood. Nobody knows what has taken place there within that short period of time. Human eyes cannot penetrate through those thick walls, and a human cry cannot be heard through them.

The heavy door closes behind three prisoners and six policemen. They are experts. In a minute all three are laid out on the floor with fetters on their arms and legs. The police disappear and then three other fellow prisoners come forward — well known characters.

They are three Arabs from Egypt, convicts, and strong and healthy ones.

In every prison in Palestine there are a few "good convicts". They are the right hand of the prison administration, they spy on the others and drive them to work (but do not work themselves) and when anyone's bones have to be broken they show what they can do.

I am standing in the corner, my hands bound behind me, the "Egyptians" are in front of me. My two other comrades are not visible, as the place is divided up with screens. They can't be seen but the echo of blows

on the face can be heard and the cries of men in pain. Suddenly there is a strange cry and something heavy falls to the floor. It is Boris — a strongly built man — a dock worker. White as chalk he lies on the ground and writhes in convulsions; the result of a hard blow in the pit of the stomach. Boris was ill for a long time afterwards. Another person would not have survived.

In the "Russian Court" in Jerusalem there are one or two large buildings, the orthodox church, the district court and the central prison which caters for all Palestine. Before the war, Russian pilgrims used to put up in this building. England has changed it into a modern prison.

In the large iron gates a small wicket opens. To pass through you have to bend double. You find yourself in a scrupulously kept garden. The entrance to this paradise is guarded by a policeman with a carbine. In the middle of the green grass and the flowers the huge prison building rises up. At the entrance the policeman with the carbine enters up the names of the new arrivals. At one side of the gate there is a policeman with a bunch of keys who admits the prisoners through a small door, at the other is a policeman with a thick rubber baton in his hand. He beats the prisoner while he is being searched. The process of being searched is very painful. You have to strip to the skin. You come out with a wounds all over and covered with blood.

A long corridor with many branches. At either side small cells, doors with iron grating. Seven hundred men live in this building. There are two main categories: — natives and Europeans. The majority belong to the first category.

On Fridays a mufti makes a religious service for the Mussulmen, on Saturdays a rabbi for the Jews; on Sundays a catholic priest comes.

The cell is an empty room without furniture; in the corner is a bucket (often two) and a boiler. Instead of a bench there is a piece of matting and this takes the place of a bed at night. Here a whole collection of convicts are sitting; next to the bandit a ruined fellah who has been unable to pay his taxes, next to the defaulter a sixteen-year-old youngster who has stolen an orange in the market, next to the thief a communist. The cells are overcrowded. Where there is room for ten there are twenty to thirty people. At night they are troubled by the frightful stench.

Only the favoured are put in the European cells. True, swindlers, crooks, merchants of human ware are to be found here too, but then they have foreign passports on them. They are civilized people, *Kulturträger* amongst the barbarians of the East and so it is only right that they should be given better living conditions. They don't have to wear prison clothes. They don't work. They sit on benches at a table, sleep on soft beds, have a stove for cooking and are not fed at all badly.

There is no special regime for the political prisoners. The "red" foreign subjects refuse to take advantage of the European régime and join in with the "reds" of Palestine in their fight for better prison conditions.

There are some natives in the prison who enjoy the European régime, and an even more comfortable one than is ordinarily allowed: five men who took part in the massacre in 1921 and were sentenced to 15 years imprisonment. No worse off are the rich *effendis*. Some years ago they gave information about a rebellion that was being planned in the prison and ever since they have been given special privileges. They wear different clothes, white trousers and white shirts, and walk about all day

in the garden and sell cigarettes, though smoking is strictly forbidden. The privileged prisoners provide the others with tobacco and make a 500% profit on it.

The prisoners who, under observation, are serving their time, are kept in solitary confinement. It is a rule that they must not be used for work.

At five o'clock in the morning the warder calls the "all up," wakes a few Beduins and drives them to work. The Beduins are slow to move. The warder has heavy boots on. He kicks over one of the buckets and then the other. In a moment the whole cell is flooded.

"If you don't want to sweep the yard you can clean up your own cell instead".

Mr. True is the governor of the Jerusalem prison. Mr. True is a higher police official. Mr. True is a loyal servant of his majesty, King George V. Mr. True's chest is adorned with many ribbons. Mr. True is the hangman of the Jerusalem prison (the gallows is kept inside the prison), and gets £ 5 for every execution. Mr. True is a man of breeding.

One of the prisoners takes it into his head to try to escape but does not succeed. They catch him, put him in handcuffs and make him stand in the yard and explain to Mr. True his plan of escape.

Mr. True beats the old Arab, hits him in the face with his hand, beats him all over with a rubber baton, kicks him... He goes on beating until there is nothing left on the prison yard but a chained up heap covered with blood.

Mr. True is a man of breeding.

On the third day of the hunger strike two of the men who are fasting lie in the office of the prison. One of them is stretched out on the ground in fetters, the other has nothing on. A policeman is holding him firmly while the doctor feels his pulse. The policeman beats him on his bare skin with a cane. Mr. True is indignant. Seized with anger he snatches the cane from the policeman:

"Have you eaten anything to-day?.." and Mr. True beats and torments. The place becomes covered with blood. Mr. True is a man of breeding.

The hunger strike continues.

B. Galin

THE CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH OF A FACTORY

1

Unexpected surprises lie in wait for the factory from the day of its birth. Childhood, "happy" childhood is painful and complicated. Obstacles do not occur suddenly and all at once. They leap from round the corner, unexpectedly, barring the road, attempting to crush the still fragile factory. The capacity of the machines as planned, the technological processes as worked out, seem accurate, technically incontrovertible. Well, young giant, they say, live your life and march on boldly; we have provided all that you need.

Stripped of its scaffolding, and embodying the best the arsenal of world technique has to offer, the factory sets out on its journey. It leans for support against the walls, and holds fast to the machinery, for its first steps are timid and uncertain. And already its childhood is enveloped in clouds of dificulties; the theories, the plans that gave it life are springing leaks.

The factory sets off on its long and hazardous journey, but somewhere in the hold of this big ship, in the furnaces of the factory, the first opening appears. The factory shudders and hastens to stop the leaks... Forthwith the difficulty with malleable pig-iron makes itself felt. The casting foundry has been supposed to produce seventy sets of tractor parts made of malleable iron—20 of the most important parts. Now theory is being tried out in practice.

The tractors leave the conveyer humpbacked and crippled, for twenty of the most important parts have not been fitted into the machine. And thus they stand in the yard — humpbacked, bent in waiting for the foundry to solve the problem of malleable iron. When the affairs of the foundry had gone on the decline, and it had seemed there was nothing in the world to check this downward trend, the dreadful echo of a catastrophe resounded in all sections of the factory, along the entire front. Two or three directors had been replaced within six months. The second director made a dead set at the chief of the casting foundry, who for four months had tried to soothe everybody by promising that on the morrow everything should run smoothly. At a meeting of the technical council the director clenched his fists, boiling with rage.

"Look here," said he in a tone of regret, "our paths run in different directions..." But here the new director evidently recalled to mind, or rather he visioned the deserted foundry, the bottomless dark pit and the tractor parts. The thought of the tractor-parts gave him the creeps. He screwed up his lips, jerked his frame suddenly and hoarsly muttered:

"I'm fed up with it! You won't be here by to-morrow, but to-day...,"

The third new director also pounded on the table with his fist, and addressing the technical council which was held on February 2, said with a sigh:

"I see no life whatever in the foundry...."

The third chief of the foundry wore a closely buttoned jacket and old worn-down shoes which had seen better days. A scientific worker who had given up lecturing to take up practical work, he rose-and cautiously remarked that the experiments with malleable pig-iron already had a firm practical foundation, but the experiments with pulleys of grey pig-iron were still in a sad condition... "We are troubled about the amount of orpiment in Kerchensk pig-iron," said he quietly.

Sulphur in the coke, orpiment in the pig-iron, poor ground, and hundreds of other, subjective, reasons, — all these are sought out so as to be banished from the new foundry, but silently they continue their disasterous work. The illness of the foundry reflects on the large conveyer. People idle about the conveyer, looking sorrowfully in the direction of the foundry. The steel ribbon slowly glides forward, returns again and stands still; there are no tractor parts and the front is broken, crumpled.

2

Every five-day week is a summit which the factory just about reaches, puffing and sneezing. Two tractors were made in the first five days of January. Then there was a jump to 25 tractors. Then down again to 19, and up again to 23. Then a drop to 18, and a further decline to 6. In the beginning of the fifth week the figure again began to rise. Red and black lines indicating the number of tractors assembled crossed one another at sharp angles. As yet the process of work was not quite normal.

On the 24th of January, 54 tractors were taken off the conveyer. Fifty four! Men who had grown thin during the night, cheerfully followed the last tractor of the successful day.

"Don't yell Hurrah!"—said the secretary of the Party committee dryly "It's too soon to yell..."

"Too soon? Forget it old man," said his companion, slapping him on the shoulder and winking to the prudent but slow-speaking secretary. At a meeting that evening, the secretary of the Party committee spoke with an enthusiasm he could scarcely suppress:

"Gosh, that was going some! Fifty four tractors! That's grit for you, boys, that's grit..."

Fifty-four were carried out on the conveyer on the 25th! A lucky day, a splendid day! On the 26th — Not one. On the 27th — Not one. The red and black lines cross in alarm. The conveyer moves not. Sometimes it makes a short trip to collect miscellaneous mechanisms. It groans like a man in fever, starts, and wishes to go ahead and ahead, but the brakes are put on reluctantly, and it stops. The conveyer dies. There are no parts! Parts No. 124 and 98 are lacking, there are no pulleys, no pivots, no malleable pig-iron...

3

The rejected tractor parts flow like a muddy stream, filling the mechanical department. They are put twice and three times through an array of American machines, and then sent to the assembly-room. Here their fate is decided. The inspector suddenly makes his appearance in the assembly-room. Like a doctor, he percusses the parts, sounds the mechanisms, and after carefully inspecting them, nods his head: "No, such parts could not pass! Its trash"....

"Are'nt we supposed to turn out 900 tractors?" inquires the chief of the assembly department, "why do you detain the pulleys?"

"Trash," cuts off the inspector.

The chief tears the pulley out of the inspector's hand and bellows: "You are a communist, you know the tractor program, why don't you give us a chance to assemble the tractors?" The inspector hears such talk every day, he knows that they want to get away with using rejected parts. The inspector raises the hammer in his hand, and replies in just as loud a voice: "You, too, are a communist, you know that the tractor will be rejected." He lets his arm fall, and the hammer smashes the pulley into pieces.

For over half a year they have been experimenting on the casting of pulleys. The foreman from the Putilovsk plant puts the blame on the bad quality of the earth and the incorrect setting of the geats. He insists that the metal flows 30 seconds through the geats of the American. This is too much, it must be less. The American digs in the mould, kneads the earth, sets the geats accurately and calls an interpreter to say that the earth is good and that they must only adjust their methods to this particular quality, and that the earth needs refreshening from time to time and should be pounded in better... The entire factory follows their experiments, waiting for them to end. If they would only hurry up! Bending down, the Putilovsk foreman whispers some incantation over the moulds, and arranges the geats so as to allow the metal to flow through in 15 seconds, without giving it sufficient time to cool down while running, and the factory waits and waits.....

4

The scientist Reameur gave life to malleable pig-iron. Since 1914 several Russian plants have been learning the art of casting. The "International" 30 H. P.-tractor must have 20 parts made of malleable pig-iron. For five months the foundry, instructed by engineer Levshin, aged 26, had sought to fathom the secret of malleable pig-iron. There were moments when it seemed that at last the secret of casting had been discovered. The temperature seems to be normal, the furnace smelts well, fine instruments instantly register the condition of the iron in the hell-furnace. Opening the mouth of the furnace, the men greeted the liquid metal as they would a long-expected guest. What will it show? The metal runs forth with a roar, bubbling wrathfully, and helplessly flows into the moulds. The metallurgist makes an analysis and shakes his head in dismay:

"Bad," says he in quiet dispair, — "waste."

Fruitless labor! The clue is lost, the iron is again dumped into the furnace and the temperature raised, as though they wanted to suffocate the cursed sulphur. The coal gives long flames but not sufficient pressure. Then they try oil. January 18 brings the first success in smelting malleable pig-iron. The metal meets all the requirements. The ready parts are bent and pulled, they vouch for the quality of the metal.

Everything seemed to be in order now, — at last, the factory will breathe more freely. But at that moment, the fourth fusion of the second shift again threw the factory off the track. Someone apatheticly reported the analysis of the laboratory. Not enough volatility! The fourth furnace gave 0,7 per cent manganese, whereas it should be 0,4 per cent.

"That's nothing, exclaimed Levshin, simulating courage, we will make it malleable..."

The pig-iron was shoved into the furnace with the characteristic of 0,7 per cent manganese. Languishing in the furnace, it was expected to shake

off this defect, and emerge on the fifth day quite healthy. The 0,7 per cent of manganese had done its job. The furnace was powerless to corrode such a formidable per cent of manganese. The furnace did not justify the confidence of the engineer, who pined away for five days waiting for the results.

"Yes, there is a defect," murmured Levshin, ubut some of it is malleable."

"What per cent' do you know?" asked the inspector gruffly.

Levshin muttered something about the iron being good enough for the purpose.

"Good enough?" roared the inspector. "Fedya, don't be pie-headed. There are plenty of defects..."

The inspector seized a heavy weight and began to pound at the metal. The cracked iron revealed a silver streak. "Well?" asked the inspector of the appeased Levshin. The black, velvet-like streak which is proper to malleable pig-iron when cracked, was not to be seen. It was absolute waste. Only the sixth furnace again put the factory on the lost clue.

The new, light foundry was accumulating lots of filth and rubbish. Pigs of iron, boards, stones and other rubbish lay everywhere. The foundry was stepping into chaos and dirt. Arthur Shott, a foundry worker from Detroit, made a brief speech: "There are three things necessary for normal production: good work, safety and cleanliness. If Henry Ford were to visit your foundry, he would glance around and say: 'There is nothing I can do for you, my friends."

All these days the foundry worked and trembled: — What if we don't get any coke to-morrow? We are running out of our last supply of coke to-day, and of cast iron, there is but very little left. On the night of the 30th, it was decided to start a general house-cleaning, of both machinery and people.

"We do not give up," concluded the chief of the foundry at a meeting of engineers and technicians, "we will start anew!"

To master technique is not an easy matter. The path between the construction of the plant and its operation, was a very difficult one. Month after month the factory fought its way through thousands of obstructions. It swept away from its path the opportunists, who were scared out of their wits by the difficulties. The factory surpassed the figure of 700 tractors in January. 1,500 tractors is the advanced program for February. January was the beginning of the transition period, now it is necessary to fortify the positions so far gained, and advance forward.

With the jaws of the furnaces closed, suffering from filth, searching for and discovering the secret of casting, the foundry gradually made progress. For three days and three nights it underwent a thorough cleaning; tons of refuse were carried out, the conveyers were repaired, new tracks were laid, furnaces were cleaned of slag. Everyone wished to forget the suffering of childhood inevitable in the life of all beings. The foundry became still, sober, yet more vital, and was now ready to start the noisy bright life of its youth, to plunge into battles toward new victories.

"Is everyone in his place?" asked the secretary of the Party committee somewhat annoyed. "Comrades, we must again and again examine ourselves and the machines."

Each engineer was entrusted with several furnaces. The ground was refreshened. The iron was broken into pieces before going into the furnace. The battle was to commence as soon as the foundry was cleaned of all refuse. Is everything ready? Wood, chips, then coke, pigs of iron, more coke and again iron, were thrown into the insatiable mouth of the furnace. The fresh black

ground started into a continuous journey along the chain. The moulding machines shook from the pressure of compressed air. The Putilov foreman stood by the pulley. With a movement of his raised hands he motioned the brakeman to lower the moulds slowly and softly. The foundry began its day.

The hours will pass, and blue streams of gas will surround the clenched moulds. The foundry began its day. Suppressing his excitement, Levshin dashed from one furnace to another, checking up on every detail. "Let us begin, comrades!" There had been no casting for three days. The assembling department was awaiting an influx of tractor parts, the men were a bit nervous: What would the pulleys be like this time? 400 tractors were waiting for malleable iron. The foundry had been silent for three days, now it must courageously say its final word.

At daybreak of the fourth day the furnaces were lighted.

Otto Biha

ON THE QUESTION OF PROLETARIAN REVOLUTIONARY LITERATURE IN GERMANY

The Economiko-Political Basis

The severity of the economic crisis in Germany is shown by her 3½ million unemployed (not counting those working only part time) out of a population of 65 millions. The world crisis is further aggravated in Germany by the burdens imposed by the Treaty of Versailles. The two billion marks of tribute under the Young Plan, which are annually extorted from the impoverished masses of the German proletariat, are squeezed out of the people by means of wage cuts, increased prices on all necessaries of life (the price of a pound of bread in Berlin is 100% higher than in Copenhagen), and direct as well as indirect taxation. The ruling class, shifting the burdens of the Young Plan onto the shoulders of the workers, is encountering the ever-growing resentment of the masses. There is a spirit of profound discontent among all sections of labor. Not only the industrial proletariat is up in arms. The destitute agricultural laborers and small peasants, the petty artisans, and the masses of shop and office employees, are beginning to rise shoulder to shoulder with the unemployed and the exploited workers against the slavery of to-day. There is in evidence a tremendous process of political radicalization among the masses, an upsurging tide of revolutionary upheaval along the entire front of the class struggle. Strikes convulse the Ruhr, Berlin, Hamburg and other districts. Peasants are up in revolt against the unbearable taxes. Demonstrations are held before the offices of local tax-collectors. All this has found particular expression in the Reichstag elections of September 14. And indisputable victory for the Communist Party (4.5 million votes), and millions of new votes for fascism in Germany by no means signifies the final acceptance of its program by the masses, but rather their rejection of the democratic system and the effete parliamentarism of the bourgeoisie. It witnesses to the helpless confusion reigning in the minds of millions of impoverished petty-bourgeois people who, in their utter despair, are inclined to lend their ear to the pseudo-revolutionary phrases of fascism. These misled masses will turn their backs on the fascists as soon as they discover their real historic mission as the practical servants of the interests of their capitalist taskmasters. The metal workers' strike in Berlin is the first active manifestation of the new strike movement against the reformist trade unions, constituting the nucleus of a growing movement against the past traditions in the economic fights of the German proletariat.

A sharp and relentless fight will break out in the near future against the fascist methods of oppression employed by the ruling class. The two

most dangerous exponents of the ruling class policies in Germany — the fascists and social-fascists — will have to be unmasked.

The Social-Democratic Party, like the National Socialist Party has nothing whatever to do with Socialism. It stands upon the platform of the Weimar Constitution, which sanctions capitalist private property (Article 153). Neither is it a party of peace. From the voting of war credits in 1914 to the building of armored cruisers, it has consistently followed a militaristic policy which cannot but lead eventually to a "holy war" of capitalism against Soviet Russia. The "democracy" of the SDP is a veiled form of the bourgeois dictatorship which is more and more manifestly undergoing a process of transformation into a fascist dictatorship. The prohibition of the Red Front, the Defense of the Republic Act, the blood-bath perpetrated by the social-democrat chief of police Zörgiebel on May first, 1929, and the lifting of the ban on the Stalhelm by the social-democrat minister, Otto Braun, are stages in the transformation of social-fascism into open fascism. The social-democrats, in their development, are gradually revealing themselves as a tool for the bloody suppression of the proletariat in the interest of the ruling class of Germany. Fascism, however, which is the last resort of the capitalist system, its last anchor of hope when the political horizon darkens, is not going to save international imperialism from its doom. The capitalists of all countries, despite their persistent campaigns to hinder the realization of the Five Year Plan in the Soviet Union, are doomed to failure in their attempts to preserve their rotting economic system intact at the expense of the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union.

The Cultural Crisis

Parallel with the economic and political crisis of capitalism, a tremendous crisis may be observed in bourgeois art and science, and in the whole of bourgeois culture. All serious thinking and research is bound to result in the denunciation of the capitalist system which scientific endeavor is called upon to serve. It means that there is bound to be a growing opposition to capitalism in the schools and universities, in the laboratories, in the museums and in all other centers of learning. Bourgeois science and bourgeois art are left with no other alternative but to develop a sham art and a sham science, diverting the minds of students to by-ways of life, to "cosmic" problems, to "neutral" fields of research permitted by the bourgeoisie, such as "scientific quakerism", the Darmstadt and analogous "schools of wisdom" representing mediaeval scholasticism and the like. Science is really scorned by fascism. Mussolini's dictum: "The people need bread and games" has met with response also in Germany. In the *Mythos des XX. Jarhrhunderts* the leading exponent of fascist ideology in Germany puts forward Nordic mysticism and nebulous idealism in lieu of exact scientific methods of research and investigation. People of the type of Oswald Spengler and Henri Massisse, Hans Driesch, and similar representatives of bourgeois post war philosophy are more and more inclining to the belief that the whole wisdom of the world is possessed by a body of 70 apostles. In practice it means the granting of state funds to the evangelical churches at the expense of the government schools (as for instance, in Thuringia, where the fascist minister Frick allowed 1,250,000 marks to the evangelical church out of the public education funds). The Concordat, the film censorship, which allows only such movies as are likely to lead the spec-

tators away from the realities of life; the literary censorship which, like the film censorship, encourages only the publication of social-democratic literature, of "constitutional" sentiments and opinions, while suppressing the "free speech" that has been guaranteed by the Weimar Constitution; the closing of cultural institutions maintained by the workers themselves, the imprisonment of hundreds of communist writers, editors, and artists, — such are the symptoms of the tremendous cultural reaction which accompanies reaction in the political field. This cultural crisis plays an important part in enlightening the petty-bourgeois intellectuals that are still held captive by the shadows of the past, as it opens their eyes to the real situation, and to the wide gulf which exists between the two opposing camps of socialism and fascism. The earnest scientific worker, the technician, the physician, the student, the artist, are all beginning to realize that productive creative activity is possible only by working hand in hand with the revolutionary proletariat. These elements are beginning to realize that to ignore the real situation is tantamount to mental degradation, and that to cooperate with the ideological apparatus of the ruling class meant to take a hand in its bitter struggle against the working class.

As a matter of fact, there is now going on a process of realignment in the ranks of the petty bourgeois masses. How can we accelerate this process? How can we differentiate, how can we attract the sound and wholesome elements to cooperate with us and to further our aims? A whole system of possibilities arises. This places important tasks before proletarian literature.

The Literary Problem

By proletarian revolutionary literature we understand a literature which views the world from the standpoint of the revolutionary proletariat and educates its readers in accordance with the tasks of the working class in the struggle against capitalism. The proletarian writer can view the world only from a consistent Marxian standpoint, this being the only way in which he can serve the working class in its struggle. On this foundation our literature is slowly but steadily developing. Outside the Soviet Union, there is only in Germany an extensive literature which is ideologically and organizationally connected with the proletariat. This is due to the maturity of the revolutionary party and to the high degree of class-consciousness reached by the proletarian masses in Germany.

The existence of an ideologically consolidated organization was the pre-requisite for a systematic development of our literature. However, there were bound to be some ambiguities and some confusion in the development of the theoretical principles. We have gone through the infantile stage of excessive formulation, of over-estimating our own progress, and of inadequate stress upon the necessity of learning from experience. Mistakes of this kind were shown, for instance, in the article by Erich Steffen entitled "Urzelle der Proletarischen Literatur", which was published in the official magazine of the proletarian literary association of Germany. (*Linkskurve* Vol. 2 № 2). It was declared by Comrade Steffen in that article: "We do not have to create a proletarian literature, we have one already." He believes, for instance, that the factory newspapers, contributions by worker-correspondents, and the like constitute already the literature that we need. This is certainly a mis-

take. Reports do not constitute literature and although factory newspapers are all-important elements of the political struggle, they are not literary works. Such views, arising as they do from a strong class sentiment against the hostile culture of the bourgeoisie, indicate an underestimation of study which is so necessary for any proletarian literary movement in its early stages. Lenin taught us that it is essential to assimilate the culture of the past if we want to create a new culture.

An analogy to the German case is furnished by one of the basic theses of the John Reed Club, our fraternal organization in America, which bases the proletarianism of its literature on the fact that its members went to the factories, turning into worker-writers in this roundabout way. This wrong conception is based on the assumption that it is possible to create a proletarian culture by some social organizations and little circles that are secretly paving the way for a new culture, thereby gaining a mandate as cultural representatives of the working class. This constitutes a *Proletcult* delusion, a belated application of the philosophy of the *Narodniki* in the domain of literature: in other words, it implies disregard of the fact that the class character of literary creation is not determined by the starting point, but rather by the goal toward which it strives.

As a reaction against the negative attitude towards our literature taken up by those who do not believe as yet in a proletarian literature, and who are inclined to overestimate the literature of a circumscribed intellectual group, like the one of Tucholski, there have developed left sentiments.

It was relatively an easy matter to dispose of the dangers from the Left. It was all the easier on account of the fact that in Germany, and probably in most of the capitalist countries, the danger of deviation has been mostly towards the Right. This danger consists in an overestimation of the level of the culture of the enemy and essentially has no faith in the forces of the proletariat.

One of the first blows in this direction had to be leveled at Gerhard Pohl. In his *Neue Bücherschau*, while pretending to pursue a revolutionary literary policy, he really took an attitude that was more dangerous than open hostility.

Typical symptoms of a literary Trotskyism were furnished by the preference for mere literary form, the advocacy of the independence of art from party politics, and lastly, the negation of proletarian art and literature on the grounds that proletarian culture was not desirable, unless it be distinctively socialist. The negative effects of that misguided literary policy were largely disposed of by the withdrawal of the proletarian writers from editorial collaboration with Pohl and by the appearance of a series of polemilal articles in the official organ of the proletarian writers, *Linkskurve*.

The official organ of the proletarian writers in Germany, *Linkskurve*, has taken a relatively critical attitude in regard to Upton Sinclair. Thus, in an article entitled „America turning leftwards" (Volume 2 No. 7) we wrote about his inconsistency in attacking incidental phenomena of the system, while hesitating to attack the system as a whole. An inconsistent attitude in regard to this writer, with all due recognition of the importance of his works *(Jimmy Higgins)*, etc., would hinder the consistent development of proletarian literature in the United States.

Among our struggles against certain right-wing tendencies on the cultural front, we must take a stand also against some of the plays put up by the valuable proletarian producer Erwin Piskator. In 1919 Piskator, as one of the founders and leaders of the proletarian stage movement, wrote in his program:

"The management of the proletarian theater must aim at simplicity of expression, of simple and unequivocal impression upon the proletarian audience. Subordination of all art aims to the revolutionary goal. Conscious emphasis and propaganda on the idea of the class struggle."

A series of plays was produced by Piskator which reduced this program to the absurd. At times the art purpose was brought so much to the foreground that the revolutionary goal became well eclipsed. Lately Piskator has turned back again to his original correct line. We can only hope that we shall have every reason to change our comradely negative criticism into a positive one.

A similar question was that of finding the proper attitude towards the manifold and class-differentiated manifestations of culture coming from the Soviet Union. The Soviet theaters that came on tour to Germany and Europe were not always the ripest from the standpoint of class ideology. Negative experiences, such as the case of Granovsky and others, have taught us to be circumspect in our criticism of petty-bourgeois performances, however high their artistic merit may be. Thus, in contrast to many comrades, we have analysed critically the performances given by the Meyerhold theater on its German visit. While appreciating the great historic services of this theater and its high esthetical level, one has to say that it by no means portrays the revolutionary realities of the Soviet Union. In contrast to this theater of the revolutionary form, which has discarded all the traditional methods of stage management, and has to a certain extent revolutionized also the theatrical content, we pointed to the progressive theater of the working youth of the Soviet Union, the TRAM.

These are but a few instances. We have always endeavored to oppose the firm and seasoned ideology of the revolutionary proletariat, to petty-bourgeois radical esthetical quests. We have polemized even with those writers who are sympathetic to ourselves. Our struggle was essentially based upon stressing the class character and the line which we draw between ourselves and petty-bourgeois and anarchist literature. Polemics of this kind we have carried on with Tucholski, Toller, Ossetinsky, etc.

On the whole, in a spirit of self-criticism, we must admit that this activity was neither adequate nor systematic. What were our sins in the campaign for winning over to our side the individual petty-bourgeois revolutionary writers?

If we assume that the sympathizers can be won over to the proletarian ideology, then these tasks ought to be differently solved in regard to the various groups. It is essential to support those tendencies and moods in the group of our fellow-travellers that are leading our way, precipitating the crisis through which many of them are passing, so as to hasten their coming over to the proletarian front.

We should adopt the slogan of the proletarian writers of the Soviet Union, who advise their members to combat those elements that take a scornful or careless attitude towards the fellow-travellers in whatever form that may be: whether by minimizing the value of their work while bestowing undue praise on the work of their own members, or by simply ridiculing them, and so forth.

From the foregoing we may draw some practical conclusions. We must apply serious Marxist analysis to the literary production of all those that are engaged on the cultural front, while affording practical guidance to real sympathizers. We must subject their work to profound Marxian critical analysis, so as to convince those that are undecided and to get them to recognize the weapon of Marxian criticism. Moreover, by raising the quality of our own literary output, we should afford an example to be emulated by those who are inclined to fall into line with us. In our class activity in the domain of literature we should give expression to the slogan launched by Comrade Wittvogel at one of the recent meetings of the intellectual groups: "There can be no neutral ground between the fronts, one gets shot down half-way between the fronts." It must be persistently pointed out to the large mass of petty-bourgeois intellectuals in Germany, who have lately been stirred to their depths by the economic crisis, that in a time of decisive battles, all hesitation and wavering must be considered as direct hostility.

This activity we have lately carried on with relative success, and we report this to the present conference so that the comrades in the other capitalist countries might make use of our experiences. In addition to numerous gatherings organized particularly with a view to attracting these elements of the petty-bourgeoisie, we have also organized a Symposium in *Linkskurve*, which allowed a number of representatives of the different intellectual currents to have their say and to state their views on essential problems. This Symposium we have carried out in thoroughgoing fashion, and it resulted in a strong realignment among the intellectual groups. On the one hand, a number of hesitating petty-bourgeois intellectuals, who at one time were considered quite close to ourselves, have now definitely turned away from us and gone over to the fascist ranks where they really belong. Mention should be made particularly of Max Hodann. Another important result was the showing up of the limitations of the political horizon of petty-bourgeois intellectuals, as was demonstrated in the reply given by Jakob Wassermann. Yet by far the most important result was the crystalization of a firm and definite left-wing orientation on the part of the best elements of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, such as Ernst Glaser, Armin, T. Wegner, Friedrich Wolf, and others.

In order to obtain a thorough grasp of the problems which confronted us, we have to analyze both the economic and political basis of the literary activity of our contemporaries. This is rather difficult work, bearing in mind the woeful lack of preparation in this respect. To some extent, valuable ground is furnished by the critical essays of Mehring, regardless of their serious defects. However, that material is far from adequate for our present needs. The same ought to be said about the critical essays of Plekhanov, which, by the way, have not yet been translated into German.

Similarly, the young literary criticism of the Soviet Union has not yet been translated, and it is unknown in Germany. Lately, however, we have benefited by some of the work of Comrade Wittvogel and of a few other young comrades that have been published in German.

Particularly important to our immediate critical activity is to give a thorough analysis of the fascist, social-fascist, and Christian literature in Germany.

The Sympathizers

In the struggle to win over the radical petty-bourgeoisie and its literary exponents; in other words, in the struggle to win over the sympathizers, it is our urgent task to select and befriend those elements that are really in earnest and that are really serviceable, those who show distinctive sympathy for our class outlook. This process of discrimination is rendered exceedingly difficult by the complex character of the contemporary political and ecomomic development.

On reviewing the twelve years that have passed since the collapse of Germany, we find that the wavering and oscillation of the petty-bourgeois literateurs reflect perfectly the economic and political vicissitudes of this period. From the literary manifestations of the early period of the revolution, through the period of formal "revolutionary" phraseology, the course of development has gone through the period of "relative stabilization", reflecting all the time the political and economic situation of the country. After the turbulent period of inflated currency there was greater foresight shown on the literary front of the petty-bourgeoisie, and a clearer and more definite class differentiation ensued. In the present stage of economic and political crisis, which foreshadows the beginning of a revolutionary crisis, we shall have to seriously intervene in this process in order to win the victory for the revolutionary proletariat. This task is all the more difficult by reason of the fact that the field of revolutionary activity offers as yet a relatively limited market for literary products. It means that we shall have to contend with a certain contradiction to the material interests of the writers that will be involved in this process. Yet this contradiction is only an apparent one, bearing in mind that the process of economic decline leads to a shrinking of the book market anyway, so that a great many literary workers are thrown into the ranks of the unemployed. Moreover, we must point out to such people the tremendous sacrifices made by the struggling proletariat, so that economic consideration should not affect their decisions. The decision to join the front of the fighters, the builders of Socialism, should lift the radical writer above all selfish motives and considerations. It should be realized by the real literary artist that the great struggle for the socialist order of society means sacrifice and unselfish activity. Those of them whose conscience is not a mere mask, will realize that the struggle for a better and more equitable form of society should lend strength and endurance to overcome all persecution and opposition.

In forming a wide united front in the struggle against fascism, our agitation should be directed in the first place towards the young writers of various tendencies who have not yet gained publicity. It will be certainly far more difficult to win over the writers of renown whose ideology has been more or less definitely established. Nevertheless, this work should also be taken up, bearing in mind that the sentiments of the reading public are bound to have their effect even upon such writers. This recruiting activity should not be carried on in any timorous way. Those who join us cannot be expected right away to agree with the consistent Marxists on all points. But the constant intercourse and common activity will influence them and train them, so that they will be drawn more and more closely to the front of the revolutionary proletariat. On the other hand, we should not ignore certain dangers which are bound to come in one way or another from the recruiting of sympathi-

zers. To take a concrete case, let us allude to the example of Kurt Tucholski. He is certainly a firm opponent of fascist ideology, and his writings are distinctly leveled against their entire conception of the state; yet, when joining the proletarian literature, he carries his scepticism rather too far, developing it into a sort of nihilism which discards not only the illusions of the petty-bourgeoisie, but also tends to discourage the workers in their struggle for the better future. It is here that we ought to apply our Marxian critique, showing up this petty-bourgeois individualistic outlook for what it is worth. It has to be pointed out that this pessimism is the expression of the despondency and weakness of the petty-bourgeois thinker who sees the negative aspects of the existing order of things, but lacks the mental vigor to contemplate the whole magnitude of the creative work of the struggling proletariat. We have alluded to Tucholski merely as a symptom. We are not going to enumerate the names of other writers of different shades of opinion to illustrate this point about the danger accruing from the allegiance of sympathizers to our cause. One thing is certain: we must take advantage of the tremendous flux that is going on within the ranks of the petty-bourgeoisie, attracting their best and most important elements to our literary front.

By way of concrete illustration of our methods for the winning of sympathizers, I should like to emphasize that we ought to avoid the mechanical adoption of such methods. Thus, there was an extensive discussion here in connection with the mechanical interpretation of the Marxian dictum: "Consciousness is determined by existence." This was construed to mean that we could not hope at all to win over those writers who are in the opposite camp if their economic interest lies that way. The ideas of the revolutionary proletariat are so strong, and so subversive in their effect that frequently consciousness plays an extraordinary role among the bourgeois intellectuals, and as we were taught by Marx and Lenin, a portion of them — namely, the best among the intellectuals — in the hour of final decision, will go over from their class to the proletariat. And there is no reason whatever to ignore this process in our consideration of the methods of activity.

This activity among the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia is of supreme importance, but it is not the task of the writers alone. Rather is it the task of the whole apparatus of agitation and propaganda of the revolutionary proletariat. The specific task of the writers is the formation and development of proletarian literature which can carry out its political and ideological tasks only in the course of the dialectical process

Worker Correspondence and Literature

The task of organizing a powerful literature in the service of the working class should direct our attention, in the first place, to an important reservoir that forms the most important source of our proletarian literature. In analyzing our activity so far, we must attach prime importance to the worker-correspondent movement. (This may be gathered at once if we examine the most important literary works produced by German proletarian writers, including novels, short stories, lyrics, etc., to mention the names of Grünberg, Marchwitza, Bredel, Turek, etc.). While this movement is essential to our literature, it stands to reason that we must thoroughly discuss and investigate here the methods whereby the closest contact may be established between proletarian literature and the worker-correspondents.

The great and mighty worker-correspondent movement of the revolutionary proletariat in Germany has tremendous tasks before it. We may declare with pride that the worker-correspondence and factory newspapers allows us to peep into the most hidden recesses of capitalist production. The exploited and oppressed working class turns out a sea of newspapers without possessing typesetting machines and printing presses. It has its posts of revolutionary observation established in numberless factories, in thousands of offices, in workers' barracks throughout the country. The observers are the worker-correspondents. The activity of the worker-correspondents is associated with tremendous political tasks. These tasks are not strictly of a literary character; nevertheless the creative forces of the proletariat, passing through the apprenticeship stage of worker-correspondence, subsequently enhance the realm of proletarian literature. This is a quite natural process, as the political struggle enables such workers to develop what latent literary ability there is in them.

This literary section of the militant proletarian movement offers an essential reservoir to our proletarian literature. We must maintain the closest contact with this movement, even to a far larger extent than we have done so far. The material gathered by the worker-correspondents will contribute the most essential subject-matter to our proletarian literature, portraying as it does the actual economic fights and experiences of the proletarian masses.

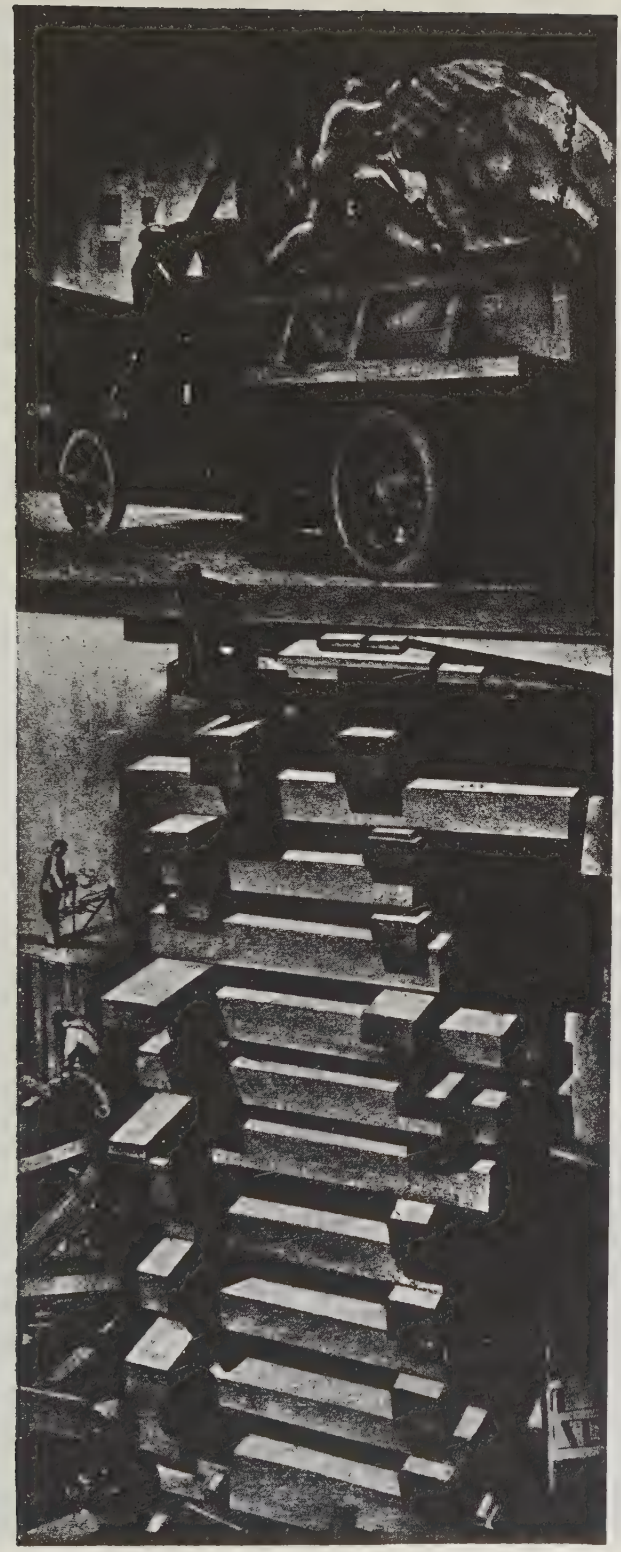
The usual way of development for worker-correspondents with an inclination towards revolutionary literature is by way of the minor forms of propaganda literature. It is therefore important for us to deal with such forms of writing.

Factory Newspapers

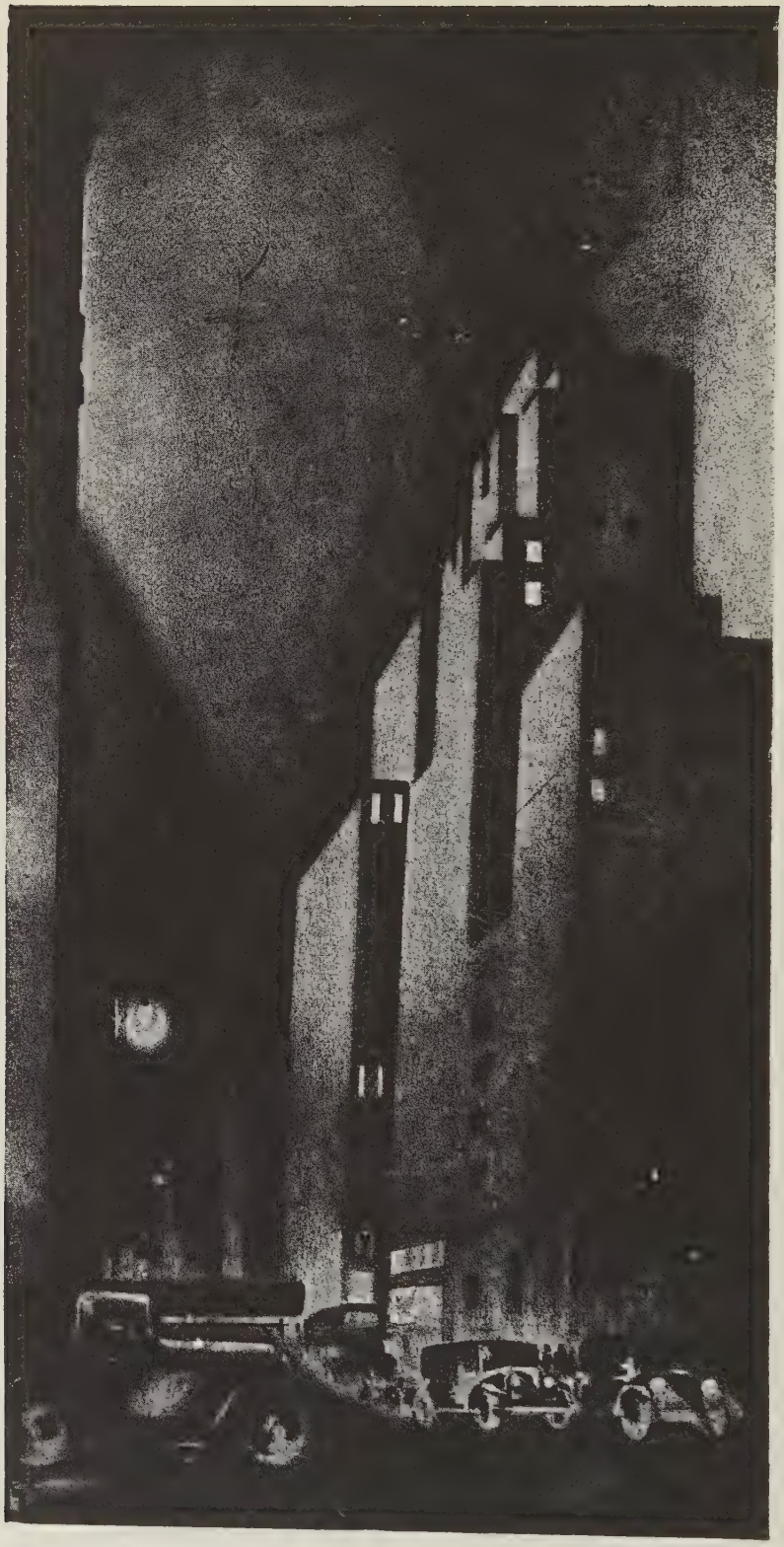
Factory newspapers and house newspapers are often the first form of publicity for a great army of proletarian writers, and the real school for budding proletarian writers. Here it is that the worker correspondents first work together with the writers. They enrich the latter with their experience of work in the factory, among the unemployed and in the trade unions and in turn learn from the writers the technique of the literary craft.

The bourgeoisie has all the means of production in its hands. Its apparatus of coercion suppresses and forbids the publication of newspapers by the proletariat. This is, of course, the natural consequence of the struggle of the revolutionary press against the existing order of society. But the proletariat, out of its inexhaustible class resources, has evolved a mighty press apparatus that cannot be curbed: the factory and house newspapers. To gain an idea of their scope and significance one has to bear in mind that in the more active and politically trained districts there is not a factory in which revolutionary workers are employed, nor a street in which revolutionary workers live, without its newspaper conducted by the workers.

This local newspaper is in the true sense the newspaper of a given nucleus of the social life which portrays the daily struggles of the workers, their everyday needs and cares, and reflects the moods and aspirations of the masses. It deals not only with general political questions, but also with the daily struggles of the masses, which are linked up with the ultimate goal. Such is the program of the local workers' newspaper.



A Building Louis Lozowick



Manhattan by Night Louis Lozowick

This network of newspapers — which must be extended even further — is a mighty and heroic fighting method of the proletariat; it is spreading throughout the world and is becoming a powerful organization of publicity that no censorship can effectively suppress. The newspapers are gotten up by nameless editors, and by anonymous reporters who do not pretend to be literateurs. It is the duty of revolutionary writers throughout the world to closely identify themselves with this revolutionary activity of the masses.

Small forms of agitation and propaganda

The entire literature of proletarian writers is agitation and propaganda for the revolutionary movement.

Nevertheless the separate branches of this literature have specific tasks of their own in this common struggle. The small forms of agitation and propaganda literature are those sections of our literature which react most quickly and most directly to the militant slogans of the revolutionary proletariat. They bring the current slogans of the revolutionary party, of the trade unions, or the strike committee, to the millions of readers of the workers' press, and they do so in a literary form, as playlets staged by agitation troupes, or as revolutionary poems to be recited at mass meetings.

They constitute a most mobile weapon of our literary movement and have reached tremendous development in Germany where they include some of the very best of our achievements on the literary front. The criterion by which this work should be measured is its efficacy in the struggle and this in turn largely depends upon its artistic quality.

I should like to cite an example. Experience has shown that many class conscious workers in Germany are particularly fond of attending meetings at which the agitational troupes perform, not only because these portray political problems very concretely, but also because they have really developed their art methods (for instance the "Red Speaking Tube" of Berlin), so much so that they are often preferred to elaborate theatrical performances.

The short story, the brief report, and the poem, as well as the agitational sketch, are excellent weapons of revolutionary propaganda and agitation which is directly employed by the militant movement of the proletariat.

Let me allude to another example. There is a strike of the metalworkers of Berlin. In our daily press we have short stories and poems popularizing the slogans of the revolutionary metalworkers, of the Red Trade Unions. Brief reports and sketches of the strike incidents and of the strike meetings impart to the masses of the workers elsewhere a lifelike picture of the struggle and of its difficulties, frequently serving as a means for awakening sympathy. The agitational troupes produce little sketches at strike meetings in which the slogans of the struggle are presented in lively form. Then comes the second weapon, which is a little more heavy. A few days after the outbreak of the strike, a proletarian writer gets up a political reporting pamphlet on the life and struggle of the metalworkers which tells the masses, in the form of a narrative, about the cause, the facts, and the necessity of the struggle in progress. Only then comes the weapon which requires time for preparation, the powerful weapon of the theatrical play and of the novel. Thus arose the novel about the metallists' strike. It is true, the novel

was not written directly in connection with the Berlin metalworkers strike (neither could it be written so quickly), nevertheless, it did not appear "by chance", but it constitutes a distinct contribution to the present struggle, and it gives a correct picture of the political analysis of the situation in accord with the policy of the revolutionary party in Germany.

This important novel (written by Comrade Willi Bredel, now confined in prison) sets the proper example for the proletarian writer that he should not wait for the outbreak of the fight, but should prepare for it in advance.

It would be wrong to think that our literature always copes with the situation so well. In a spirit of self-criticism it must be admitted that such is not the case, but that our literature still far from fully reflects our revolutionary reality and its development. We are still lagging behind events. The tempo of our literature is still too slow to cope with the great aims we have before us.

One important task for us is the creation of a mass literature portraying not only the immediate struggles of the revolutionary proletariat, but also combatting the pernicious influence of bourgeois literature. Such literature must take the shape of brochures, agitational plays and cheap novels and stories for mass dissemination. There must be literature of this kind published for the youth, for the women, for the agricultural laborers and for all other categories, containing not only the correct ideology, but also efficiently combatting the flood of unwholesome, thrilling fiction turned out by the bourgeois publishers. At this point we must critically observe that in combatting the literature of our class enemy we have rather concentrated on its best works, and this was certainly wrong. For, the mass editions, intended for millions of readers, are really the nameless literary exponents of the reactionary ideology who poison the minds of the masses. Intense activity ought to be carried out upon this front. A beginning was made in this respect by the publishing department of our party in Germany issuing a series of one-mark booklets of proletarian literature for the masses. This has been the proper step, yet it will be a necessity to produce still cheaper mass editions of pamphlets describing, in narrative form, the militant program of the revolutionary proletariat. We still lack a great deal of anti-clerical literature and popular propaganda literature of atheism. We need literature particularly for the youth, dealing with problems of interest to the youth and presenting them in attractive form; literature for the millions of workers interested in sport, dealing with such topics from the standpoint of the revolutionary sport movement, and so on. We need literature presenting the proletarian standpoint on all aspects of life. We need literature for the masses of workers and petty-bourgeoisie who are still influenced by fascism, for the social-democratic workers, for the small peasants and the agricultural laborers, for the office workers, and so forth. In all these respects we have just begun to be active, and there are great tasks ahead.

The major forms

It stands to reason that the fundamental political principles outlined above are equally applicable to the major forms of literature, since they pursue similar tactical aims. Theatrical plays, novels, and to some extent also lyrics, require a longer period for preparation and

execution. Therefore, such works cannot be produced directly in connection with the militant tasks of the day, but they have to be adapted to the general line of the struggle and its different stages, analyzing past victories and defeats, and affording the necessary lessons for the future. Nevertheless, "actuality" is essential to a good work of proletarian literature no less than political and ideological lucidity. Actuality in this sense is not meant as regards the time, but rather as regards the contents, the selection of material, and the handling of the subject. It may be a work describing battles that were fought a score of years back, yet be more actual than the description of events which occured but yesterday. If the political situation becomes clarified by the lessons of the past battles, teaching how to avoid mistakes and defeats, such a work of literature is more timely than the description of the happenings of yesterday. In this connection a historic play (for instance, about the Paris Commune) may be more actual than a modern play. Nevertheless, this should not be carried to extremes. It is essential to portray the real problems of the modern class struggle. In this sense the major forms of literature should attain the maximum of elasticity and of rapid production. We really need a "speeding up", so to speak, as against the slow tempo prevailing at present in our proletarian literature in this respect.

Proletarian lyrics may be of a twofold character: sometimes they deal with political topics of the day, at other times they deal with the experiences of the working class in the daily struggle. Proletarian lyrics in Germany have ranked foremost in this respect. Earlier than elsewhere on the literary front, they re-echoed the tempestuous breath of the class struggle. The clearest and ripest among the first exponents of proletarian literature on the international front in Germany was Johannes R. Becher, who portrays the revolutionary experiences of the proletariat. He has traversed the path from the world of the enemy class, in which he was born and reared, to the outspoken revolutionary front of the proletariat. To-day he ranks as one of the foremost exponents of international proletarian literature. His progress shows that it is by no means impossible for other members of his class to find their way to a creative alliance with the working class. Most of his poems have been banned by the censorship, and he has been even prosecuted for high treason, and they deal chiefly with the class experiences of the workers, rather than with the events of the day. There is similar content in the works of another German proletarian poet, the textile worker Emil Ginkel, who depicts the past battles of the German proletariat in which he has been a direct participant. Ginkel has exercised a tremendous influence upon the younger generation of proletarian poets by his book, *A Pause on the Pneumatic Hammer*. An opposite type to Ginkel is presented by Erich Weinert. The latter has versified in Germany, in language understandable to the masses, the political slogans of the day. He is the typical poetical pamphleteer who smites the class enemy with the keen-edged weapon of his verses. A Camille Desmoulin of to-day, the author of excellent lyrics for agitational troupes, and of satirical verses that are recited with great effect at political mass-meetings. His more important works have been gathered into little volumes entitled *Affentheater* (monkey theater) and *Erich Weinert spricht*. Besides these three leading names there is a whole galaxy of young poets still in their formative stages. First among these should be mentioned Kurt Kläber whose book of poems *Empörer, empor* contains valuable and gifted poetry; he is now developing into a prose writer. Next should be men-

tioned F. C. Weisskopf who has also taken to prose-writing ever since the publication of his earlier book of poetry entitled *Es geht eine Trommel*. Less important, in my opinion, is Paul Körner who writes lyrics in working class dialect, frequently supplying us with the most immediate impressions of proletarian life in Germany. Special mention ought to be made here of poets like Berta Lask, Hans Marchwitza, Kurt Huhn, and many others.

On turning to the proletarian revolutionary novel, we find also here that the most essential works have been created by writers hailing from the working class, who have mostly developed through the worker-correspondent movement.

One of the most important figures in the domain of prose-writing is Kurt Kläber. Kläber was formerly a miner. In his book *Barrikaden an der Ruhr* (confiscated by the class enemy) he gave us one of the most valuable descriptions of the struggles and sufferings of the proletarian fighters in the Ruhr. His big novel *Passagiere der dritten Klasse* suffers somewhat from excessive psychological intricacies which at times appear to be an aim in themselves. This book, talented as regards form can only be considered as a transition stage of this writer to whom literature is nothing else but a fighting weapon. His latest novel *Bergleute*, which has appeared as yet only in part, will portray in artistic form the experiences of the working class.

Karl Grünberg in his book *Brennende Ruhr* has first undertaken the portrayal of the political present of the revolutionary struggles. His pictures of the battles and defeats of the proletariat in the Ruhr are still frequently drawn in a primitive naturalistic manner. A good deal is still schematically drawn resembling placards, but we see already in his work the elements that we seek and need. He has also come into our literature from the ranks of worker-correspondents.

The miner Hans Marchwitza was also a worker-correspondent. His novel *Sturm auf Essen*, just published, contains a revolutionary analysis of the battles fought in connection with the Kapp-Putsch. It gives a realistic portrayal of the experiences of the heroic struggle in the Ruhr.

Also Paul Körner was a worker-correspondent. This comrade, who recently was liberated after serving a term of one year imprisonment, and within a few weeks was imprisoned again, is an active participant in the revolts in middle Germany. He has portrayed his many years experiences of both legal and illegal activity in the original form and in the specific language of the proletarian milieu, in a series of stories. He is very popular among the working class. Among his larger works should be mentioned his latest novel from the life of the miners, *Schlagende Wetter*.

The compositor Ludwig Turek, in his book in *Ein Prolet erzählt*, presents one of the liveliest and most realistic productions in our literature. This book, which deals with the war period and the subsequent revolutionary upheavals, has met with strong response.

Willi Bredel, the metalworker and worker-correspondent who is at present in prison, in his book *Maschinenfabrik N. und K.* has produced one of the most considerable works in our literature. It is the first novel which actually depicts a factory from the standpoint of the worker, which gives realistic and true pictures of the life and struggles of the workers, and of the process of production in a big modern industrial plant.

All the above-mentioned are communists, and their work essentially means the carrying out of the Party tasks on the literary front.

Before turning to a number of other writers who are equally composed largely of communists, but in whose creative work there are also contained other non-proletarian class elements, I should like to allude to two sympathizing writers whose works may certainly be classed as of a very high order. I allude to Adam Scharrer who, in his *Vaterlandslose Gesellen*, has given us the first real war novel from the standpoint of the working class, and to Theodor Plivier who, in his *Des Kaisers Kuli* has given a powerful story of the revolutionary struggle in the Kiel district. I should also mention that valuable book by Albert Hotopp, *Fischkutter HF 13* which gives the first portrayal of the life of the fishermen.

All these are exclusively names of authors of larger works. There is a whole number of other writers who are published only in the daily press, and in the form of booklets, of whom greater things may be expected in the future.

Berta Lask writes chiefly revolutionary proletarian plays. Most of the performances of her plays were forbidden by the class justice of the bourgeoisie, including *Leuna* and *Thomas Münzer*.

Among the few names that are still to be mentioned in this connection is that of our comrade Friedrich Wolf whose play *Cyanide of Potassium* dealing with the German anti-abortion law gives a mass presentation, in dramatic form, of a burning political problem. Another play of his, *Die Matrosen von Cattaro*, describing the heroic struggles of the sailors in the Kaiser's navy, on the Adriatic, is shortly to be produced. The number of proletarian playwrights is rather limited, and there is a great deal of room for development in our literature in this respect. Only a small number of our writers have furnished good proletarian revolutionary playlets for the workers' clubs (e. g. Rudolf Fuchs, *Aufrohr im Mansfelder Land*, etc.).

A number of highly talented and prominent writers in Germany were led by economic and social development to find their political bearings and to throw in their lot with the revolutionary proletariat. Some of them, a very small percentage, have become so closely identified with the tasks of the life and struggle of the proletariat that their literary output forms a most valuable part of the proletarian literature. On the other hand, there are others among them who portray chiefly the past experiences of the petty-bourgeoisie and who have not yet departed from their bourgeois methods of literary activity.

At this point I should like to allude to a mistake made by Comrade Gabor when he evolved the theory that the intellectuals who were driven by events into proletarian literature could only be considered as helpers in the birth of this literature, but could not be expected to do creative work in the field of proletarian literature. Such limitations to literary art are both unjustified and wrong. Any revolutionary intellectual who honestly and finally joins the proletariat, if he only possesses the necessary power, may accomplish this process of transformation. Is not this demonstrated by the example of Johannes R. Becher? In his poem *Genosse*, Becher says:

I gave up my name.
I am now called comrade.
I joined the red banner
of the Comintern...

Does not this show the glorious process of the transformation of the poet, resulting in his final identification with the proletariat? Such

may be the experience of all those who accept the world outlook of the proletariat as laid down by Marx and Lenin and who interpret in it their literary creations. To be sure, it is no easy matter and it calls for rigid self-discipline to emancipate oneself entirely from the trammels of bourgeois mentality. Not everybody succeeds in this. There are limitations, which we must properly point out in Marxist fashion, for the good of our proletarian literature and of those who want to identify themselves with us. For instance, if we put the question whether the book of our comrade Anna Segher *Der Aufruhr der Fischer von Santa Barbara* conforms to our idea of the tasks of our literature, we have to answer: Yes and No.

This book does not form a component part of proletarian revolutionary literature in the best sense of the word. Yet this book, which was awarded the Kleist Prize of 1929, (i. e. the prize given by a bourgeois institute) has stirred a relatively large section of the petty-bourgeoisie and has exercised a lasting revolutionary effect by its handling of the problem which, although as yet un-Marxian and based rather on sentiment, is thoroughly imbued with sympathy for the proletariat. Thus we see the twofold process which is characteristic for a large number of similar literary works: 1) the process of the evolution of the writer Anna Segher who is still seeking, and despite many idealistic traits and petty-bourgeois survivals (there is no need to lay particular stress on the high artistic standard of her work), is definitely approaching the revolutionary proletariat, and 2) the distinctive role played by her work in the furtherance of the many and multiform tasks of proletarian literature by exercising a tremendous effect on the petty-bourgeois reading public. At the same time we must emphasize that in the literary manifestation of the process of evolution from petty-bourgeoisie to proletariat, while there are still strong survivals of the ideology of the enemy classes, there is bound to be, besides the revolutionary effect, also inferences which confuse, mislead, and circumscribe the effect of such evolution. The function of the proper re-education of petty-bourgeois elements coming into our movement can best be performed by the clear and consistent Marxist who has already inwardly passed through this process of evolution, but this function should be exercised as a task given by the proletarian class, and not by way of interfering with literary style and the like.

In this sense one must wait and hope that the evolution of comrade Segher, who has taken the proper trend, will really lead to Marxism. Yet it can by no means be said that this book forms already a component part of proletarian revolutionary literature in the sense of Marxist literature. If we did so, we would be sowing confusion in the minds of the youngers writers of proletarian literature who should above all be educated into good Marxists. Having fully dealt with the example of comrade Segher, we need not go into a particular analysis of the creative work of similar comrades. Naturally, the main line is identical, while there are variations in the case of each individual writer as regards the evolution of his literary art into a weapon of the class struggle.

Thus, it seems to me the same holds good for the creative work of Ludwig Renn whose book *War* has gained worldwide popularity and whose *after War* is now in the press. He appears to be passing through the same law of evolution, although he is already closer and more immediately aligned with the tasks of the proletariat.

It is necessary to deal with the big and valuable literary work of Egon Erwin Kisch and to point out the lessons to be derived from it by the proletarian writer. For, we have here the pioneer work of a reporter who is essentially a Marxist. The specific activity of Kisch as a reporter has been nothing short of a revolution in the domain of journalism, and in his effect upon the petty-bourgeoisie, as already said in the case of F. C. Weisskopf, we may see the specific mission of the intellectual section of our literary front. The analysis is not quite simple. The comrades mentioned here are members of the Communist Party, i. e. they have politically identified themselves with our class, but this political decision is not invariably accompanied by the complete and final evolution in the direction of Marxism as regards their literary work.

This literature, whose creators are organizationally and politically identified with the revolutionary proletariat, represents an important and necessary bridge to the large strata of petty-bourgeois readers; it constitutes an essential part of our militant front, and we should not forget that we ought to adopt no shortsighted and scholastic view in regard to those other literary products of sympathizers whose progress in the direction of the proletariat has not gone beyond the desire and purpose of demonstrating their own confusion of ideas.

In view of the displacement of large sections of the petty-bourgeoisie, we must develop wider and more intense activity in this respect than we did hitherto. We must extend a glad welcome and the hand of comradship to the ideological exponents of those elements who are in real earnest and who are inclined to turn our way. For, those of our intellectual comrades who are to-day completely and finally identified with the revolutionary proletariat were also sympathizers in the past, and were not always Marxists. Just because we are unmistakably and frankly appealing to the hesitating and undecided exponents of the intelligentsia and of the petty-bourgeoisie to join us in the common fight against the cultural reaction, against fascism, against the danger of intervention, and for the aims of Socialism, we must constantly point out the class character of literature, while analyzing our differences, without abuse, but in substantial Marxist fashion.

The creative method

I have already alluded to the fact that the creative work even of revolutionary artists who have organizationally as well as politically come around to our platform, is not always entirely Marxian. What is the reason for this? There is no need to lay any special emphasis on the fact that we attach prime importance to the correct *Weltanschauung*. In practice, the world outlook of any given writer is manifested not only in his general ideological trend but also in his creative methods. Our literature in Germany is a militant literature and it must endeavor to respond quickly to the march of political development and to keep fully abreast of the times. It has to give literary expression to the militant slogans and to carry them to the masses. The treatment of the problem as a whole, and the presentation of the individual character impersonating a given problem is rather difficult. Thus it happens that in a whole number of our novels — and still more in our short stories, the anti-psychological method prevails. This by no means constitutes a deliberate method, but is rather due to the circumstances already referred to. The creative methods of our comrades are generally not strong enough as

yet to cope with the growing pace of development of the class struggle, while individual writers frequently fail to present the sentiments, ideas, and aspirations of our class, or of a portion of our class, in their connection with the whole situation of society. Thus it happens that the political slogans are put into the mouths of the literary characters in cut-and-dry fashion, so that the cause and effect of revolutionary events are frequently overlooked. Our comrades must thoroughly realize the shortcomings of this schematic, anti-psychological method, on the one hand in order to overcome it, and on the other hand to keep it within certain bounds. Because, we believe that this method, if kept under proper control, may be quiet efficient for immediate practical purposes. Nevertheless, in the next stage of the further development of our literature, it should be our aim to consolidate our creative methods, so that our writers should turn out really Marxian literary products that are built of concrete material, and are not contradictory to the social complex.

Naturally, this must not necessarily lead to a kind of psychologism. Psychology should serve us only as a means for the elucidation of the actions and development of human beings within the confines of their respective class of society. One must not treat human beings as finally settled characters that are either good or bad, but rather as objects in a state of mobility that are capable of evolution. This will be all the more important to us in Germany bearing in mind that we must use the weapon of literature to reach the masses that are still following the social-democrats and the fascists; this we can achieve only by giving such portrayals of the process of evolution and of the inward struggles of such workers in a language accessible to the masses while based upon thorough going Marxian analysis. (Thus, for instance, a good novel describing the spiritual experiences of a young social-democratic worker from the standpoint of dialectical materialism, showing the conflicts and the whole process going on in the ranks of such people, may be far more effective than numerous speeches and discussions that do not deal with the specific experiences of the individual).

When psychology becomes an aim in itself, as is the case in most of the psychological novels of the petty-bourgeoisie, it becomes superfluous ballast and it leads to a flight from the reality of things to the sham reality of inward, relatively uncontrollable emotions which, instead of clarifying, are apt to becloud and confuse. The discussions on the "birth of heroes" which have been going on in literary-political circles of the Soviet Union have shown that it is not always an easy matter to find the right proportion and to handle the weapon of psychological study while avoiding its numerous pitfalls.

In Germany we have little ground for complaint on this score. Apart from the book of comrade Segher already referred to, which still shows the definite traces of the school of petty-borgeois psychologism, we have to observe rather the reverse. Generally we find in the books of our writers — for instance, in Turek's *Ein Prolet erzählt*, or in Scharrer's *Vaterlandslose Gesellen* — that the narrative, while psychologically understandable, is treated rather from the standpoint of social development as a whole, so that it is never a story of strictly personal experiences and conflicts. Such books, and a whole number of other productions, like *Des Kaisers Kuli*, *Sturm auf Essen*, and particularly, as I believe, Willi Bredel's *Maschinenfabrik N. und K.*, which for the first time depict in German literature the real life and struggle of the workers in the factories and the modern process of production in the facto-

ries, being an entirely new category of production in our literature, indicate the rapid pace of development that is taking place in our proletarian literature. In this connection, alluding to the thesis of Comrade Weisskopf about the decline of the novel, one must say that the fate of the novel as such does not concern us. The process of decay within the ruling class has its effect also upon its superstructure. The contents of the bourgeoisie are declining, and along with them also their literary interpretations. The bourgeois novel is declining. The wholesome proletarian and revolutionary contents are still presented to-day mostly in old, borrowed garb which certainly misfits them; nevertheless the new contents are quite in evidence. It is essential to harmonize the form with the contents, and it doesn't matter whether or not, the final product will be in the shape of a novel. However, to repudiate the proletarian novel would mean to ignore the realities of to-day for the sake of abstract speculation as regards a distant future. Everywhere throughout the world we see the production of excellent novels from the life of our class (Japan, America, Hungary, etc.). Above all, we should give special attention to the great novels produced by our comrades in the Soviet Union. Books like Serafimovitch's *Iron Stream* or Panferov's *Brusski*, are great collectivist works, epoch-making and pace-setting novels, whereas the formalistic, aesthetico-psychological literature of the bourgeoisie is landing more and more in the cul-de-sac of its own perplexity and is decaying together with the ideology of its class.

The outlook

In conclusion, I might say that the proletarian literature of the capitalist countries is in the thick of fighting. It is a militant literature, and it stands together with the entire movement of our class upon the offensive. It should not take a modest stand in the rear. It has behind it the proletarian class, the scientific conception of present history, and it is itself a part of the new great culture of the proletariat. Its creative work is not only a valuable document portraying the present period of the decay of the capitalist system and of the forward march of the oppressed masses; but it is also a component part of the proletarian culture, that is, of the creative force of the proletariat that will be entirely set free only after the conquest of power by the proletariat.

Our slogan is: a general offensive by the proletarian literature upon a wide united front with all those who are fighting against fascism, who are for the defense of the Soviet Union, and who are prepared to join us in the fight against all oppression of the toilers.

The general offensive of our literature as a weapon in the class struggle!

That our literature has become a sharp weapon in this struggle is shown among other things by the persecution and repression to which it is being subjected by the master class. At this moment, 68 editors, some of them members of our organization, are in the dungeons of the German Republic as a living symbol of the freedom of opinion and speech guaranteed by the Weimar Constitution. Yet, the dungeons are turning into superior schools, and in their confinement they are producing new valuable works of our literature that are part of the force which will ultimately break up the great dungeon of the capitalist system of society.

The front of our literature is the front of the proletarian revolution.

Sergei Dinamov

THE LITERARY METHOD OF JOHN REED

John Reed's course of development was long and instructive, being that of a journalist, of an artist, of a revolutionary, of a communist, who began his career on the Pacific Coast and finished up at the walls of the Kremlin. Reed is the only writer who has a book to which Lenin wrote an introduction. But in order to live through the ten days of the October Revolution and to deserve Lenin's "I recommend this work with all my heart to the workers of every country" Reed had to pass through a whole series of stages, and had to overcome many of the contradictions inherent in the process of his mental development. While remaining at the summit of professional journalism he had yet to become a revolutionary, a Bolshevik. Very much indeed may be learnt from John Reed's achievement, and as much can be learnt from his failures. His work as a whole is one of the most valuable contributions to that international proletarian literary experience which has not yet been assimilated by the proletarian literary work of the international.

"Reedism" is represented by that type of sketch which takes the form of a concentrated conspectus of a large design: in Reed's biggest things there is always a promise of still greater things, and when he expands his theme there is always room for a yet wider expansion. That is not because Reed does not take many sides of reality in his grasp — on the contrary it is rather explained by the fact that much is grasped in a small compass, and life is "wrung out", compressed within certain bounds, and cast into a concise form under the tremendous pressure of thought. The conciseness then becomes an expression of the multiplicity of this pressure, and of its irresistible force. "Reedism" in fact involves "worrying matter into shape" as it were. There is no kind of gentleness in Reed's attitude to things, for any kind of "fondling" with nature and history is as Lenin has said "an attempt to purge them of their contradictions and antagonisms." Reed is rough and determined, he stands up against reality in order to seize in thought what is of real significance, what is fundamental, what is essential. He is not dismayed by the impact of reality and will not allow himself to drift down the current of details and the infinity of facts, but on the contrary subordinates details and facts to reality, to objectivity. He rejects the insidious tendency towards empiricism, whether it be factual empiricism where facts gather themselves around the swaying thought, or political empiricism where literature becomes a mere rephrasing of newspaper editorials, or again psychological empiricism where the artist dives "unconsciously" into the depths of the subconscious, the superconscious, the "non-conscious" and the "beyond-consciousness," overlooking the objective basis of this psychological substratum, going no further than the mere quality and moving about from one of its phases

to another (a quantitative relation to reality). Empiricism is foreign and repugnant to Reed — his thoughts are merged with facts though they are not dissolved in facts nor subjugated to them. But "Reedism" in all its completeness is a whole series of incompletenesses. Reedism did not come to full strength all at once but through sudden leaps and transitions. We must understand the weaknesses of John Reed before we can see the strength of his method.

"Flexibility applied objectively so as to reflect the manysidedness of the material process and its unity — that is the dialectic, that is the true reflection of the continual development of the world." (Lenin). Reed was not always able to see the world dialectically like this — the subjective sometimes got the better of him. It can sometimes be noticed in his *The War in Eastern Europe* that events are represented as spontaneously following upon one another, not in relateo to their objeitivn development, but rather subjectively; the movement of the ego carriec with it a series of representations; personality becomes the basis of the system of images. Events seem to impinge upon consciousness independently of their own nature. The first cause and final outcome of phenomena, manifest themselves not within but rather outside of phenomena, in the artist who is portraying them. Now the sketch is created as follows: the phenomena are brought into the arena of representations, move and then suddenly collapse before completing their path of development. Thus Turkey, Greece and even to a certain extent Russia during the War period were presented by means of a series of fragmentary representations. Whatever happened to come into the field of view was reflected, even though it was of the most trivial and random nature (especially the chapters about imprisonment in Russia). Here his pre-occupation with detail carried Reed away and his art lost its coherence. He makes up for this fault with his chapters on the general condition of the country, but the necessity of the universal to supplement the merely contingent speaks for itself (the chapters "The Face of Russia," "A patriotic Revolution," "Petrograd and Moscow.") Of course here external causes played a very important part (John Reed was not allowed to remain in Russia and he was shortly afterwards deported). But the essence of the matter lay in something else; it lay in the point of view in the literal and metaphorical use of this term; — the point of view on the one hand as one of the points of objective reality (the question of subject) and the point of view on the other hand as the attitude of the artist (the question of the ideological standpoint). Great works of art are brought forth as a result of the unity of these two aspects. Great art demands bringing to the forefront that which is most characteristic and charged with social purport among the great variety of phenomena which reality offers; it reproduces life in all its objectivity and the world through its most significant relationships. This is also what makes art so readily attainable by the rising class of our times, namely the proletariat. In seizing his object the artist is himself carried along by it and through his contact with it his experience is enriched. Thus it is not merely by chance that it was just the October revolution and nothing else that Reed described with such force. It is no less significant that in the course of one and the same period Reed showed sudden spurts of genius and equally sudden weak moments. Thus his sketches of Europe were unimaginative and commonplace, but his trip to Mexico resulted in a sudden rebirth as it were, and he wrote a number of brilliant pictures of revolutionary Mexico. *The War in Eastern Europe* and *Ten Days*

That Shook the World are separated by a very short space of time, but what a tremendous difference there is between them! It is essential that efforts should be made by revolutionary writers in acquiring subject matter, but it must nevertheless be remembered that the quality of the subject matter depends on the style. Workers as represented by Dickens, Zola, Bibik, Niechaiev and Chumandrin are quite different types of people.

In this same book *The War in Eastern Europe* Reed sometimes becomes held up by exoticism and attention to trivialities. His flow of thought loses its accustomed swiftness and becomes becalmed in contemplation. The ideas become wedged in, as it were, by the immobile mass of heavy descriptive matter. He turns to history, but history takes the form of a directory.

> Grouped around the site of the Hippodrome to the east are pure Greeks, with Hellenic and Byzantine traditions unbroken for fifteen hundred years, and westward dwell the Albanians, that mysterious people who are supposed to have fled west from Asia at the break-up of the Hittite kingdoms.

The sketch should include history, in it the whole past and present of its object should be knit together in such a way that no introductions or prefaces are needed. But here the history enters in as an afterthought and not as an organic and inseparable part of the whole. In *Insurgent Mexico* Reed deals much more skilfully with the historical material. Thus in the chapter *Los Pastores* he very aptly brings in fragments from the previous rule of the Spaniards in Mexico. As a result the present is given a much deeper significance and with much greater clearness. The struggle of the Mexican peasants and workers against Spain becomes an expression of a necessary law of history, and individual facts, such as Villa's demand for immediate evacuation by the Spaniards, gain in universality and become less isolated and particular. But on the whole Reed lacks this historical approach, his ideological horizon is too narrow. There are many points on which he does not touch at all (for example he does not understand the rôle of American imperialism in Mexico). A writer of sketches must go deep, otherwise his art will become superficial. It is impossible to think of a Soviet writer of sketches who had not a clear idea of the whole policy of the Party, for it is not enough merely to have a sharp eye, one must be able to see in everything the universal and the particular. In these two books Reed does not show himself at his best. Thus instead of giving an ideological portrait of Villa he presents him almost photographically for ten pages, thus failing to disclose the true character of this "leader."

The objective sketch is typical of bourgeois literature. Here the writer takes the part of some intelligence standing over and above all classes, or rather of an impartial photographer who is quite indifferent to his subject whether it be a house on fire or a street battle. On the other hand in the bourgeois sketch the expression of class subjectivity is patent. Instead of an objective presentation of phenomena, an attitude for against what is being described makes itself evident. The sketch then begins to pass judgment on the phenomena and becomes subjective.

The objectivism and subjectivism of bourgeois literature are equally foreign to the materialist artist. He is objective but only in the sense that he properly appreciates a given social economic formation and the antagonistic relationships to which it gives rise — discloses the class contradictions and in doing so defines his point of view. Thus on the one hand the materialist is a more thoroughgoing objectivist,

because his objectivism is carried further and has greater depth. On the other hand he is class-subjective, but only in the sense that his art is a Party art and he is consequently obliged in a quite open and straightforward manner to take the point of view of a definite social group in his evaluation of all events. John Reed sometimes pays tribute to his own petty bourgeois class. He occasionally fell into objectivism and his "impartial" attitude towards reality served to defend the bourgeois regime. Thus in his sketches about militarist Servia he never ceases to insist that there is no class war in Servia, no division of the people into rich and poor, an idea with which he is continually stuffed by Servian officials like colonel Subotitch who says "We are all peasants in Servia — that is our pride." This kind of objectivism makes its appearance with Reed in one or two parts of his book on Mexico. But all the same this objectivism enters merely by chance. Impartiality, indifference, contemplation and cold passivity are as a rule foreign to him. Passionate love and bitter jealousy are what characterised him as an artist and even before the great October pointed out for him the path to Bolshevism. To pierce the surface of things and see their essence, to see beneath the outer covering the inner contradictions — that is what is demanded of the artist. What the proletarian writer requires is not pure representation, not the Kantian unpurposiveness of art as its highest merit, what he wants is to pass judgment upon life and to give a class and Party evaluation of it. But this judgment means leaving objectivity and taking up a definite class position, it involves thoroughly merging oneself into a definite class group and making a thorough break with everything that is hostile to it. John Reed like Maiakovsky, Barbusse and Gorky showed by his life's work that the path of the true artist in bourgeois society is the path leading to the proletariat. John Reed never wrote a single line in defense of bourgeois society, he was always wholeheartedly on the side of all that protested and rebelled against this society. It was not merely a luke-warm sympathy that he felt for the working class, he threw in his lot with them and sank himself in the revolutionary movement. It is true that he did not fight rifle in hand, but there can be no doubt that only an early death prevented this delegate to the Communist International from taking up arms.

> There were a hundred and fifty of us stationed at La Cadena, the advance guard of all the Maderista army to the West. Our business was to guard a pass, the Puerta de la Cadena...
>
> The first day we reached La Cadena, twelve of them rode up to reconnoiter.

Such "we's" as these are met with all through the book, *Insurgent Mexico*. The artist joins in with the peasants in revolt, he is a true *companiero* — comrade — entering the fight against feudalism and the bourgeoisie of the *peones*. He is not one of them but he is with them.

Reed tears off the outside form of things. Where the bourgeois sees in revolution nothing but dirt and barbarism. Reed sees only the transitory and temporary being destroyed, and he sees that this destruction is necessary. He puts up with the hardships of revolution because he knows what revolution is.

> Pretty soon somebody shut the door. The room became full of smoke and fetid with human breath. What little silence was left from the chorus of snoring was entirely obliterated by the singing which kept up, I guess, until dawn. The campaneras had fleas...

But I rolled up in my blankets and lay down upon the concrete floor very happily. And I slept better than I had before in Mexico. At dawn we were in the saddle... At noon we roped a steer and cut his throat and because there was no time to build a fire, we ripped the meat from the carcase and ate it raw.

What is that but a trifle, a chance incident, a detail? Perhaps it is a trifle, perhaps a detail, but it is a detail full of deep significance, inspired by the revolutionary daring of the artist, and serving as a most instructive example for any writer of the fact that true art is always courageous and is not put off by the first hindrance. John Reed was not put off by the hardships involved in finding material for his work. He wanted to see things as closely as possible although in doing so he risked his life. You cannot invent reality unless you have experienced it. But in order to experience it you have to live side by side with it and not look at it through binoculars. "Jack" Reed had no patience with these literary binoculars.

"I sent a polite request to general Mercado. The note was intercepted bu General Orozco who sent back the following reply: —

'Esteemed and Honored Sir,

If you set foot inside of Ojinaga, I will stand you sideways against a wall, and with my own hand take great pleasure in shooting furrows in your back.'

But after all I waded the river and went up into the town."

"I ran and ran until I could run no more. Awful cramps gripped my legs... I wasn't very frightened. Everything still was so unreal... I kept thinking to myself: — 'Well this certainly is an experience. I'm going to have something to write about.' "

"Then came yells and hoofs dramming in the rear. About a hundred yards behind ran little Gil Tomas... I saw the foremost horses hoofs strike him... The *colorados* jerked their mounts to their haunches over him, shooting down again and again... Before I could stir the *colorados* came plunging down the hill side. 'There he goes!' they yelled and, jumping their horses over the *arroyo* not ten feet from where I lay, galloped off into the desert. I suddenly fell asleep."

For the sake of illustration we may add that the American writer Beirce was shot in Mexico while Reed was there. No less exciting things happened to Reed during the October days when he was several times arrested and once put up against the wall. But he was able to overcome all these hindrances. Taking no notice of the hardships he went on stubbornly collecting his material and filling his art to the brim with the rich content of life. So it was that in *Ten Days* there was nothing that one could reject, nothing that one could abbreviate, and it would be as difficult within the form that his story took to add anything to it. Lenin only said a few words about his book although he was writing for Americans, for Western people — for everything necessary was to be found in this powerful book itself, Reed had made such a thorough selection of his material. This literary experience of Reed's shows that reality is mastered not in study armchairs but on fields of battle — whether on fields of armed combat or those of a collective farm. When S. Tretiakov or Stavsky not only study collective farms and the countryside but actually live and work with the advanced peasantry, it is no less heroic than the example of John Reed, and its literary results are no less prolific.

Let us return to the question of the judgment passed on life through art. From the point of view of Pereverzev the possibility of such a judgment would seem absurd. How can the artist appraise reality if he is

all the time representing only his own class and he has no knowledge of any other class. How can judgment be passed on a reality that has been rejected, if it cannot be perceived beyond the limits of a given class. But if a thing cannot be perceived outside these limits, then it is clear that these limits themselves cannot be perceived, for one can only be aware of even one's own class in its connections and relationships with other classes. But this inactive devastating little theory of our professor has nothing in common with Marxism. The passivity of the art of the declining classes is quite foreign to proletarian art and so also is the non-party "objectivity" which indirectly defends the order that is passing away and all that is already socially dead. True prolearian art is always Party art, and it was not for nothing that Maiakovski called his works "Party booklets." But the content of this judgment is not the same with every artist, its nature and extent is achieved in style. For artists who have not, so to speak, reached the vanguard of style a mere journalist's appraisal of what is disapproved of is most often found and it is generally denounced in bald and formless phrases. So it is for example with the English miner Joe Corry in all of whose books capitalism appears but always as some ill-defined idea. With him cries of protest and slogans take the place of imagery. Does not this prove that Pereverzev is right? Not in the least. The art of any class cannot be understood in its particularity and its individuality, but only in its universality. If we take the style of proletarian literature as a whole we see that the writers of the vanguard, the artists belonging to the most mature groups, have already passed on to the figurative representation of the hostile classes, thus overcoming the limitations of the initial stages in the development of a proletarian style; (for example the novel entitled "Anna the Proletarian" by the Czeck writer I. Obracht where a number of well developed pictures of the bourgeoisie are given).

John Reed was a master of the art of thinking pictorially, he did not ever replace it with the methods of crude journalism. Reed's method is extraordinarily fertile from this point of view. Separate facts, events and people stand side by side in his works. They pile up one on top of the other until the point is reached where only a few more additions would break through the bounds separating Reedism from the most planless empiricism. Sometimes this point is actually reached, but more often at the right moment and in the right place Reed links up the individual with the universal and cuts short the stream of particularities. In *The War in Eastern Europe* for instance Reed gives us a tremendous amount of empirical factual material, and at times himself becomes entangled in it, but then he later straightens it out and finds a philosophic axis around which to organize this load of facts so as finally to pronounce his judgment on them. "With such a stock, with such a history, with the imperialistic impulse growing daily, hourly, in the hearts of her peasant soldiers, into what tremendous conflicts will Serbia's ambition lead her!" In his usual effective way Reed makes his conclusion concrete by adding a picture of a particular instance:

> "There was a soldier standing on guard at the platform, a tall wiry, bearded man dressed in the fragments of a uniform and shoes with sandals of cow hide and high socks embroidered with flowers. He was leaning on an Austrian rifle, staring out over the heads of the sweating workmen to those dim mountains lost in the dark beyond. And as he looked he sang, swaying slightly to the rythm, that most ancient Serbian ballad of all, which begins: 'How is it with thee, O Serbia, my dear mother...' "

The point where the artist passes his judgment presupposes, as a *sine qua non* a resort to what Tolstoi called "generalization". Reed knew how to select a single circumstance, rich in content, which even in its particularity is at the same time a generalization. Thus in "*Insurgent Mexico*" he discloses the ideology of the peasants in revolt by means of one single instance summing up as it were all that has gone before and throwing light on all that follows.

> " 'We are fighting', said Isidro Amayo 'for libertad.' "
> 'What do you mean by libertad?'
> 'Libertad is when I can do what I want.'
> 'But suppose it hurts somebody else.'
> He shot back at me Benito Juarer's famos sentence — 'Peace is the respect for the rights of others!'
> I wasn't prepared for that. It startled me, this barefooted meztiso's conception of Liberty.' "

An even more effective and trenchant use of the pictorial method is made by Reed in his book of stories *The Daughter of the Revolution*. In "The Englishman" he portrays the arrogant aristocratic Briton who looks with contempt on everyone and everything. Reed gives a few of his remarks, sketches in the background and through the behaviour of his hero discloses his inane vanity, though his own attitude towards him is hardly expressed in his few vigorous phrases (for instance: "There are very few things an Englishman can talk to a stranger about without losing his dignity — probably only the weather.") But Reed would remain a shallow empiricist if he merely confined himself to this objective description. He goes further however. He illustrates this English diehard with an angry flash of contrast, placing him beside another high-born Briton, this time a drunkard and a rogue who has nevertheless preserved the main traits of the first hero. Thus making use of contrasting social images and throwing over the usual conventions, Reed shows most effectively by figurative means his attitude to the bad elements in the environment which he is depicting.

Reed does not like using indifferent epithets, he fills his style with social meaning, and organically combines this social content with the very structure of his language. His sentences are sharpened like weapons. But the sharpness is not externally in evidence, it is not angular, but neither is it polished until it no longer hurts.

> They came tramping along with the heavy, rolling pace of booted peasants, heads up, arms swinging — bearded giants of men... Row after row of strong black, ircurious faces set westward toward unknown battles for reasons incomprehensible to them.
> "Leaving Bucharest on a dirty little train you crawl south over the hot plain, passing wretched little villages made of mud and straw like the habitations of an inferior tribe in Central Africa."

This method of passing class judgment attains to maturity in *Ten Days*, Reeds ideas are here combined with great colorfulness of imagery, and their structure is well defined and powerful. Thus in the chapter "Background" he sketches out the way things stood, tells us of the people he met and his impressions, reproduces conversations he has heard, and then passes on to more general matters. He describes the activities of speculators and in passing mentions the correctness of the line taken by the Bolsheviks, and then with a swift stroke of the pen he writes: — "Having at one bound leaped from the Middle Ages into the twentieth century, Russia showed the startled world two systems of Revolution —

the political and the social — in mortal combat;" and then: — "A grand swell of revolt heeved and cracked the crust which had been slowly hardening on the surface of the revolutionary fires, dormant all those months. Only a spontaneous mass-movement could bring about the All-Russian Congress of Soviets;" and again: — "Such a deluge of high and hot thoughts that surely Russia would never again be dumb."

He very often ends up his observations by emphasising some thought which even he himself has not expected. "And I suddenly realized that the devout Russian people needed priests to pray them to heaven. On earth they were building a kingdom more bright than any heaven had to offer and for which it was a glory to die." Reed never allows himself to fall under the influence of caprice. Facts do not carry him away but rather he himself organizes them and selects them to suit the objective flow of events. Thus friends and enemies, particular and general, inherent and contingent — all find their expression in his work, in no way hindering one another nor crowding out the essential, but rather adding emphasis to what is real or significant. *Ten Days* is not a book of memoirs (no great revolutionary ever wrote memoirs; neither Marx nor Engels nor Lenin but only Trotsky wrote memoirs.) No, *Ten Days* is not a book of memoirs, it is a book that portrays reality objectively. The writer shows his individuality only in virtue of the fact that he sinks it in his class.

Reed frequently steps aside and pronounces judgment on the passing events, not through his own mouth but in the words of the Party and the working class. Documents are for him not something external, they are intimately bound up with the whole structure of his story telling, their limits are merely the limits of a different kind of type in the printing, and fundamentally they are inseparable from the whole remaining material of the book which itself, taken as a whole, is really a document. Reed is not an onlooker, and that is just why he sees so much. He is not a mere collector of copy, he actually takes part in the events and takes sides. The side he takes is that of the Bolsheviks. Hence the oratorical character of the book in parts, the frequent use of purely oratorical phrases and exhortations and slogans with which Reed cuts short the utterances of his friends and enemies. At the same time he cuts himself short when he wants to make a commentary on the events which have already been commented on by the Party. Thus after describing a certain speech he adds: —

"No one was satisfied. The reactionaries wanted a "strong" imperialist policy but the democratic parties wanted an assurance that the government would press for peace. I reproduce an editorial in *Rabotchii* Soldat (Worker and Soldier) organ of the Bolshevik Petrograd Soviet."

Reed does not act according to Pereverzev's prescription — he does not turn merely to his own class, but he gives this class in its relations and antagonisms to the social groups which oppose it. He sees and portrays the dialectics of social development. He shows how in society various class tendencies are pitted against one another and how various social groups fight around the levers of historic development and how a new Russia is forming which will neither be Russia nor a Russian Republic.

Reed here always remains faithful to his usual method of representing people outside the contingent circumstances and what is narrowly subjective in them. The method of subjective psychologism is quite

foreign to Reed, and the emptiness of purely external objectivism is equally foreign to him. A proletarian writer cannot be a so-ipsist and a subjective idealist to whom "bodies are mere complexes of sensations." (Mach) A proletarian artist cannot be a Freudian either, tracing the social to the sexual and subconscious. To hem in reality within the boundaries of the ego and to put everything on a psychological basis is to show a lack of the creative power necessary to grasp the social essence of the subjective. Reedism gives proletarian literature an entirely different method. Reed never probed into the "unfathomed" (though in actual fact extraordinarily shallow) depths of "psychologism." He selected before everything else the active element in a human being, and he did not treat the psychological as something in the subject isolated from reality. Reed teaches us to take the subject in its active manifestations. He takes the subject in its relation to reality, in its nature as manifested and not as implied. Hegel says that "for empiricism in general the external is the true." But the "external" for Reed is not the external (this kind of empiricism is characteristic of the so-called objective psychological school, particularly of Pavlov and his followers) — for Reed the external is also the internal, the subjective traced back to the objective which is understood as the activity of the subject in its social significance. For a writer whose method is the subjective-psychological, what is particularly characteristic is the empirical relation to reality, although he is chiefly concerned with "internal experiences." This "internal" element in so far as it is only taken in its external aspect thus leads him in the end to empiricism, however much he may have intended to be subjective.

Reed sees the world differently. His characters are not psychological complexes of self-contained experiences. They represent a definite system of relationships to reality, objectivized in action. The creative skill of the artist is measured by the kind of actions of the subject which he portrays. Sometimes the function of art is to disclose the subject's insignificance. Chernishevski has derided such "activists" as these:—

"Spin out, repeat, assert the same thing twenty times, each time with new (and impressive) variations, new washes of colour, new modulations of thought, new shades of feeling. With us for instance, if the hero puts on his slippers, the procedure will take at least a page and a half, but he puts on his slippers about twenty times, and our art requires of us to write one and a half pages about it each time. Now that is real art — and the kind I have a talent for. But you try and carry out such a roulade. You won't have the voice to do it, but I will carry it out. Excellent, only your art reminds one of the process carried out at dinner by toothless old men. Anyone who has good teeth immediately bites his mouthful, but the poor thing who has no teeth chews and chews, munches and munches in a way that makes you wonder at the patience some men have. But wouldn't it be better not to take a mouthful that you can't bite straight away?

"Now is this mashing up with water art? What art is there in this? Art consists not only in having every word in its place, but in having no words that are not absolutely necessary and unavoidable, and in having as few words as possible. There is no art without conciseness."

In another of his essays ("Have not things begun to change") Chernyshevski gives the correct formulation of the method of representation. "Be able" he writes, "to subsume the personal aspects of one and the same feeling under the universal to which in essence they belong."

The method of psychological representation can be found in John Reed's early story "Seeing is Believing." In the centre of the story is a girl. Her subconscious is not touched upon. If she was put for a moment on the highroad of subjective psychologism she would immediately evaporate. But with Reed she does not evaporate, she grows into a figure having great psychological significance. The character of the girl is unfolded in her relation to New York and in the story of her adventures — her arrival from an out of the way provincial town in Ohio and her life in New York without friends or relations. Alongside of her a bourgeois is depicted who under the influence of this naive but determined girl does a number of things which are quite incomprehensible from his point of view, helps her, although he does not trust her, repeatedly comes to her aid although she seems to be deceiving him, returning again to New York after he has given her money for her ticket. Thus without any depth of psychology we have portrayed two people coming from different social groups, brought together by chance, coming near to one another for a moment, disclosing their psychology in their mutual relations and then going their respective ways. In Reed's "Broadway" the face of New York by night flashes out for a moment with its electric illumination, the glitter of jewels the bright light of its advertisements, its noisy patchwork of cafés and theaters, and into this dazzling sluice-gate the figure of a lonely old man is thrown, selling for a couple of cents *Happines for Life* — a matrimonial newspaper an old man whom capitalism has robbed of wife and child and his very life-blood. Reed sketches in the figure of this unhappy seller of happiness, using his characteristic method of a synthesis of the subjective and objective. In all his sketches Reed works equally confidently with this method, creating the subject as the totality of social relationships. We find represented in his works an endless number of people of different classes and orders, and their characters are all unfolded in just this way. Let us give one example. In *War in Eastern Europe* he depicts an Armenian merchant. In all he devotes only sixteen lines to him, of which nearly half consist of a conversation with him. This is what Reed selected out of this conversation: —

"Yes I am a Turkish subject and my family for generations. They are fine people the Turks, hospitable, kindly, and honest. I have nothing with which to reproach them, but, of course, I am for the Allies. When England holds the Dardanelles — ah then there will be good business! Then there will be much money to be made!"

Within the limits at his disposal it would have been impossible to give a clearer class portrait of the bourgeois than Reed has here done. But that is only a single example, and there are hundreds of such passages in Reed. This does not mean that this is the only way to portray the subjective, but we insist that one must make thes method one's starting point, must put it at the basis of the proletarian literary style.

It might seem that there was nothing easier than to put down a number of conversations and gather together a heap of facts in order through them to give an idea of a certain event. In fact Reed's method was so simple that it came down to this: — he left his house, met some soldiers, asked one of them a question, wrote down the answer, and this answer was so fraught with significance that the single line grew into a volume.

"What side do you belong to?" I asked "the Government?"
"No more government" one answered with a grin, "*Slava Bogu*" (glory to God).

That was all I could get out of him...

Not much is it? but a lot all the same, a very great lot. Reed was able with extraordinary facility to feel what was fundamental in this dialogue, and to express that in the very shortest way possible, giving to his words, through their very conciseness, a weight of meaning.

And so it is throughout all his work. In this lies the faciltiy of Reedism. It is one of the surest signs of John Reed's unusual capacity for seeing the world with a view to altering it. He does not make use of a single detail if it is merely accidental. He never buries what is essential under a mass of unnecessary words, and he will not write a phrase which might upset the balance of his work or fall discordantly. This "facility" is the result of great labor and is a sign of the difficulty of the Reedian method. In Reed's art there is nothing forced, there is no overloading or heaviness of style. There is nothing voluminous about his work. Its meaning is transparent, its form is regular to the last degree of precision, its inner significance and its presentation are united to form one single whole. Objectivity has found in his person a magnificent subjective form.

Perhaps nowhere is the originality of this method of Reed's so strikingly evident as in his description of one of the most important of those who lived through the events which he describes. This man says of himself: —

"The soldiers whispered together for a moment and then led me to the wall and left me there. Suddenly I understood everything. They were going to shoot me."

According to the method of subjective psychologism it would have been necessary here to develop the richness, the delicacy, and the depth of feeling experienced by the psyche, to reproduce all the sensations of a man at whom the rifles have been levelled, and so on. In fact even proletarian writers sometimes devote pages or so to describing the refinements of sexual experience, so why not here where we are faced with something very much more fundamental. But no, Reed does not indulge in such descriptions. He has expanded the whole theme in a few lines and has gone on to an interpretation of facts. We know that this hero had a wife, Louisa Bryant, that there were all sorts of troubles and difficulties, but all the same Reed did not allow himself to be deflected by them from his description of the revolutionary movement. It is hardly necessary to add that this unpsychological hero was John Reed himself.

To present the personal flow of events as a social flow of events, to portray social development alongside of personal development, to present facts not as selfsufficing but in their relation to the universal, to express this universal through the individual and particular, keeping clear of empiricism in one's political psychological and factual treatment of the subject matter — that is what John Reed's work teaches us.

The imperishable significance of "Ten Days" is due to the fact that it is the secult of a combination of revolutionary daring with the right literary method used by a man highly developed mentally, with a wide political horizon and an unimpaired proletarian philosophy.

We are for Reedism and against those who make a fetish of facts. We are for Reedism and against the method of subjective psychologism. We are for Reedism and against non-party art.

A. Selivanovsky

THE SOLE BUT STRONG DEFENSE OF MONSIEUR POULAILLE

1

The Second International Conference of Proletarian and Revolutionary Writers has shown that France is one of those countries in which there has up to now been completely lacking a strong proletarian literary movement. As a matter of fact, in the leading organs of the I. U. R. W. France is represented by comrade Barbusse. At the Conference itself comrades Arragon and Cadoul represented the group of surrealists in a consultative capacity. However, it is clear to all that the perfected policy of opportunism, carried on by *Monde*, edited by com. Barbusse, which more and more is losing any resemblance of connection with the theoretical positions of the proletariat, and which, despite the solemn and repeated promises of com. Barbusse, has remained unchanged, can only hinder the development of proletarian literature in France. On the other hand, it is equally clear that the better part of the surrealists can help our cause only by breaking once and for all with the idealist, Freudian tendencies of surrealism, which have grown up in the soil of decadent bourgeois consciousness. (A propos, comrades Arragon and Cadoul have proved just as rich in empty promises as several other French comrades: not only has their promise to re-examine the platform of surrealism not been fulfilled as yet, but no beginning has been made in this direction).

At the first superficial glance we are faced with an inexplicable contradiction: France is a country with rich traditions of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, with great experience in revolutionary art, with growing force of capitalist industry; yet France, in the international proletarian and revolutionary movement, lags behind Germany, Japan, China, Czecho-Slovakia, Austria. But this seeming paradox can be easily explained if we take into account the peculiarities of the political and economic development of pre-war and post-war France.

France before the war was a typical petty bourgeois country, with a feebly developed large-scale industry and, at the same time, with a powerful network of banks which permitted her to be the usurer of the world. The Peace of Versailles enabled France to join the ranks of the foremost capitalist countries. As a victorious country, France derived the maximum of profit from the victory of the Entente. The wounds inflicted on her during the war were quickly healed: the heavy burden of reparations, pressing in its clutches Germany and Austria, squeezes out of the toilers of those countries, blood, mixed with sweat and gives France the prize of money, iron, ore, coal, everything needed to create her own heavy industry at home. The chief monopolizer of the profits granted to the victorious powers by the Versailles peace, capitalist France, has

been transformed into the general staff for the preparation of intervention against the USSR into the mainstay of world reaction, and at the same time has felt comparatively less severely the blows of the international economic crisis. All this must be kept in mind in analysing the literary development of contemporary France, for the development of literature, as a specific sphere of ideology, is when all is said and done, determined by the economic and political development and of the class struggle within the given country.

The petty bourgeois character of the literature of pre-war France is comprehensible. But the close of the war did not provoke a plainly expressed class differentiation in the sphere of art. Barbusse and several other writers, in whose creative work petty bourgeois tendencies are strong, were unable to create the literature of the class that rises against the bloc of all the exploiting classes. The petty bourgeois spirit of protest among the surrealists, as we have already said, was itself an objective expression of the decline of bourgeois consciousness, and this circumstance did not allow it to feel its way to being transformed into literary "fellow-travellers" and allies of the proletarian revolution, as has been done by the better part of the Russian futurists and by several literary groups in Germany. Beyond a doubt we see at the present time a general decline in the theoretical and artistic level of French literature, which feeds upon the post-war feelings of tranquillity, satiety and complacency of the French bourgeois. But this quiet back-water is already beginning to ripple, in augury of the coming upheaval.

We must keep in mind that the late flowering of industrial and financial capitalism in France began in the epoch of the world proletarian revolution. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, the revolutionary movement of the working class is growing. The strike movement is growing. The pages of *Humanité* give the summons to the struggle for communism. The French Communist Party itself is being Bolshevized. Sparks of revolt are breaking out in the ranks of the army of French imperialism. Finally, in the sphere of art, ever wider strata of the proletariat are coming forward in the role of organized consumer, demanding their own art. A temporary advance during the epoch of the inevitable decline in economic and political life and of the degeneration in the world of ideas of the class which began its literary history with Voltaire and Beaumarchais, only to bring it to a close with Pierre Benoit and Paul Morand, such is the post-war capitalist stabilization of France.

And this is giving birth to new lines of demarcation in French literature. Within it the wing of aggressive imperialism is gathering strength. Within it is being born the fascist and social-fascist literature. There is still no proletarian literature in France, but one of the most striking symptoms of that ill-ease of which the French bourgeois is conscious in literature or which he obscurely senses, is the appearance of a number of literary schools, social-fascist or fascist in essence, which are obliged to wear the mask of "proletarian" or "working-class" or simply "populist" literary groups. And even if this is simply froth on the surface of the water, still this froth is worth being examined attentively.

2

In the present artiele we propose to examine two articles on proletarian literature written by Susanne Engelson and Monsieur Poulaille. Of late this problem has become fashionable in France. Numerous

questionnaires have been appearing, in which representatives of different varieties of French bourgeois and philistines have been competing in stupidity and ignorance for example, the note "The Bourgeois on Proletarian Literature," in No. 1, *Literature of the World Revolution.* (The populists and the proletarian writers of the Valois — Poulaille group have been quarreling fiercely over secondary questions, — secondary, insofar as these groups are merely fractions from among the literary agents of the bourgeoisie.)

But why has the problem of proletarian literature come into the centre of attention? Because in order to preserve bourgeois influence over the mass working-class reader it has become indispensable to change the weapon of literary influence chiefly used up to now by the bourgeoisie and by the petty bourgeois literature of France. It stands to reason that neither the refined psychological experiences of the intelligentsia, nor the mysteries of the conjugal alcove of the satiated and contented bourgeois could touch even the most backward strata of working-class readers. But they had to be kept within the sphere of influence of bourgeois ideology. The literature of high society, of the salon, of mere ornamentation, of decadent psychologism, had to be replaced by another literature. More precise methods were required. Thus was born in France, fascist literature, evoked to represent "small" people, suffering, humiliated, or, on the contrary, people devoting their labour to capitalism though themselves from the "toilers," from the "people," from the working class, and by this means to distract the attention of the working-class reader from the problems of the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat, including the sphere of art. In this sphere fascism and social-fascism are fulfiling the same function as in politics.

It is worth mentioning how low is the theoretical standard of these quarrels. In old Russia there were cities and small towns where fashionable clothes reached the local dandies several years late. Monsieur Poulaille, his supporters and "opponents" from the camp of the "Populists" have left far behind the provincial dandies of old Russia; their fruitlessness in the realm of ideas they cover up with phrases borrowed from the theoretical storehouse counting many decades of antiquity and presented by them as the last cry of fashion. What squalid provincialism! What a mudpuddle of petty ideas!

It is however bad that several comrades who have come out against the "theories" of Monsieur Poulaille and have put forward correct propositions, in justifying them have themselves admitted crude mistakes and have not raised the question to a firm and high plane. In the quarrel between S. Engelson and M. Poulaille we have no need to take one or the other of the sides to the dispute. Both sides are wrong, since both were unable to understand the main point. But the measure of their mistakes and the degree of danger of these mistakes differ. Monsieur Poulaille expresses a point of view perfectly and logically hostile to the proletariat. Susanne Engelson commits serious mistakes, but she is attempting to defend the positions of the proletariat. Susanne Engelson can be helped by Marxism. But no Marxism can help Monsieur Poulaille.

What do S. Engelson's errors consist of? First of all, in a definition of the conception "proletariat" from a typically intelligentsian point of view, and in the contrast between the proletariat and the working class. "The proletariat," writes S. Engelson, "taken in the class sense, the operative sense, is the collective body recognizing for itself the work

of fulfilling a definite historical role and in fact able to be composed of elements of the most varied origin. It is bound together by unity of attitude toward the world and by purpose. The worker, however, is a man of a definite social stratum," etc. In another place, S. Engelson writes "In creating it (proletarian literature. — *A. S.*) even a man of bourgeois origin may take part provided he has grasped and become utterly imbued with the historical significance of the proletariat (by proletariat I understand here that part of the people which is conscious of its historical role)."

Monsieur Poulaille has seized upon several weak sides to Susanne Engelson's chain of argument. Answering the latter, he writes: "Just as if it were attempting to replace religion, Marxism declares at this point that any banker can become just as good a proletarian as any comrade ditch-digger; he merely has to read Marx and make up a catechism from him." The visage of the dull-witted philistine shines out from this quotation. It seems to Poulaille that he has smashed S. Engelson one straight to the head. As a matter of fact, he has merely exposed his own ignorance. We do not assume that the banker would read Marx, unless he wished to end his life with suicide. To become a Marxist means, not only to recognize the inevitability of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the proletarian revolution but to fight actively to realize this prospect in history. Otherwise, we have under our eyes the social-fascist, dear to the heart of Poulaille, of the type of Jordanie Dumas of Hilferding, in other words, no Marxist at all. The banker, who under contemporary conditions becomes a Marxist (in principle such individual cases are thinkable), ceases to be a banker, for he has to take his stand in the ranks of fighters for the cause of the working class. Thus, Monsieur Poulaille's acquaintance with Marxism does not extend beyond his acquaintance with parliamentary idiocy and the political corruption of the social-fascists, who (not all, not all!) now and again call themselves Marxists, true, more and more rarely of late.

Monsieur Poulaille resembles that widow of a subordinate officer in Gogol's *Revizor* who flogged her own back. But, beyond a doubt, if not by reason then by instinct (the class instincts in him are evidently better developed than this capacity for thinking), he has groped upon a serious slip (we may hope that it is merely a slip) made by S. Engelson in overlooking the principle of the unity of understanding and action, which underlies Marxism. To determine the creative paths of proletarian literature this principle is of paramount significance; proletarian literature not only comprehends objectively reality, but is a powerful factor in its revolutionary remaking, by exposing in the unity of opposites, the guiding opposite, by emphasizing the tendencies which in the reality of to-day are preparing to-morrow, by definitely influencing the ideas and feelings of the masses, by preaching and in the logic of the development of artistic images imparting definite ideas. Any bourgeois may imbibe to its fullness the historical significance of the proletariat merely in order with new force, with fierce energy, begin the struggle against the strengthening revolution of the proletariat. For example, the Russian writers — White emigrants — inhabiting France, have become imbued very well, as tested on their own hides, with the historic significance of the October Revolution of 1917. Therefore S. Engelson commits a mistake by not emphasizing the really important factor in the ideology of the proletariat (this error, by the way, is to a considerable degree native to Plekhanov).

But it may be that the formula given by S. Engelson in another spot, her words about proletarian art representing reality from a definite angle, includes the unity of objective understanding and revolutionary practice. However, in this S. Engelson falls into the opposite error. The fundamental defect of the so called "people's" literature she considers the following: "It can furnish pictures of contemporary life, illuminating them from a point of view deduced from that contemporary life, itself, but not at all from the proletarian point of view." In effect, according to S. Engelson, the outlook of the proletariat is not "deduced" from the contemporary, objectively existing reality, obviously blind and unthinking, but is introduced from without, a priori, in the form of some abstract logical categories or other. By the way, this is the distinction between Marxism and the Utopian socialism of Saint-Simon or Fourier, that the theory of Marxism is created not by means of the independent movement of abstract ideas, but by means of comprehension (i. e. deduction) of the laws of objectively existing reality. The proletarian writer does not invent, does not ornament, polish, reality. He takes it as is, otherwise he proves to be a protesting petty bourgeois, a writer with anarchistic tendencies. In the heap of scattered facts, in the whirling chaos of the empyrean he traces out the fundamental laws of movement, separating the fundamental from the accidental, tossing aside the rind covering the surface of phenomena, and these laws are nothing other than the subjective reflection in his consciousness of the objective laws of material reality. He by no means rejects "deduction," on the contrary, he "deduces" his creative activity, in reflecting reality, from a definite angle, from reality itself, and this S. Engelson has not understood.

That this is not an accidental slip, but a real error is witnessed to by her opposing, as in the above quotation, the proletariat as a collective body with cohesive ideas to the working class as a social stratum. To the question of the mutual relations of the class to its vanguard, of the various stages traversed by the proletariat on the path of becoming conscious of its goals, as treated by the agents of bourgeoisie within the working class, we shall return in treating the flat aphorisms and stale pleasantries of Monsieur Poulaille.

Let us remark only that the proletariat is the working class, that by class is meant the collectivity of people united by a common position in social production and distribution, and that certain strata of the intelligentsia may be the spokesmen of the proletariat. Without becoming proletarians, they may be its theorists, if they fight by its side, if they scorn Messieurs Poulaille and Thérive, if they are Marxists. In defending the rights of Marxism, S. Engelson is absolutely right. But what is bad is that in doing so she displays confusion and errors such as cannot help the struggle for a proletarian literature in France.

Let us proceed now to the school-boy exercises of Monsieur Poulaille.

3

S. Engelson has declared that a writer may call himself a genuinely proletarian writer only if he has mastered the Marxist outlook upon the world.

Henri Poulaille hastily musters all the reserves of knowledge at his disposal to refute that assertion. Proletarian literature, he says, may be

Marxist, but it may also be anti-Marxist. To make over it the sign of the cross with the "shade of Marx" means to resemble the brethren and sistern of the Christian faith (à propos, why only Christian, and not Hebrew and not Buddhist, it means to deny that the workers and peasants "can by themselves struggle for certain aims". Direct experience, which permits the worker to express himself, "to know the recreated subject from within, that is what is needed above all. Genuinely human documents, a literature born from the people itself, but not a literature that is dogmatic, — that is what Monsieur Poulaille is fighting for. On the way he throws overboard the very term "proletariat," as not sufficiently "elastic." That, in essence, is the entire line of argument of Mousieur Poulaille, which, as we see, is not distinguished by its wealth of ideas, but yet is sufficiently characteristic.

The working class does not all at once come to be aware of its historic tasks. In arising and existing in the depths of bourgeois society, it confides, in the beginning, in that period when the bourgeoisie is only coming into power, the full representation of its interests to the "third estate." Later, the working class begins to become aware of the distinction between its own interests and those of the bourgeoisie, and finally comes to comprehend its own special paths of development, to recognize proletarian dictatorship and to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie. In other words, it traverses a complicated and contradictory path of being transformed from a class in itself into a class for itself. This path is not simple and straight. It is contradictory, just as every process in society is contradictory. Although it already may understand its peculiarity and the special character of its path of development, although in its thinking it may already be demarcated from the bourgeoisie, the working class in its various-strata, may often be far from understanding its true tasks. The elementary force of class rises into class consciousness, but rises not along a straight line, but along a spiral. Working-class origin in itself by no means guarantees a person against all sorts of bourgeois influences. A specific characteristic of the period of imperialism consists in the bourgeoisie's creating, by using every means, its special agency for dislocating the working class from within. The leader of the Labor Government in England, MacDonald, and Lenin by no means represent two different wings within the working class, inasmuch as MacDonald is an agent of the bourgeoisie, holding back the proletariat within the sphere of bourgeois influence. Let us illustrate what we have just said by a few popular examples, approachable for Monsieur Poulaille's understanding.

The French communists are struggling for dictatorship of the proletariat and against the Peace of Versailles. The French socialists are defending the foundations of the bourgeois order and competing among themselves in the League of Nations. Under the leadership of the Communist Party the proletariat of the USSR is defending its socialist fatherland. The Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian and other mensheviks and social-revolutionaries were and are at the present time the hired lackeys of the interventionists. Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg headed the proletarian revolution in Germany. Noske and Ebert drownded it in blood. Are further examples necessary? Or perhaps, even from now on Monsieur Poulaille, like a parrot, will go on asserting that the Spartacus workers and men like Ebert and Noske, each in his own way, "directly" and "each by himself" expressed the experience of the working class. But let us return to literature.

Monsieur Poulaille's lordly character is exposed with full clarity in his talk about the "documents" created by the working-class writer on the basis of his immediate experience in labor which are valuable in themselves, independently of what ideas they express, independently of what class they serve, independently of what stage and what aspect of class consiousness they bring to light. This merely means that for Monsieur Poulaille there is an equal value in the productions of those sub-strata of the working class still prisoners to bourgeois ideology and in those of Communist, i. e. Marxist writers; for him fascist and communist productions are of equal value. But Monsieur Poulaille is cleverer than appears at first glance. Or rather, that class is cleverer, whose social order is fulfilled by Monsieur Poulaille, the ally of Monsieur Thérive of the "Guêtre." As a matter of fact he accepts all productions except genuinely proletarian ones, that is, those nourished by communist ideology. And this is why.

Monsieur Poulaille might be a partisan of pure art; which should not have any connection with the despised practice of society. But in that case he would have no ground for declaiming on the social content of art. Insofar as we catch him engaged in that we are entitled to expose him in his hypocrisy. No, Monsieur Poulaille is far from indifferent to the question of what class is served by the working class literature which he is propagandizing.

If Monsieur Poulaille recognizes the social meaning in literary phenomena, he cannot dodge the recognition of the social function and social tendency of art. We are opposed to vulgar utilitarianism, which reduces art to a sum of practical recipes for all occasions in life. But we favour the utilitarianism of art in the sense that art helps to comprehend reality. But, as is well known, man comprehends in order to act. In this sense every art is utilitarian and the stronger its utilitarianism is, the higher is its theoretical and artistic level, that is, the more deeply and many sidedly it discloses in artistic images, reality, in all its variety and contradictory movement. In this sense, the art created in particular by the class of rentiers is utilitarian and hieronistic, although the reflection of reality in it is false, although the real force in it is reduced to the minimum. In this respect, inaction proves to be a form of the social practice of the given sub-stratum.

But it is just from such literature that the working class reader in France is turning away. It is for that very reason that Monsieur Poulaille is hastening to the aid of the bourgeoisie. How can we speak of an equality of value in art if separate detachments of it stand on different sides of the class barricades? The idea of class peace is a bourgeois idea, intended to weaken the proletarian movement. When it is driven by the daily practice of the class struggle from other spheres, it migrates into the sphere of literature by the efforts of Monsieur Poulaille and his cronies. In the sphere of "working class" literature the bourgeoisie needs above all the peaceful cooperation of different groups of workingclass writers. It is not opposed to working class literature if such is peaceful, domestic, tamed. It recognizes and encourages (in the international sphere) such literature, which has two faces: the domestic dog serving its master on its hind legs, and a wild beast ready to tear to pieces anyone who might dare to attack the principles of the capitalist order. These Messieurs Poullailes are an international phenomenon. Their appearance at the given moment in France is especially profitable for the bourgeoisie, for they have not as yet a serious opponent in the form of organized

detachments of the proletarian literary movement. When such a movement breaks out, it is not difficult to predict on what side Monsieur Poulaille will be found.

But this gentleman has several arguments in reserve. In fact, this non-Marxist literature, about which he is so much concerned will be created by the workers themselves. Is it not to be given preference as against a literature created by a poor sort of intellectuals from "refined society" who call themselves Marxists? We do not deny the existence of such "bad" intellectuals (although why generalize in this point? There is undoubted base for turning the force of this generalization against those intellectuals who are fighting Marxism because, objectively or subjectively, they constitute the theoretical clientele of the order which has the colourful figure of Doumergue at its head). We are speaking of the "good" intellectuals (not for Monsieur Poulaille). But a "good" intellectual and writer, by himself creating productions which organize the masses for the struggle under the banner of the teachings of Marx and Lenin, bends all his efforts toward setting free the minds of working class writers from the burden of the old world, from clerical prejudices, from the passiveness instilled by Poulaille's bosses. He will do this by exposing the Poulailles who are only collecting samples of "experimental documentation." The inevitable aggravation of the class struggle in France will lead also to the appearance of genuinely proletarian literature. Within the ranks of that group of writers which is represented by Monsieur Poulaille and *Nouvel Age* and which includes a certain number of comrades who are by no means lost for the international proletarian revolutionary movement, a sharp differentiation is beginning to appear. But Monsieur Poulaille has one more "murderous" argument ready for us.

Art by its nature cannot be dogmatic. Genuine art does not suffer schematicness, it dies if it is thrust upon the Procrustes' couch, prepared for it beforehand from false and abstract ideas. But Marxism is dogmatic, we are informed by M. Poulaille, in its type it is intolerant of dissenters, like the fanatics of the Christian religion. From this proceeds the deduction: genuine art is incompatible with Marxism. The colourless philistine who follows Monsieur Thérive, from *Temps*, protests against the ideological and artistic barracks which, in his opinion, are being prepared for art by the dogmaticians of Marxism! A sight for the gods!..

But what is Marxist art? It is art based on the outlook of dialectical materialism. Marxism is not a dogma, it is leadership into action, said Lenin. In its spirit Marxism is incompatible with dogmatism. But an artist who in his creative activity appears as a dialectical materialist, not only does not narrow the boundaries of his artistic possibilities, but, on the contrary, extends them to a degree unknown to the art of preceeding epochs and other classes. And while M. Poulaille summons the working class reader to limit himself to the narrow little horizon of the workshop which his eye sees, Marxism calls upon the working class writer to transform himself into the author not of a single shop, but of the class which is setting mankind free, summons him to widen his horizon extraordinarily. But such a widening is bound to lead to ever newer and newer creative quests. Only socialism, which must be "the new stage in the artistic development of mankind" (Lenin) will lead art out of that blind-alley into which it has been led by bourgeois culture and in which gentlemen like Poulaille are trying to keep it.

We will pass over the stale pleasantries and reasonings of Monsieur Poulaille (for example, the hint that the "Russian Marxists" are able,

orsooth, yet their Marxism is connected with the national peculiarities of the Russian revolution). We shall not degrade the pages of this magazine by dealing with them. What has been said is enough.

We have been talking of Poulaille, but we have had in mind all the international Poulailles. We have lingered over the French dispute, but the roots of the latter are not exclusively bound up with the territory of the republic of Doumergue. In the epoch of the international proletarian revolution there is special danger in the bourgeoisie's attempts to create forces obedient to itself amid working-class writers.

The only, but a big service of M. Poulaille consists in his having permitted you without superfluous labour to recognize the emptiness of his line of argument, which more able people succeed in unfolding with a greater appearance of external convincingness.

Louis Lozowick

ART IN THE SERVICE OF THE PROLETARIAT

On numerous occasions whenever American artists are called upon to express their views on their work or on art in general they invariably adopt an attitude of aggressive individualism. They declare that art is autonomous and that the artist is independent from masses and classes. This proves — if proof is necessary — how effective the ideology of the ruling class dominates the average artist. A moment's thought should expose the hollowness of such claims. Economically the artist is, of course, dependent for his livlihood on dealers, galleries, patrons. Besides, all of his methods, themes etc. are historically conditioned. The fact however is that the very vehicle the painter uses — easel painting —, the themes he selects — portrait, landscape, still-life — ,the individualistic philosophy he professes, all are a result of post-renaissance capitalist development.

The battles that artists have fought have been battles of a purely formal nature. The academy whose practice is a mixture of classicism, romanticism and impressionism, is a powerful widely ramified organization with branches in all large and many small cities, with connections in government circles and a sure control of the art market. The modernists have been fighting this intrenched institution for twenty-five years and are now coming very close to victory. The downhill movement of post-war imperialism and the resultant general disillusion has turned the attention of art patrons away from disagreeable reality into the realm of formal and abstract experimentation. One collector after another has joined the camp of the modernists. Special museums have been opened for their works. Babson, the great financial authority on stocks and bonds and the money market has found it necessary to send out a special weekly letter (a Babson Chart) recommending modern art as a good investment. Modern art has arrived. Needless to say the modernists have no contact whatever with the working class. They are satisfied to produce for fewer patrons than the proverbial Four Hundred.

It is in such an unfavorable atmosphere that the few American revolutionary artists have to carry on their work. These artists are grouped mainly around the John Reed Club and the New Masses. Their activity flows along several lines. They organize meetings and discussions to expose the class character of bourgeois art, to fight the influence of that art on the masses and to agitate for the consolidation of proletarian forces. They offer their services to the working class in his political and economic battles by preparing posters for demonstrations, staging pageants decorating workers plays, illustrating shop papers, etc.

Within the field of art proper, the work of the revolutionary artist, while always maintaining a working class orientation, shows certain varieties of method and theme. In the revolutionary political cartoon

the artist's task is to make an annihilating attack on the capitalist regime in all its aspects, to show how inimical its existence is to the emancipation of the working class.

Here a variety of revolutionary stages must be noted. The American worker inevitably lives and works with cities and machines. But instead of portraying the apocalyptic city of the German expressionists or the mad and inhuman city of the Italian futurists, the American revolutionary artist pictures it more as a prognostication than a fact. He departs from realistic appearance and paints the city as a product of that rationalization and economy which must prove allies of the working class in the building of socialism. The revolutionary artists are gradually working towards the acquisition of a synthetic style. They insist on the highest technical quality, not however at the expense of the message but only as something that can best help the effective delivery of that message. They have profited by the experiments in the art of the last twenty-five years. Thus they utilize the clear cut laconic precision of certain younger artists; they take liberties with natural appearance whenever their theme requires it. They strive towards a style which must develop and mature as the revolutionary movement grows.

Daumier, one of the great forerunners of revolutionary art said, *Je suis de mon temps.* The American revolutionary artist would revise this to read: *Je suis de ma classe*, and make it clear beyond a doubt that, *La classe ouvrière* is meant. For the American revolutionary artist is above all the representative of the class of proletarians in their struggle for the overthrows of the capitalist system, and for a new socialist society.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE VOLGA FLOWS TO THE CASPIAN SEA.

Pilniak owes his fame and his success to the revolutionary epoch, to the events of 1917.

The Naked Year which brought Pilniak fame reflects the bewilderment of the bourgeois intellectuals, who were shaken out of their old ruts and tried to explain the new by their own old ways of thinking and old conceptions and who consequently observed events keenly but none the less superficially.

The reader of *The Naked Year* has to contend with discontinuity of style and lack of system in the presentation of material. The situations are brought in an anecdotal fashion; individual characteristics are delineated schematically; there is an eclecticism of style which combines quite shamelessly a manorial lyricism such as Turgenev's with the psychologism of Dostoevsky primitively understood; one finds a cynical naturalism, expressed in the mechanical insertion of official documents, with plays upon words which are a poor imitation of Andrei Biely and a method of writing that is drawn from the stores of folk lore and song. Such is the strange dish offered by Pilniak to the readers of his Naked Year. All these characteristics are cemented by phrases which are cumbered with endless enumerations of objects, comparisons and associations, phrases which flaunt their own sonority but which for all their claim to deep significance are really meaningless, romantic, fervid and often hysterical.

Pilniak's high-sounding phrases concealed the fact that he was incapable of accepting the realities underlying the revolution and interpreting their dialectical significance in artistic form.

Coming forward as a writer of the revolutionary epoch Pilniak in actual fact mobilized what few ideas he had against the class purposiveness of the times. And in spite of all he gained recognition but only because Soviet literature had merely begun and because *The Naked Year* was the first book to portray, even in an anectotal form, the new life and ways of the epoch which had begun. He gained recognition further because the numerous other writers, fellow-travellers of the revolution, so few in numbers, had not "risen" to the level of those generalizations which Pilniak flaunted and because the emptiness of these generalizations was so carefully concealed. He gained it finally because the future proletarian writers of prose had not yet made their appearance in literature.

There were, however other and more important reasons for Pilniak's success, reasons of an ideological nature. On the one hand in 1922 many people saw in *The Naked Year* the first steps of an interesting writer to the side of the proletarian revolution, although Pilniak did not portray either the communist party or the proletariat in its role of builder and organizer. On the other hand *The Naked Year* gave such rich material to the enemies of the revolution, who saw in it only chaos, destruction and anecdote and the festivity of the countryside, that in this camp too its success was assured. Finally the petty bourgeoisie were attracted by the piquance and sensation they found in it, its attempts to be original, its intellectual fashionableness and erotic touches.

A philosophy was ascribed to Pilniak which was not his at all. People talked about his Soviet "populism" about his being a slavophile. But Pilniak was of course never a "populist" at all. He was never the ideological representative of any class group of the working peasantry. On the contrary very early he shows that he has hopes for the rapacious peasant (Donat in *The Naked Year*), for the new kulak who made his pile during the civil war on the sly, for the peasant proprietor, for the *intelligent*, turning farmer. He seizes on the kulak just as he seizes on every sign of bourgeois rather than socialist rebirth of Russia after the destruction of the civil war.

Pilniak a Slavophile? But was not the Slavophile movement itself one of

the most artful cloaks of that section of the Russian nobility of the middle nineteenth century who in the person of Ivan Aksakov idealized the Russia of the times before Peter the Great and made an appeal to the people, but in the persons of princes Cherkasski and Samarin built factories and ordered their estates on thoroughly bourgeois lines.

Slavophilism served as a theoretic mask for that section of the Russian nobility which under the cloak of an out of date romantic idea contrived to conceal their efforts to get everything they could out of capitalism, to remodel their life on bourgeois lines, at the same time preserving their feudal privileges the rod and the rule of the landlord over the peasantry, emancipated in 1861, but still deprived of land.

And in this respect there is of course a similarity between Pilniak and the Slavophiles in their methods of camouflage.

Under Pilniak's declamations about the rule of the muzhik, about country songs and peasant customs, a crystal clear Turgenevskian lyric of the manorial nobility fails to hide itself. Behind this lyric, behind these declamations, behind the torrent of abuse to which the mechanical civilization of Western Europe is treated, a respectful admiration of the economic and technical achievements of America makes its appearance, and above all a faith in that new and energetic, course-grained bourgeois of the countryside, who came forward at the time of the revolution, and was not even afraid of rushing to its standard, but who was quite certain that it would lead from the Russia of the Romanovs to the rule of the rejuvenated Russian bourgeoisie and the newly formed Russian intelligentzia. But in Pilniak's view this intelligentzia was to combine energy and business qualities with the refinement of the nobility and an admiration for the ikons of the old Russia.

Thus he sets his hopes on the communist "business man", on the "leather jackets". It was not without reason that Stalin in his work on Lenenism took them as his example of shortsighted "practical" bolsheviks, devoid of revolutionary aims.

Many years passed since the publications of *The Naked Year*, *Black Bread* and others of his early works, years of bitter class struggle during which the Soviet proletariat went from victory to victory. All hopes of a bourgeois rebirth of communism proved groundless. The dream of the farmer-intellectual, of the new bourgeois victorious, became utopian phantasies. The rapacious kulak proved a broken reed, all-round collectivization is leading to the extinction of his class. Engineer-saboteurs servants of the interventionists, with their dreams of seizing power, were disclosed. The great work of construction went forward. Everywhere, in every branch of work the new began to take the first place.

Pilniak slowed down during the period in 1928 when the war against the kulaks was being intensified. He published abroad the counterrevolutionary book *Mahogany* and was shown up in the Soviet Union.

Afterwards when it was clear that the kulaks would be defeated Pilniak began to turn his unlimited power of spinning phrases to making fine words about socialism. Thus we find his *The Volga Flows to the Caspian Sea* is the apogee of pitiful literary opportunism, self satisfied vulgarity and false sentiment. In the U.S.S.R. this novel too had no success, so he took himself abroad. Pilniak likes people to read his books the way they used in the old days to listen to the utterances of Pithia. Pilniak's phrases are misty and meaningless for all their claim to great profundity of thought — they are oracular phrases. You are not supposed to think out the meaning of each word or proposition, you must seize something that is unseizable, you must be intoxicated, as by some sacred scent from the altar, by the heavy oppressive choice of meaningless words, names and similes.

But pay close attention, refuse to be lulled by his drugged phrases, do away with the idea that everything Russian is exotic — and the whole thing is merely amusing.

Pilniak is surprisingly at home with axioms and "final truths of the last order". Let us quote a few examples of these aphorisms of his philistine wisdom.

"People always pay each other back in the same coin as they have received."

"A woman's armpits smell of sealing wax" (this is a magnificent axiom found only in the German edition, p. 120).

"The murderer is drawn to the scene of the murder".

"Construction is as subject to law as the laws governing the flow of rivers. Here no element of chance can enter."

"Every man, some time or other sitting in his study at night must have been suddenly terrified by the sight of a book realizing how every book is a counterfeit of a genuine human life."

"Death and love are not merely zero quantities but they are also equal to one another."

It would not be difficult to go on adding to these aphorisms. What for

Pilniak Travels — Kukriniksy

instance is the law of recurrence of phenomena worth, about which the professor Poletika shouts under Pilniak's instructions, and according to which he develops the conversation about his former wife etc.

Or take another "law" — "All things are built on blood". This law it is true, is first expressed by Poltorak but afterwards by the author's wish it is confirmed by the death of this saboteur.

It is not merely that the "laws" which have been discovered by Piliniak are nothing else than repetitions of philistine maxims.

It is not merely that Pilniak's thought is stagnant, that the idea of continual intellectual evolution is essentially foreign to him, of which evolution Engels said that even mathematics which, is, for Pilniak, infallible, had "fallen into sin" and that the "universal applicability of the complete demonstrability of everything mathematical had for ever lost its virginity".

Like every philistine, dilettante and vandal, Pilniak grovels before all the exact science and their representatives — the learned professors — and in that degree fails to understand the significance of the dialectical materialist method in its application to all branches of exact knowledge. The materialist dialectic being foreign to Pilniak he is unable to understand that from the point of view of this method "the extent to which our knowledge approaches to absolute objective truth is historically conditioned, but the existence of this truth is certain, as is also the fact that we do approach to it". (Lenin — Materialism and Empirio-criticism.) The eternal truths and laws uttered by Pilniak according as he requires them, and in unlimited quantity, are at one and the same time a form of polemic against class truth and the laws of the class struggle themselves. They constitute the polemic of the bourgeois liberal against the laws of Marxism and against the class explanations of the phenomena of reality.

From this point of view his most instructive eternal truths are those in the

realm of morals, truths which Pilniak seems particularly anxious to proclaim. Pilniak is for ever talking in *The Volga Flows to the Caspian Sea* about that honor and morality which is common to all mankind. For Pilniak construction and sabotage are in essence types of the biblical conceptions of "good" and "evil." Pilniak does not want to know anything about class morals and about bourgeois morals being fundamentally different from those of the proletariat. It does not concern him that from the point of view of millions of the bourgeoisie Ramzin was right when carrying out sabotage work and that he went wrong only when he repented and disarmed. Thus Pilniak portrays Poltorak as a rotter in his personal life, a revolting and hysterical Lovelace. He substitutes ideas of universal human morality for a social class estimate of character, he even puts into the mouth of the communist engineer Sadykov in his conversation with Laslo, a veiled polemic against the fundamental class criteria. Pilniak, who tries to get from the revolution everything that it can give him, while retaining every vestige of his bourgeois-liberal ideological heritage, naturally appeals to people with the moral criteria of philistines who will never be able to understand that a scientific expert who has been a saboteur but has repented may very possibly be of use to socialist construction.

The political significance of Pilniak's moral teaching is also not far to see; — there are and have been no saboteurs, there have been merely scoundrels and rotters as there have been since the world began. That is what our preacher and oracle wishes to tell us. The hysterical-good-for-nothing Poltorak is supposed to suggest to the reader that the existence of hundreds of bourgeois intellectuals who were saboteurs, amongst whom were big men of business, able engineers and experienced practical men of all kinds, excellent husbands and fathers of families, is nothing but an invention, a legend. For Pilniak there is no such thing as a member of this or that class. Thus Poletika and Sadykov on one hand and Poltorak on the other differ from one another in their moral qualities, and not in their outlook on life.

The only person who could give a party membership card to Poletika and Sadykov as also to the Turgenevskian girl Liubov Poletika would be Pilniak himself, the communist party could certainly never do so. Sadykov is a bourgeois engineer who despises the workers, the communist nucleus and the works committee. "You and I are the only people who count", he says at the end of his conversation with Laslo (p. 157 Russian edition, p. 225, German). So too, Sadykov whom Pilniak makes hold forth about communist morals and who ruins his wife by giving her to Laslo is acting merely like a mediaeval fanatic with ideas of feudal honor and not in the least like a steady and self-controlled communist.

As regards Poletika, this comic figure merely discloses what a philistine's idea of a great man is. A great man according to Pilniak is not he who studies reality carefully and regulates his conduct so as to conform to the evolution of its dynamic forces, not the man representating the class in whose hands the "administration," to use Lenin's expression, of the economic relationships of the age lies' but the man who starts from some eternal truths known only to himself, some kind of police regulations for the rest of mankind and material reality. "After 1917 he did not change anything, he even went on using the old spelling," Pilniak fondly writes of Poletika, this dry old monk whom the writer has turned into an old bolshevik and a friend of Lenin.

In one of the advertisements of this book we find the statement that the prototype of Poletika was Krassin. What naiveté, to put it mildly, one must possess in order to find the slightest resemblance between the great electrotechnical and revolutionary engineer, financial director of the underground communist party, organizer of the monopoly of foreign trade of the U. S. S. R. with a man like Poletika, the learned and decrepit professor without any idea beyond his own special subject, of which any number can be found in any university, or academy. Nothing gives Pilniak so completely away as Poletika's national bourgeois ideas about the messianic role of Russia which is to be that of saving Europe from becoming a desert. Thus Sadykov and Poletika as bolsheviks are nothing but bourgeois in a new mask striving for power and trying to oppose themselves to the proletariat and to history.

But what of the phrases about socialism? What about the workmen described in *The Volga flows to the Caspian Sea*? These very phrases and the workers whom he describes when carefully examined likewise show the real Pilniak. In his view the building up of socialism involves an enormous military camp of forced labour. "People must be driven into history for everything that is rational is real" our lover of eternal truths tells us with complete candour and logic.

Pilniak who believes only in the individualistic bourgeois inteiligentzia and its brains, naturally does not notice the enthusiasm of the working masses. A gang of slaves being driven forcibly into socialism — that is what the population of the Soviet Union is for him, and the Soviet government is nothing but a servant of old Russian bourgeois nationalism which is to-day reconstructing even geology. His "cosmic" scale, his intentional mixing of geography, biology, geology and socialism, apart from his inability to write plain Russian, once again betrays an attempt to hide the real work that is being done on one sixth of the earth's surface, the building of a new socialist order.

The worker Sysoiev (we are given only a number of schematic representations of him) is just one of those many who are being driven into socialism — it is not for nothing that he makes a remark characteristic of all the right wing opportunists such as the workers of the Soviet Union show up at their meetings. "Give a little more of everything so that no one will complain; buckets, saucepans, machines, bread, meat": plainly a covert attack on the policy of putting the development of the heavy industries before everything else. Ozhigov is nothing but a malicious caricature of a real communist politician, unswering and resolute.

Such, we see are the old ideas which we find in Pilniak's new work, such are the artificial people whom he creates. What else do we find in his novel? We find a great deal of mahogany, china and antiquities but very little concrete and steel. Altogether his novel reminds one not so much of a panorama of newly built industrial giants of industry as of a second hand shop in Moscow selling bronzes, china, nick-nacks, pictures and furniture formerly belonging to the bourgeoisie and landlords. The erection of a monolith gives Pilniak a magnificent background for his fantasy and likewise a pretext for passing over in silence the real giants of socialist unstruction, for example the enormous Kolomenski Works in the town of Kolomna. K. Radek tells us in his introduction to the German edition that Pilniak had read hundreds of pages of technical books in order to write about the monolith. Unfortunately that does not give one much consolation, for when you have read *The Volga Flows to the Caspian Sea* you feel inclined to agree with Goethe that some books are written not so much that the reader might learn something from them but that he might find out that the author knew something.

Let Pilniak whisper with tragi-comedy to the interviewer from *Monde*: "All those who are now only twenty years are unable to understand the greatness and the sufferings of the naked year. The youth are a cheery lot of people but our generation can no longer laugh." "His profound sayings" can only call forth a smile.

Pilniak who claims to be a writer of the socialist revolution in actual fact combines in his work all the various hopes and ideals of a bourgeois aristocratic renascence and the no less eclectic and varied stylistic influences corresponding to them. He is seen to have the instincts of the liberal philistine in that he is ready to glean any corn of bourgeois restoration to whatever bourgeois aristocratic group it may belong. He admires the fragility of the Turgenevskian noblewoman and grovels before the great achievements of bourgeois thought.

The attentive reader who does not allow himself to be taken in by Pilniak's phrasing will realize that *The Volga Flows into the Caspian Sea* gives a false and distorted picture of the Soviet Union, the communists, and workers, the saboteurs and the fight for socialism. He will realize that Pilniak's revolutionary phrases only give a perverted idea of socialist construction, and will see the futility of his merely having adapted himself to the revolution instead of making a thorough revision of his whole philosophic outlook. It is especially important for the Western European petty bourgeois intellectuals to realize this, since sooner or later the time will come when they will have to choose between capitalism and socialism.

For this reason we must not omit to mention Ribemond Desson's review of *The Volga Flows to the Caspian Sea* which appeared in the May number of *La Nouvelle Revue Française*.

Ribemond Desson begins by saying that neither a person of reactionary views living in Russia nor a Marxist will understand Pilniak's novel. The first will smile while the second will speak of romanticism. For that reason the reviewer turns only to you "who are capable some time of an evening of leaving your house, leaving your good clothes behind, and going out amongst men with an open heart, even though to morrow you will be fated to return to the best of dinners, like the she-dog in the scriptures. You will at any rate be able to recognize the warmth of humanity bringing on the spring amidst the mud of winter." The reviewer's style shows that he has a fellow feeling with Pilniak, but he is clearly one degree better since he at least understands that anyone who likes the romanticism

of Pilniak is not going to be a consistent supporter of the proletarian revolution.

We cannot forbid any intellectual from following the example of the she-dog of the scriptures, but such a person must bear well in mind that any warmth that he notices in *The Volga Flows into the Caspian Sea* is not the enthusiasm of socialist construction, but the fever of a pitiful adaptation to it, and secondly that the role of the scriptural she-dog leads inevitably to reaction and priestcraft.

THE WAY OF UPTON SINCLAIR.

At the beginning of this year, shortly before the appearance of his new novel, *Roman Holiday* [1] Upton Sinclair in replying to the severe criticism of his previous work, *Mental Radio* [2], made by the English and American communist press, wrote that he hoped his new book would "appease his revolutionary friends." Unfortunately he has not fulrilled this promise.

Roman Holiday is based on a theme which according to Sinclair had been intriguing him during the whole of his literary career — the resemblance between the capitalist America of today and the Roman republic of the period following the destruction of Carthage. Luke Faber, a young American capitalist is wounded in a motor car race; he loses consciousness and sees himself as an ancient Roman patrician, Lucius Faber (fallen from his chariot during the race in a Roman circus) and takes an active part in all the events of Roman political life. His *Roman Holiday* lasts three weeks; then he comes round to find out that what he experienced in Rome tallies exactly with what had occurred in his native town during his illness. The whole novel is based on this system of correspondences. The author draws a complete parallel between the social and economic life of Rome in the year 138 B. C. and the present conditions in the U. S. A. If the motor magnate Luke Faber corresponds to the Roman patrician Lucius Faber, owner of large chariot-shops, the imperialist war of 1914 corresponds to the Carthage war, and the strike movement of the American workers finds its" perfect" historical parallel in the exodus of the Roman plebeians to the Sacred Mountain.

Sinclair draws an equation mark between the class struggle of the Roman plebeians against the patricians and that of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. The very conceptions of "proletariat," "capitalism" etc. become in Sinclair's interpretation mere logical, non-historical categories, existing out of time or space. The classical Marxism dictum telling that "the history of society is a history of class struggles," when taken in such an abstract, non-historical manner, loses its actuality. Sinclair concentrates his attention upon finding more or less original parallels between life in ancient Rome and our present social conditions — and his very quest carries him away from these conditions. Finally Rome comes to represent for him something "exotic" in which he dissolves all the concreteness, all the specific problems of the present and future proletarian class-struggle. What might have been used as an excellent method of agitation, here exceeds its legitimate limits, assumes a self-sufficient value. Extending to the size of a whole book the development of this parallel between the antique and the capitalist social formations, striving for the highest possible exactitude of historical details, Sinclair finishes by falling himself under the spell of historical details, unable to subordinate them to the general and social. *Roman Holiday* lays the same stress on the similarity between the rôle of cosmetics in America and in ancient Rome as he does upon the similarity between class-struggles under both social formations.

Of all Sinclair's works the one bearing the closest resemblance to *Roman Holiday* is his novel *They call me Carpenter*, dealing with the second coming of Christ in capitalist America. The idea of the "eternal undying Rome" is treated in both cases in the same abstract, nonhistorical manner. Abstracting himself from the concrete, specific problems of proletarian class-struggle, Sinclair in his representation of the working-class displays the typical features of a déclassé intellectual — compassion, and inactive sentimentalism. The proletariat as a class, as an active social force, remains beyond Sinclair's ken. His only successful rôle is that of a martyr for whom capitalist exploitation serves as a kind of crown of thorns. All the creative work of Sinclair bears the imprint of this humane, compassionate treatment of the proletariat. As an example we might take *Jimmy Higgins* — the most popular

[1] *Roman Holiday* Sinclair Upton Pasadena California, Author's edition 1931, 288 pp.

[2] *Mental Radio*. This book deals his experiments with the "wonderful" telepathic powers of his wife, Mary Craig Sinclair. The book was reviewed unfavorably by the *New Masses* and the London *Daily Worker* which pointed out that by acting as a champion of pseudo-scientific clairvoyance Sinclair in fact reaches out his hands to the innumerable preachers of openly reactionary mysticis.

perhaps of Sinclair's books in the USSR, — where the conversion of a class - uncoscious worker to communism is interpreted as a mere fact of voluntary martyrdom, the glorification of which crowns the novel. But in both above mentioned novels this tendency has pride of place, becomes determinative. If in *They call me Carpenter* the image of Christ, treated as the "first socialist" practically screens the proletariat, becoming its ideological mouth-piece, in the *Roman Holiday* the proletariat is substituted by Marcia Penny, a nurse whom the police kills and over whose corpse the fascist Lucius Faber wails bitterly, and by a pack of anarchist agitators, whose part is confined to the functions of passive objects of fascist persecutions.

The non-historical abstractness and the humanism of the *Roman Holiday*, which are so typical for the intelligentsia, deprive Sinclair's social satire of its revolutionary sting. Omitting the proletariat in its specific historical qualities, drawing an equation mark between two different social-economic formations, not only is Sinclair's novel unfit for a leading, organizing part in the revolutionary struggle against capitalism, but it also leads to wrong conclusions with regard to the perspectives of historical development. Finding a similarity between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and a would-be communist state, organized by rebellious plebeians in Sicily in 138 B. C. asserting the complete identity of the ancient Roman republic with the bourgeois USA, Sinclair, in the person of his central character Luke Faber, puts the question: will this parallel be continued? Shall we see a Sulla and a Ceasar in America? Will they be followed by a Nero and a Caligula? All these questions leave Luke Faber in a chaotic frame of mind — and the same is the feeling of one who has finished the reading of this novel, unmagnetizing, unable of any actual organising influence.

If in such novels as *Jimmy Higgins 100%*, *Oil* or *Boston* Sinclair somehow or other raises the problems of class-struggle, of the revolutionary labor movement in modern America, his last works show a certain shifting away from these problems. In *Mountain City*, which appeared last year, Sinclair practically juxtaposes only two social forces: the financial-industrial oligarchy and the petty bourgeoisie, personified by the individual timeserver, Jed Rusher who finally joins the upper middle class. Thus building up his novel as a satire on the means of reaching the capitalist Olympus, Sinclair never points out the right way to solve the contradictions of bourgeois society, he even does not sufficiently expose these contradictions. In principle there is little difference between the problem of Jed Rusher's "rise" and the analogous problem, say, of Clyde Griffith, the hero of Dreiser's *American tragedy*. *Mountain City* brings Sinclair nearer to the main stream of American radical literature (Dreiser, Lewis etc.) puts him on a level with those radical writers who, though seeing the contradictions tearing asunder modern capitalist society, are unable to find out an actual way of solving them. In this respect the *Roman Holiday* continues the line begun in the *Mountain City*. These last novels by Sinclair are proof of the deep changes and the new grouping of forces now going on in American literature, affected by the ever growing crisis and ever increasing class-struggle — changes which make the literary fellow travellers of Sinclair's ilk face the problem of a decisive choice between throwing their lot in with the proletariat, becoming its real allies on one hand, and capitulating, abandoning true revolutionism, on the other.

A. Elistratova

INTERNATIONAL CHRONICLE

USSR

WHERE THERE IS WILL—THERE IS WAY!

518 new gigantic enterprises equipped with the latest technical improvements are, this year, joining the steel ranks of socialist construction, thanks to the creative enthusiasm of the many millions comprising the working class led by the Leninist Communist Party.

518 New socialist enterprises are in themselves a story of how the USSR is from a backward country being transformed into a highly developed industrial country.

Along with the creation of a second metallurgical base in the Urals, the Party has put before the nation the problem of reconstructing the existing metallurgical plants in the south.

The largest of these enterprises to undergo reconstruction is the Dzerzhinsky plant.

For the purpose of attaining utmost speed in the work of this plant the Comsomol, under the guidance of the party, suggested the idea of so called Comsomol "Counter Graphic Plans."

The Dzerzhinsky workers offer their experience and call upon all other workers, brigades and shifts to follow their example.

Last fall a letter was delivered to the Dzerzhinsky plant. At the first glance it did not differ from the many business letters received by the enterprise during the many years of its existence.

An order to restore the blast furnace.

This time, however, the letter contained something that shook the factory and made it review in alarm its program and the figures of its production plan.

By orders from the Steel Trust, blast-furnace No. 2 must be stopped for repairs. Stopped for repairs! Do you realize what that means? It means a loss of an enormous amount metal; it means that the fields will have less tractors and machinery, it means cargo lying without movement, it means empty rooms in new factories, it means a chunk of industry torn out of the five-year-plan. And yet, the blast-furnace must be repaired. In years of great tension the industrial wreck is once more called upon to give service. But it could be restored to life only through a lengthy process of re-equipment.

50 days remained before the furnace fires would be quenched. But men already got dizzy. Confusion gave birth to doubt. To prepare the drawings, make the necessary details, in other words, almost build a new blast-furnace in 50 days, sounded like a joke.

People came to their senses after ten days. Then the administration of the plant fixed the remaining forty days as the definite period in which blast-furnace No. 2 was to be overhauled.

The period was very short and demanded every possible effort on the part of auxiliary departments. But during the first few days results were not satisfactory. People bent over drawings and stood at the machines just as lightheartedly as they did yesterday, last week, a month before. They did not yet understand that to speed up the repairs of the furnace meant to give the country new machinery, lathes and agricultural implements.

How the Grephic Plan was worked.

Danger threatened the blast-furnace. It was then that a group of Young Communists working in the factory got a bright idea — the idea of a graphic plan for repairs.

What was the substance of this plan?

The Comsomol nucleus of the Dzerzhinsky plant decided to revise the programme of work mapped out by the administration, and submit their own graphic plan based on the so-called "counter" plans of the various departments and shock brigades, curtailing the time allowed for repairs by several days.

The Young Communists submitted their "silly" project to special meetings of workers, foremen, engineers, and managers. The youth tackled every brigade and department, suggesting that they check up on the capacity of each machine and the productivity of each worker, and once more determine upon the period in which all details and equipment for the furnace should be turned out.

Very little time was given to work out these plans, which, when submitted shortly after, outstripped all terms fixed by the administration. The mechanical department cut down on the production of spare parts by seven days. The casters submitted a plan in which they promised to do their share of work in half the time originally proposed.

But not everyone responded to the Comsomol's appeal. The management of the foundry immediately made a demagogical protest; it flatly refused to decrease the term in which to make knobs for the pillar-supports.

After the administration's refusal, the Young Communists called a meeting of the casters who make the knobs, and had a talk with the moulders and Peretyatko, the foreman of the department. This large assembly of workers drew up their own "counter" plan in which they pledged to produce all the knobs in two days instead of four, casting four a day instead of two.

The Comsomol collected thousands of similar plans from the workers. With the aid of the engineers they worked up these plans into a unified graphic plan giving the exact dates for all orders to be filled and for different repairs to be done.

This graphic plan reduced the term fixed for repairs by ten days.

Mospan surpassed his "counter" plan.

This plan was so well worked out that it did not take long to convince the administration of its soundness. It was endorsed and signed by the management, and given the name of "The Comsomol Counter Graphic Plan."

The plan took into account not only the technical possibilities, but also the creative enthusiasm of the workers, a factor which can not be estimated in purely technical calculations.

The workers began to cure and rejuvenate the worn out body of the blast-furnace at a speed never before witnessed by the factory.

Grandpa Mospan, a turner who operated a lathe in the mechanical department for 38 years, was the one who made the ground-belt for the furnace. The old man switched the lathe on full speed and did not leave it for five consecutive days. He even took his breakfast and dinner right there without taking his eyes off the machine shaping the huge steel belt.

How else could it have been? He also had fixed a date for the completion of his job. He promised to finish the belt in eight days instead of the scheduled 14.

Grandpa Mospan decided to outdo his own "counter" plan, and in this he was successful. The belt was finished in five days!

Super speed.

During these days of anxiety, those who lagged behind were assisted by everyone who wished to see the plan go through. In the foundry it was saved by the secretaries of the party and Comsomol nuclei, the chairman of the trade-union committee, the manager of the department and the tariff agent. They rolled up their sleeves and helped in the casting.

Sledzinsky's brigade of fitters mounted 12 refrigerators in 25 minutes whereas ordinarily it took an hour and a half to do the job. Veremei's brigade assembled six Shibers in 7 days instead of 13. The Chicherin brigade repaired the slag-discharging shaft in 20 days instead of 35.

The speed with which this work was done could not even be called "shock-speed". It had a greater significance than this term can convey. The highest speed of which man is capable was reached in the overhauling of blast furnace No. 2.

The Comsomol's counter graphic plan triumphed. All fundamental repairs were completed in 30 days. It saved 4 000 tons of pig iron for the country.

As a powerful instrument for carrying out the programme and reducing the time limit for a given piece of work, the graphic plan soon found its way into all construction works of the Kamensky region.

"Gas"

The Comsomol graphic plan was put to a second severe test in the laying of gas pipes. This work involved the construction of an intricate system of pipe-lines, through which the valuable coke-gas is conveyed from the furnaces to the Dzerzhinsky factory.

According to the original plan drawn up by the administration, work was to be completed by May 1, 1931. The Young Communists of the factory, after obtaining hundreds of "counter" plans

from the workers, introduced their own graphic plan by which the work was to be finished 10 days earlier.

The Kandirin, Cheberdi, Slavin, Lazarenko and many other brigades laid an average of two pipes a day.

Snow storms and bitter frost could not force the pipe-fitters to stop work even for a moment.

Snow storms were not reckoned with in the graphic plan and therefore they were no excuse for idleness. During three such days, when gusts of wind tore heavy metal pillars from their foundation, the Lazarenko and Bubrennik brigades succeeded in laying three pipes.

The second test—a success.

Work was based on the principle that the foremost should help the backward. When there was a danger that the pipe-laying programme would not be fulfilled in time, over 1,000 Young Communists and shock-brigade workers from the factory, together with their foremen and managers, came to the assistance of the pipe-layers. They rolled the huge gas pipes from the place of unloading to the place where they were to be fitted — a distance of half a kilometer.

Sometimes the offer of help hurt the pride of the one lagging behind. But this only helped to fulfill the graphic plan. One of the "offended" workers by the name of Kanderin, after refusing the help of his associates, developed such speed in his work that in a very short period he fulfilled his programme of pipe-laying 100 per cent. The builders of the gas-pipe line responded to the appeal of the Tula workers by raising the productivity of their labor. Tomilin, Vainavitsky, Soldatenko and Batrakov, all fitters, finished their "counter" plan on April 15 at 1 a. m. According to the plan drawn up by the administration they should have finished on April 17, and according to the graphic plan — on April 16.

The factory supplying the works with all pipe-laying material also joined in the contest to fulfill the plan and reduce the time required for each particular job. Perepyatko, a skilled worker, made a push-bolt in three days before the schedule. The bolt turned to be of very high quality.

The gas-pipe works were completed on April 22 — in thirty days! Once again the Comsomol graphic plan triumphed!

What the german engineer said.

Gue, a German engineer, a consultant on the laying of gas-pipes, witnessed in the course of a month, how the workers lengthened the days by squeezing in more work. When the job was finished Gue said: "I have never before witnessed such tempo of work. In Germany speed is acquired through increasing mechanization. You, on the other hand, have achieved victory by your unprecedented enthusiasm".

Planned method, control and rational utilization of labor — these are the factors that gave victory to the counter graphic plan. Each department kept watch over the others. A waste of material in the foundry provoked a storm of indignation in the mechanical department.

The workers of the foundry adopted decisive and drastic measures against those responsible for waste. Once they even refused to let them into the foundry.

"We are in no need of the kind of workers who endanger the fulfillment of the Graphic Plan."

Not a single detail was delayed in the process of work. Details passed right from the foundry to the mechanical department without even having sufficient time to cool down properly.

* * *

The Comsomol Graphic Plan organized the enthusiasm of the workers. It was put into action twice.

What did it give the country?

In the first test it gave 4,000 tons of pig iron.

In the second — 750 tons of coal.

It will become the common property of 518 new enterprises under construction.

About a conceited foreigner, about the reply to princess Trubetskaya, about the virgin soil that was ploughed and about the fact that it is necessary to keep advancing.

A female traveller from Europe visited the "Gigant" State Grain Farm. The immensity of the farm, which in size has no equal on this planet, staggered her. Miss... was perplexed.

"Why, this is surprising! It is unbelievable," exclaimed the foreign lady, looking at the combine-drivers through her lorgnette. "Why, how in the world did you do it? We have'nt extended any credits to you."

"Credits!" bellowed one of the combine-drivers. He had only lived through eighteen winters. "Here is our credit!" and he shook his brawny fist which dazzled in the sunlight like polished bronze...

Miss... dropped her lorgnette. The man at the wheel gave the signal and the squadron of combines, the power-

ful ships of the field, panted and groaned as they began to move forward.

During one of the days when preparations for the second bolshevik spring sowing campaign were in full swing, a telegram from London was delivered at the State farm. The telegram stated that a "League for fighting slave-labor in the USSR" had been organized in London and that one of the initiators of this slander-spreading organization was Princess Trubetskaya, on whose land the socialist grain factory is located. There was a stir in the "Gigant".

In the assembly rooms, in the mechanical and forging shops, in garages, in the tractor station, — everywhere — workers held meetings. Men in overhalls, their faces smeared with machine oil, made wrathful gestures with their hands which were still warm from the heat of the machines. They were discussing their reply to the League.

Among them were those who worked for the stud-owners on the land of princess Trubetskaya. Among them were eye-witnesses of "free" labor under the landowners and kulaks.

"In those days when the soil of the "Gigant" belonged to Trubetskaya said those men, —"farm laborers worked and died on the manure pile."

"Our wives and daughters were doomed to become prostitutes".

"When we were ill or crippled, we were thrown into the street to die freely from starvation."

"Everyone of us was illiterate"

"Our only diversions were vodka and cards".

"And the whip of the overseer!"

"Listen boys, let me say a few words".

Grandpa Vasili Kalashnikov pushed his way to the platform.

"Throughout the year we swarmed in manure from sunrise to sunrise. We did'nt even have a place of shelter where we could warm our stiff limbs".

"Comrades, I also worked for Trubesskaya".

This time it was Alexei Limarov speaking.

"We lived worse than cattle".

"And let me have my say... My woman, when she was with child, they made her work, like a horse, so they did".

"The emigrant vermin."

And so they drew up a long letter about their life in the "Gigant;" they related how on the land of the slave owners, soaked with the blood and sweat of farm hands, they are building up socialism. Late that night the wireless Station "Gigant" broadcasted this letter to all the ends of the soviet farm;

'he darkness of the March night wed the loud speaker.

"So know. If with the help of the imperialist social traitors the runaway princesses, Trubetskaya, Riabushinskaya and the other slave owners take it into their heads to encroach on our peaceful labor, then we at the first call of the party and government will take up arms, leaving the tractor for the tank."

"And meanwhile.

"Meanwhile our object is, with the help of socialist competition, shock work and socialist rationalisation to sow, plough and gather in grain from 183 thousand hectares this summer and reduce the cost of our grain by 30% as against last year".

1928. The Birth of the Gigant. On lands of which only 9.2% was under tillage, with the remaining 90.8% virgin steppes, the Gigant decided to sow 59,000 hectares.

They were told: "You are cranks. This is utopian. Nothing will come of your venture. The largest grain farm in the world belonging to the American capitalist Cambell, is only 20,000 hectares. And that don't forget is in America. What are you thinking of?"

The savants of all countries thumped their multi-volumed works and with foam at the mouth croaked. "It's an unprofitable undertaking. It's bound to fail."

But the "Gigant" sowed its 59,000 hectares. Nobody says that it was easy. This was the beginning, and every beginning is difficult. The Gigant boys will remember this first sowing to the end of their days. The weather that year was exceptionally bad. Snow storms. Frosts. The steppe was unruly and capricious like an untrained steed. Six hundred and forty five tractors drivers took the steppe by storm. These tractorists would fall asleep at the table after their day's work. The first year, Gigant yielded about one and a half million profit. A Centner of wheat cost 6 roubles, 30 kopeks; of rye — 4 roubles, 20 kopeks. Such a low cost of production was not attained by any of the individual holdings in the district which would get only 5 or 6 centners from a hectare as against the Gigant's 10.

Time pased. In the spring of 1930 "Gigant" sowed already 111,959 hectares. It attained a complete mechanisation of the harvest, gathered in 800,000 centners of marketable grain and succeeded in lowering the cost of production from 4 roubles, 80 kopecks in 1929 to 4 roubles 30 kopecks in 1930, besides helping neighboring collective farms covering an area of 77,000 hectares.

Thousands of foreigners come to "Gigant". They go over the farm, the machi-

nes, the grain and the dwellings of the workers. They are busy with their note books. It is clear to all: The "Gigant" has already outdistanced the foremost capitalist countries.

The visitors take up different attitudes. "Gigant" is visited by delegations of foreign workers and communists. Their faces light up. They are delighted with its achievements. Bourgeois visitors also come. Their faces betray anger and maliciousness. To admit our achievements were tantamount to admitting the superiority of socialist methods. And this is out of the question.

A certain Mr. Knickerbocker visited the farm last year. On returning to America, he gave vent to his spleen in an article written for *The New York Post*. This article was full of venom and spite. He tried to prove that the "Gigant" was an unremunerative undertaking. The management of the "Gigant" answered his "calculations." The figures they gave are worthwhile remembering to-day. In 1930 the "Gigant" gave the government 97.000 tons of first class grain to the value of 5,320,000 roubles. Furthermore the farm received 450,000 roubles from the sale of straw. Thus: the receipts for 1930 amounted to 5,770,000 roubles, the expenditure to 4,553,000 roubles. Profit — 1,217,000 roubles.

Profit. Mister Knickerbocker.

This was in 1930.

Now for 1931.

Summer corn has been sown over an area of 115.000 hectares. In summer the farm will gather in harvest from an area of 183,000 hectares. The gross productivity is estimated as 1,861,712 centners as against 947,000 centners for last year. Out of this, marketable grain will constitute 1,613,700 centners.

The yield of cereal crops will be increased this year to 10.48 centners per hectare.

"Gigant" leads the collective farms, By its example as well as by direct assistance it helps to achieve all round collectivization and exterminate from the face of the earht the dying class of kulaks. Gigant has sown and ploughed many thousands of hectares for the collective farms.

"Gigant" has left the large grain farms of America and Europe far, far behind.

But we must go further. We must catch up and surpass in the matter of quality, too. For this the technique of production must be mastered. There still remains much to be done. An example. In the utilization of the tractors "Gigant" is already outstripping America. On an average the Americans utilize a tractor for 450—600 hours a year, while "Gigant" in 1930 did so for 2,300 hours. It has been decided to raise this to 3,200 for each machine this year. But each hectare requires 15 hours while in America the corresponding figure is 5 hours.

The Americans know how to economize on fuel. Gigant has decided to cut down the expenditure of fuel this year to 360 grammes per hour for big machines and 395 for small ones. How? By mechanization and nationalization of oil distributing points and by elimination of overflows.

All this can be done by the workers of "Gigant." They want to and they will. They wanted to spare parts for the Caterpillars and the Fords this spring. In this they succeeded.

They wanted to and by their proposals for nationalization they succeeded in effecting economies to the amount of one and a half million roubles. They are marching ahead. And others are taking the lead from them.

CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN SOVIET PLAYWRIGHTS.

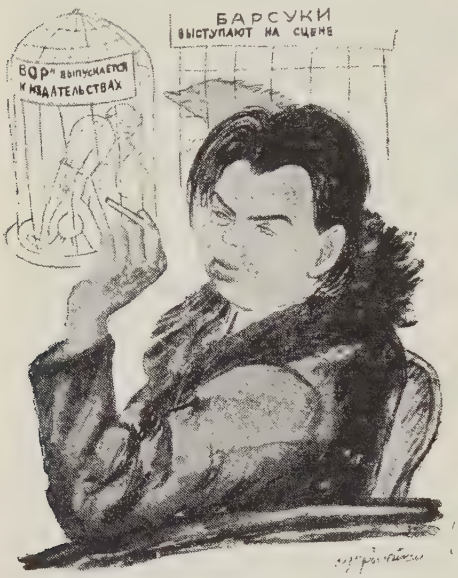
1. Fellow Travelling Playwrights. The bourgeois influence continues to be the chief danger in the theatre, and the continuation of our vigorous struggle against this influence is one of the tasks of the proletarian literary movement. Nevertheless, owing to a whole number of causes (the general successes of socialist construction, the growth and consolidation of the proletarian ranks of playwrights, the attraction of working people to active participation in theatrical activity, etc.), the bourgeois influence in the drama and in the theatre, while still remaining the chief danger, is being gradually ousted from its positions and is making room more and more for the dramatic activity of proletarian and "fellow travelling" writers.

Certain strata of the petty-bourgeois intelligentzia are becoming transformed in the process of revolution into "fellow travellers" and "allies" of the proletarian ideology. Hence the chief theme of the whole of the dramaturgical output of the fellow travellers. The fellow-travelling playwright endeavours to solve the problem of the attitude of his class-group towards the class struggle that is in progress.

Faiko's "The Man with the Briefcase" belongs to this kind of plays. Its author endeavours to expose those strata of the intelligentzia who wish to use the revolution for their own personal aims and ambitions, and not as an

instrument for their own reformation and for that of their class. Faiko draws the character of an adventurer and "wrecker" who "adapts" himself to the revolution, posing almost as a Communist. Faiko, however, delineates really a criminal character which might be calmly traced back to the pre-revolutionary period, modifying a few details here and there. Faiko has handled this big theme in purely superficial and schematic fashion.

B. Romashov's "Bridge of Fire" is built upon a different plan. Romashov's theme is, the acceptance of the revolution by the petty bourgeois intellectual only in its "storm and tempest"; this intellectual collapses when the years of civil war are over, when the military commanders of yestarday become commanders of industrial enterprises.



Leonid Leonov

In his "Changed Heroes," Romashov deals with the struggle between two principles in the milieu of the intelligentzia of the arts — collectivism versus individualism, of the revolutionary attitude against that of the petty-bourgeois philistine. Another fellow-travelling playwright, Shkvarkin, in his "Who is There?," takes up the theme of the petty-bourgeois intellectuals who serve as the direct agents of the international bourgeoisie; at the same time Shkvarkin draws a series of images of the new Soviet intelligentzia and of the intelligentzia which reforms itself.

Yet, in the hands of these playwrights, the big theme shrinks, the tremendous problem loses its significance. On the one hand, they transform revolutionary reality into a mere background for "martyred" intellectuals, while on the other hand, this very "martyrdom" becomes the main theme of the play, subjectivism reigns supreme, the "ego" is forcibly detached from his environment and is given to shallow "psychological" musings.

This theme of the reformation of the petty-bourgeois intelligentzia can either be solved as a social theme, in conjunction with the general course of the class struggle in the country and the forward movement of the revolution, or it cannot be solved at all. Leonid Leonov's "Untilovsk" furnishes a striking example of the bourgeois solution of this basic problem in the plays of the fellow travellers. Leonov depicts reality as though made of cast-iron: no change, no movement, no evolution takes place in it. His hero, Buslov, says about Untilovsk: "Can the water be driven out of a sunken boat? Behold our town submerged under muddy water, with a fog hovering over it... Smoke and stench in summer, mud in autumn, and mountains of snow in winter... Great human love is wanted to melt these snows. Outside, they indulge in crazy dreams, they invent the new man who is to till the new land... They scare the world with new words— what words! Meanwhile, what is our life? The more rigorous their crazy pranks, the sweeter the taste of moonshine whisky at Untilovsk..." The author cannot be held responsible for the utterances of his heroes, but he answers for the idea expressed in his work. And the idea of "Untilovsk" is precisely expressed in the above-quoted passage: the world cannot be changed, those "god-forsaken places" cannot be transformed into a region that builds socialism, and generally, human nature cannot be altered. Thus it was, is, and ever shall be — is the idea of the play. Thus, the problem of the attitude of the intelligentzia towards the revolution is taken up, not in order to solve one of the most essential question of the life of this intelligentzia, but on the contrary, the author gives a false, non-revolutionary solution, he canonizes that which ought to be destroyed, he devitalizes his own theme about the movement of the intelligentzia, about its attitude towards the revolution.

Olesha seems to be in contrast to Leonov. He seems to be an artist of movement, his heroes are tossing about, as though seeking a path and heading towards a set goal. Yet, to a considerable extent, this is but an outward movement; for Olesha cannot conceive the world in the whole complexity of

its phenomena, in their interconnection and interdependence. His heroes move about within the circumscribed shell of the "ego"; the subjective experiences are not interwoven with the objective phenomena around them. Subjectivisation of social phenomena, reduction of class conflict to individual perplexity, — these are the things which Olesha should overcome in his dramatic work. Kavalerov, in his play *Zavist* (Envy), is really a rebellious philistine, shallow in his very rebellion, paltry and insignificant in all his jacobinism. The paltriness of Olesha's hero stands out prominently once we look beyond the play into the realities of life. While Kavalerov is a nonentity, equally nonentical is Babitchev, the opposite character in the play; in fact, both of them are socially insignificant.

The period of socialist reconstruction raises in a new way the question of the role of the intelligentzia in the revolution; it emphasizes the class differentiation, it acentuates the social contrasts. At the same time the period of reconstruction opens up ever greater possibilities for the real remaking of the intelligentzia for its real collaboration with the working class.

The fellow-travelling playwrights in no way reflect this new stage. They fail to portray even with an approximate degree of fulness the process of realignment that is going on among the intelligentzia. Nevertheless, it seems pretty certain that this general theme of the fellow-travellers' plays is going to remain one of the principal themes of these playwrights.

Yuri Olesha

Another leading theme of the fellow-travelling playwrights is the Civil War. One section of the playwrights takes the past as an object of contemplation, as an external background for the unfoldment of the personal "dramas" of the intelligentzia. To these playwrights the civil war is unessential *per se*, as they are mainly concerned with moral problems, with inner conflicts. The revolutionary experience remains alien to them and they do not even try to assimilate it; the supreme form of the class struggle, the civil war, is transformed by them into a series of historic battle scenes (for instance, in plays like Lubov Yarovaya, Raslom, Bridge of Fire etc.). The playwrights seem to "adapt" this experience to the petty-bourgeois practice, for this experience upsets the practice of the petty bourgeoisie, raising as it does in a new way the questions that are of real importance to day.

Ilya Selvinsky

Leonid Leonov, in his *Barsuki*, essays to take up the theme of the civil war as one of the class struggle. While such an attempt has its positive virtues, it ought to be said that Leonov misunderstands the very nature of the class relations, because he conceives the peasantry as an integral whole, failing to see the class divisions within the peasantry. According to Leonov, the civil war was a struggle between the town and the village, and not between two classes.

Ilya Selvinsky, in his "Commander of the Second Army", equally fails to grasp the class nature of the civil war. The petty bourgeois Okonny becomes the prism through which the author himself sees the events. The bolshevik Chub (none too bolshevist, be it said) is brought out in the play "in small type," in passing ,and is not drawn in opposition to Okonny, but rather as an "extra character." Tchub really represents an abstract image of a bolshevik, detached from the concrete reality of the situation.

A third line of development of the theme of the civil war is taken up by Vs. Ivanov in his play "Armoured Train 14—69". He clearly delineates the aims of the struggle, he outlines, even if cursorily, the role of the Party in this struggle, he supplies the social motives for the actions of his heroes, he is entirely on the side of those who are fighting against the white-guards and the foreign invaders. It is a pity that Ivanov, in his "Blockade," departs from the line of the class interpretation of the events, from the line of the social approach to his theme, turning his attention mainly to casual happenings which socially do not matter. Subjectivism hinders Ivanov from understanding the class substance of the Cronstadt mutiny.

The thematics of the civil war should by no means be confined to reminiscences and surveys of the "past." In fact, we have no use for "historic scenes". Earnest fellow travellers are now

writing about the civil war from the view point of present-day reality. In doing this work, many of the fellow travellers obtain the correct vision of the past, as there can be no correct appraisal of the past without an understanding of the present day reality.

The last two years have seen a distinct departure in the work of the fellow-travelling playwrights: new themes are taking up the centre of the stage. In the centre of the events is no longer the "suffering" intellectual, his place is taken by the social phenomena; the playwrights endeavour to delineate the dialectics of the class struggle, and not the "dialectics of the soul." Nevertheless, even in these plays one becomes aware of the common defects of the dramatic works of the fellow travellers. For they deal with social phenomena as with congealed categories; they schematize the social processes, transforming them into something immobile, mechanically rigid, deprived of concrete originality, isolated and circumscribed.

D. Schheglov, in his play *Zemlya* (Earth), deals mainly with middle peasants growing into kulaks; his attention is drawn chiefly by peasant proprietors. Yet, the proprietory, petty-bourgeois relations in the village cannot be understood apart from the processes of collectivisation, and it is just the latter that are omitted in the play and are not reflected with any degree of satisfaction. Schematisation necessarily deprives the writer of the ability to perceive the reality in its objective, real plenitude. This "lack of ability" is a concrete historic phenomenon: the fact of the writer's belonging to a definite class of society determines also the degree of fulness with which reality is portrayed in his work. Schematisation is the manifestation of the limited outlook of the petty bourgeois who is unable to comprehend separate phenomena in their connection with the other phenomena, and this leads the writer to a narrow, isolated treatment of separate facts out of joint with their connections with the whole of phenomena.

Thus, Prozorovsky, in his play *Mgla* (Gloom), published in 1930, endeavours to treat the theme of Antisemitism as a political, social theme; he endeavours to delineate the social aspects of his heroes, to imbue them above all with a social content, and at the same time he gives to his play the ending of a detective novel in which the social clash is settled in accidental fashion. The actual political theme is thus reduced to insignificance, and its social function loses all its value.

Shimkevitch, in *Vynga* (Snowstorm), takes up the thematics of socialist construction; yet, imperceptibly, he substitutes for this tremendously important theme the petty themes of unfortunate love, revenge, etc., putting to the forefront the images of a kulak, of a white-guard officer, of a shopkeeper. Shimkevitch sees only the surface while ignoring the essential; he gives us a string of happenings of a criminological character, but fails to show even a slice of real socialist construction. True, people of the epoch of reconstruction do appear in the play, but they give the impression of bloodless and lifeless abstractions.

Yanovsky, in *Yarost* (Fury), takes up the theme of the village upon a broad plan, and his play is overstocked with all kinds of episodes and events. Yet, Yanovsky does not link up these separate episodes into a systematic portrayal of the village: the class struggle in his play proceeds along the hackneyed and trodden path of petty criminal conspiracies. There are plots in plenty, but no middle peasant and no poor peasant. There is one poor peasant in the play, Semenov, but he is mute and does not utter a single word throughout the play.

V. Katayev, in his play "Vanguard", endeavours to reveal the contradictory processes of rural collectivisation; he fear lessly breaks up the blissful existence of the commune which he depicts as a prosperous unit detached from the surrounding peasantry. He shows how the commune falls through in the process of reconstruction, how it is almost completely wrecked by the advent of new members, how it is torn by internal dissent and jealousy, how it has to contend against the machinations of the kulaks, and of the agents of the latter boring from within. Yet he fails to furnish a complete, conclusive picture of these contradictory tendencies, he does not show how the conflict leads to the development of new forms of collectivisation, how the difficulties are eventually overcome. Katayev sees the solution of the problem not from within, but from without. Tractors arrive, and everything is satisfactorily settled: he does not conceive that the tractors cannot bring "victory" unless the ground has been prepared for them. Bare technique solves no social problems.

In "Firing Line" by N. Nikitin, we see an unmistakable though inadequate approach to the new thematics, to the new dramatic content. Nikitin knows how to concretize reality, although he encumbers it by a mass of incidents and details. He portrays big social phenomena, yet this does not hinder him.

but rather helps him portray also those who are building socialism. The image of the builder of socialism as an inseparable part of the socialism that is being built, and the picture of socialist construction as the process in which the living human material is reborn — such is the theme of Nikitin. Tremendous difficulties face the fellow-travelling writer; he has a good deal of internal evolution to go through, of old notions to discard, and of new ideas to assimilate. Comrade Nikitin has worked hard on his play, and the process of its creation was along the path of self-reformation of the writer: in mastering the thematics of the reconstructive period, comrade Nikitin has, in fact, mastered himself. Nevertheless, there are big defects in the play — superficiality, insufficient seriousness, inability to give concrete images of the worker and of the working mass — which indicate that Comrade Nikitin has yet a vast amount of work to accomplish.

2. Proletarian Playwrights.

The proletarian playwrights endeavour to deal in their works with the fundamental practical problems facing the working class, and their creative method affords them a profounder grasp of reality. The general theme of fellow-travelling and allied playwrights is the place of the intelligentzia in the revolution, the attitude of the petty-bourgeois intellectual toward the proletarian dictatorship. The general theme of the proletarian playwrights is the socialist reconstruction of the country, while this theme branchess off into two basic themes: first, the socialist reconstruction of industry and the socialist transformation of the working class; second, the socialist reconstruction of agriculture and the transformation of the peasantry. "Rolling Rails" by Kirshon "Voice of the Mine" by Bill-Belotserkovsky, "The Shot" by Bezymensky, a series of recent plays produced by the Theatre of Revolutionary Youth (TRAM) "The Test" by V. Gerasimova and M. Kolosov, "Shock Workers" by Vl. Churkin, "Tempo" and "Poem of the Axe" by N. Pogodin, — such are the basic productions of the cycle. The latest plays begin a new line of this cycle, and they deal with problems of socialist construction on the material of the period of the socialist advance in full swing, giving expression to the new phenomena in the struggle of the working class for socialism: socialist rivalry and shock brigade work are in the centre of these dramatic works.

Another aspect of the one theme of the socialist reconstruction of the country is represented by plays dealing with the village. "The Farmyard" by Anna Karavayeva deals mainly with the old individualistic village while the new social relations are but feebly expressed. We find here the individual peasant who owns his land represented faithfully, all the details of his life are given. Yet, it is a one-sided "fulness", for one aspect of a phenomenon cannot be understood out of context with its entirety; and in this case, it is impossible to give a complete picture of the private property tendencies among the peasantry without depicting the elements that wipe out and destroy these tendencies.

One of the TRAM plays, "Virgin Soil" by Glebov and Lvov, deals with the influence of the kulak on the peasantry, of the role of the machine in the rebuilding of the village.

The writers of "Virgin Soil", however, "attenuate" in schematic fashion the contradictions of village reconstruction: they introduce a whole lot of difficulties, which they proceed to eliminate in a mechanical sort of way; the peasants understand at once the advantages of collective farming, lose their confidence in the kulak, flock into the collective farm, and so on.

"The Village" by Dm. Tchizevsky represents an attempt (regrettably unsuccessful) to show the movement of the collective farm peasantry towards the commune. Tchizevsky is carried away by the idea of the superiority of the commune over the collective farm and does not even attempt to understand these advantages in historic retrospect, forgetting that under different conditions these very advantages may be turned to antisocialist purposes. Tchizevsky leaps over an essential stage in the development of the collective farm movement: he takes the collective farm as the opposite of the commune, he deals with these two interconnected lines of rural collectivisation as with two opposing and conflicting tendencies. The idea of the play is altogether wrong, the author having paid a very high price for his abstraction from actual historical facts.

Kirshon, in his play, "Bread," raises a number of fundamental problems relating to the Party's policy in the village: the attitude towards the middle peasant, the forms of struggle against the kulak, the opportunistic distortion of the general policy of the Party. Kirshon touches very sparingly on the individual element, allowing his heroes but a minimum of personal experiences. The hub of action in his play is shifted from the individual to the social milieu, and with good effect. The leading characters of the play: Olga, Michailov, Rayevsky, represent not only a family "triangle", but also a social one, a "class

triangle", each of them representing a social group, yet without being transformed into an abstract scheme devoid of concrete traits. Nevertheless, even in "Bread" the elements of schematism can be found. Kirshon has not succeeded in his portrayal of the middle peasant Korytko who plays a very insignificant role in the play, although its basic problem is that of the middle peasant.

The second theme in proletarian drama is the expression of the struggle of the working class for winning over the intelligentzia to the path of proletarian ideology. The proletarian playwright actively intervenes in this struggle combatting those who hinder this progress of the petty-bourgeois intelligentzia and unmasking the bourgeois intelligentsia and its apologists.

J. Libedinsky, in "Heights," while raising a number of other highly important problems, deals also with this particular problem of the intelligentzia. As though anticipating the trial of the "Industrial Party," this play presents a series of characters revealing those very traits which came to light in the course of the trial, while the "family" dissensions, too, are treated from the class point of view. Aivazov and Tasia are the embodiment of two different social tendencies, and this justifies the author's taking up the "family" problem.

Afinogenov, in ' The Crank", draws the picture of cranky petty-bourgeois intellectuals who veer around to the proletarian position in devious ways. Afinogenov, however, gives undue prominence to subjective personal traits, as he does not present his heroes in conjunction with their milieu. Excessive stress on the personal element overshadows the social aspect.

Glebov, in "Inga," departing from the hackneyed approach to the contradictory peculiarities of the petty-bourgeois intelligentzia, takes up such intellectuals as have already come over to the proletariat. He presents to us intellectuals who are already in the bounds of the Party, who, while being in these bounds, have not yet broken completely with their past. The defect of the play consists in that the author does not "show up" this attachment of the heroine to her past, but rather idealizes it.

Afinogenov's "Fear" belongs to the same cycle of thematics. It is a militant political play in which the author deals with fundamental problems of the day. His individual hero is the embodiment of a vast theme which expresses important aspects of the processes that are now in progress throughout the country.

The proletarian playwrights turn to past history as to the past experience of the revolution, as to one of the essential historic stages of the struggle of the working class for the proletarian revolution. The proletarian playwright endeavours, while employing his specific means of delineation, to generalize the past experience of his class, thus producing a play of past experience which spould be helpful in the constructive activities of today.

Kirshon's "City of Winds" is one of the most effective plays in this cycle. Kirshon is neither a chronicler of battles, nor an observer, nor a "historian" for history's sake. Kirshon turns to one of the most important problems of the past, to the difficulties of the past, whereas the "fellow travellers," as a rule, endeavour to obliterate the contradictions of the civil war, being unable to comprehend them. Kirshon wants to understand the defeat of the revolution on one of the fighting sectors in order to equip his class for victory. To plays of this cycle belongs also "The Storm" by Bill-Belotserkovsky.

Kurdin, in "Between Gales", turns to the recent past of the Red Army, after the close of the civil war, when the place of fighting at the front was taken by study and training in the rear, and when some of the erstwhile commanders proved unfit for the "peaceful" tasks, for the new work in the economic field.

Vs. Vishnevsky, in "First Cavalry Army", turns to the heroic fighting days of the Red cavalry, beginning his dramatic recital from the tsarist barracks and leading up to the present time. In his "Last Decisive", he endeavours to portray the future battles against world imperialism, again taking up an original theme on a very momentous topic which no one has yet handled. Vishnevsky occupies a unique position among our present day dramatists. He chooses the most burning problems of the day for his dramatic creations, endeavouring to keep pace with the quick tempo of his epoch. So in his "Last Decisive" he takes up a dramatic subject that has not been handled as yet by any Soviet playwright. His theme is the struggle of two systems, of the capitalist versus the socialist system, which is going to turn, at a certain stage, into a struggle between two armies. Vishnevsky writes about the Red Army. It is a theme fraught with tremendous intrinsic difficulties for we have here an entirely novel qualitative phenomenon, the first army in the world that is organized upon unique principles, the Red Army, the army of revolution. Comrade Vishnevsky endeavours to generalize the experience of the Red Army; he endea-

vours to connect it with the general revolutionary movement, and in this he succeeds with great difficulty.

Vishnevsky as an artist, has a particular liking for big canvases. Taking up a separate phenomenon, he tries to link it up with a whole series of other phenomena. Hence the wide scope of his "First Cavalry Army": the tsarist barracks, the imperialist war, the civil war, and the army on a "peace" footing. Yet, his wide creative scope is also responsible for undue stress on isolated phenomena, with the result that he writes not history but episodes. He manifestly fails to grasp the inner connection between the episodes which he depicts, the profound historic sequence by which they are linked up with each other.

In his "Last Decisive" we find these literary defects in even more pronounced form (schematism, mechanical delineation, biologism). In fact, these defects are even more outstanding in this play then in his "First Cavalry Army". Vishnevsky has built this play upon an exceedingly circumscribed scale. He takes the Red Navy and the Red Army as something exceedingly limited, as something apart from the country as a whole. This results in the portrayal of a military caste, so to speak, instead of portraying the Red Army as it really is. Vishnevsky draws a picture of the Red Army that is not connected with socialist construction as a whole. He fails to show the insoluble ties by which the Red Army is connected with the rest of the proletariat that is engaged in the building of socialism throughout the country, the organic unity existing between the Red Army and the masses of the workers in the rear. Vishnevsky's Red Army, therefore, creates indeed the impression of an exclusive military caste, of a group of people living their own inner life. The same thing happens when Vishnevsky proceeds to depict life in the rear of the armed revolutionary forces: again he portrays isolated, insignificant episodes.

It is true, now and then he makes an attempt to reach out beyond his limitations. Thus, the scene of embarkation in the port is extremely interesting. Here the dramatist turns to the general living and working conditions of the proletariat. But this is only a little episode in the play which does not alter its general character.

Thus, the problem of the revolutionary rear is not correctly solved by Comrade Vishnevsky.

Vishnevsky turns the insignificant into the essential, the incidental into the fundamental. In the first episode of the play, he gives a parody on the operatic theatre. He devotes a good deal of attention to operatic questions. He seems to be fighting some enemies on the operatic stage. To be sure, it is the duty of the proletarian playwright to criticise the opera, to fight for its reformation; yet, when the playwright is engaged in portraying the clash of two systems, of two worlds, should he in this case give first prominence to the side issue of the opera problem? This excursion into the realm of operatic critique diverts attention from the basic problem of the play.

The future collisions between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world will be sharply different from those we had in the epoch of the civil war. It will be a different struggle in regard to quality, because our army is now different in quality, because the qualitative correlation of the opposing forces is now different. Vishnevsky, while trying to portray the future struggle against imperialism, fails to give a picture of imperialism, having apparently overlooked this subject. He has overlooked the international aspects of the problem: the ties of the Red Army with the revolutionary rear, and the forces at the disposal of imperialism. The only thing which seems to have arrested his imagination in our future struggle is the pathos of death.

Visnevsky and Meiyerhold

This position of Vishnevsky as a playwright is to some extent the position of a Remarque, and not of a proletarian dramatist. Powerless to depict the real struggle to come, the writer confines himself to a portrayal of the pathos of death, of the horrors of the future collision.

Vishnevsky's failure is not the failure of proletarian literature. For, Vishnevsky is strong when he portrays reality according to the method of dialectic materialism (we have a number of such scenes in "First Cavalry Army" notably the scene of the imperialist

war, and partly also the scene in the barrack), and he is very weak when he solves creative problems not by the method of dialectic materialism, not by the method of the proletarian literary movement.

The proletarian art becomes crystalized in the struggle against bourgeois art, it opposes the latter on all the basic creative and ideological questions, it is entirely different from it as regards quality; it combats the latter, and in our country it ousts it more and more from its positions. Proletarian literature in this country is more and more gaining supremacy, and already to-day it plays the leading role along the entire literary front. Nevertheless, in the course of this struggle between proletarian and bourgeois art, at times the lingering bourgeois influence is revealed on some points of the literary front, and petty-bourgeois tendencies manifest themselves on separate, non-essential sections of the front. These tendencies are also manifested now and then in some of the proletarian dramatic works.

Alexander Bezymensky

One of the forms of these petty-bourgeois influences in the proletarian drama is subjective psychologism. Thus, Vagramov, in "Air Flight", offers as a casual scene what is really essential in the play: the struggle against locusts by a Red aerial squadron in a national district as a means for cementing the brotherhood of the nationalities of the Soviet Union, as the realisation of the Leninist national policy, as the means for the socialist reformation of the peasantry of a backward national region. This tremendous fact is given by Vagramov as something incidental, as an exotic decorative effect, as a stage-setting for the old and hackneyed theme of the "triangle", of the private family affair of a married couple which takes up the centre of the stage. By separating the personal from the social the author, of course, has failed to understand both and his method of "psychological isolation" reveals his exceedingly limited ideological level.

Schematism is another big defect of the proletarian drama. The playwright takes a one-sided view of reality: unable to take it objectively as a whole, he singles out incidental episodes. Some of the playwrights mould their characters out of one block: "emancipated" from their concrete traits, the heroes appear as the bearers of but one specific trait. Such, for instance, are the workingmen in Bezymensky's "Shot", who are bereft of real traits, who might simply be given under serial numbers. The author fails to realize that the individual character is the expression of one of the aspects of the class, that the delineation of the "personality," if done by the method of proletarian art, must inevitably lead to the delineation of the common and typical as embodied in the individual. Bezymensky draws concrete images only of the enemies: the latter are endowed by him with concrete traits, and are drawn with relative fulness, whereas the workingmen are schematized.

In Pogodin's plays this schematisation is expressed in the fact that he most frequently contemplates the results of certain social processes without seeing them in their development and movement. Hence a mechanical approach to reality, which naturally prevents him from properly gauging the result, since the primary cause is not fully revealed. The process of the rebuilding of the human material is most intimately bound up with the process of socialist reconstruction, and this unity Pogodin is prone to sever in his plays.

Schematism is also revealed by Churkin in his "Shock Workers". His hero, Dyomin, organizes shock brigades, leads the workers into battle for the industrial plan, fights against idlers and slackers. Yet, Churkin presents to us Dyomin in his home life, and this hero of the industrial plan becomes a dull and lifeless person. Why so? Because it seems to Tchurkin that if one is such a splendid industrial worker, he therefore lives the full life only in his factory and nothing exists for him outside of his job. This is the quite correct approach for Pierre Hamp when he depicts the slave conditions of labour under capitalism. But does socialist labour bereave the worker of all other human interests? Is the worker in the Soviet Union an "incomplete" man (as Marx said of the worker in capitalist society). Of course, such is not the case, and Comrade Churkin draws here an incomplete, schematic picture of reality.

Such then are the two basic defects of our proletarian drama: subjective psychologism, the detachment of the personal from the social, and schematism, a onesided and narrow approach to reality. Nevertheless, these defects should by no means close our eyes to the unmistakable positive achievements of our proletarian drama.

Alongside of the incorrect solution of the problem of personality, we find in our proletarian plays also the quite

correct approach to the personality as an embodiment of social phenomena, as a part of the class.

Our drama is beginning to be built up in a new way, becoming transformed into the social drama, into the drama of social situations, into the drama of class contradictions. This emulation of the best models of the classical drama is quite legitimate as well as fruitful; for the best classical repertoire comprises dramatic works which deal with socially important problems. The proleterian drama is creating a clear-cut class structure of the play (composition, plot, and subject); the connection between the heroes in the play is the class connection.

Our drama is becoming utilitarian and practical; its social function is tremendous. The proletarian playwright creates his play in order to influence reality, he uses the drama as a weapon, as a special form for changing the world around him, and not as a form of contemplation. Thus, "Bread" teaches how the general policy of the Party should be carried out in the village; "Fear" shows the forms and methods of the struggle for bringing over the petty-bourgeois intelligentzia to the side of the proletariat; "The Test" and "The Shock Workers" are really dramatized instructions for the organization and activity of shock brigades in the factories.

This is not a defect, but rather the great merit of these plays. It means that the proletarian drama furnishes the spectator with the methodology of struggle and construction, that it teaches him, educates him, organizes him in the proper direction, becoming part and parcel of the practical activities of the working class. The theatre regains the social importance of which it has been shorn by bourgeois society.

The theatre is becoming the exponent of the strategy and tactics of the working class. It does not take a back seat, but on the contrary, it throws itself into the thick of the struggle, cooperating in its development, becoming the theatre of practical policy and of political practice. The works of proletarian dramatists are primarily political plays, and the proletarian theatre is primarily a political theatre. Nevertheless, the political and publicistic content is blended into the substance of the play and turned into a complete image. Policy turned into image, and image turned into policy, — such is the outstanding feature of the best works of proletarian drama.

THE APRIL 1931 COUP D'ETAT IN SPAIN AND THE SPANISH INTELLIGENTZIA

The revolutionary events which have been taking place in Spain are of very great moment to the Spanish bourgeois and petty bourgeois intelligentzia. At first sight it would even seem that the April coup d'état was the preliminary to a radical change in the relations between Spanish intellectuals and the ruling authorities. It is well known that during the war in 1908 a sharp depression in Spanish public life began to make itself felt and a wave of national pessimism spread in bourgeois intellectual circles which resulted in their virtual refusal to take part in the government or political life of the country. This passive protest on the part of the educated classes was of particular advantage to the Spanish government as it came to the same thing as refusing to offer active opposition. Their contemptuous attitude towards politics became particularly marked after 1917 when as a result of intensification of the class war on the peninsula (evidenced by strikes, mutinies etc.) the chief parties governing the country began literally to fall to pieces. The September coup d'etat (1923) which brought Primo de Rivera into power, and the heavy defeats of the Spanish Army in Morocco which preceded it (the Annual disaster in the summer of 1921) could only serve to increase the passively hostile mood of the intellectuals. By 1924, however, a definite change in attitude could be noted. The great Spanish bourgeois historian, Rafael Altamira, in a lecture on "Contemporary Spain, her Recent Spiritual and Social Evolution" outlined the most salient differences between 20-th century Spain and Spain as she was in the closing years of the present century.

In his words the Spanish intelligentzia had (1) outgrown its national pessimism and replaced it by faith in the genius, the might, and the high spiritual gifts of the Spanish people, (2) become still further alienated from the governing authorities, having convinced themselves by experience that much can be done outside official channels, (3) created in the course of a few years much of economic and spiritual value, and (4) become still more sceptical in their attitude to political life.

One must not forget that Altamira said this in 1927 when Primo de Rivera was still fairly firmly in power. As a result he could not mention the fact that as far back as 1924 attempts had been

made in educated circles to rise up against the rulers — to pass over from a passive to an active policy of opposition. The terror of the dictatorship merely hastened these attempts. Apart from the fate of Vicente Blasco Ibanez it is sufficient to mention the proceedings taken against that well known Spanish publicist, poet, novelist and philosopher, Miguel de Unamuno, who only just escaped death, was sent to the island of Fuerteventura and finally was forced to emigrate to Paris, the late poet Enrique de Mesa exiled to Soria and the famous novelist D. Ramón del Valle Inclán.

Primo de Rivera's successor, general Berenguer, it is true, considerably relaxed the administrative oppression and allowed the political exiles to return home and even, within limits, to take part in politics. Some of those who had opposed the military dictatorship of Primo de Rivera and Berenguer (Miguel de Unamuno amongst others) took advantage of this opportunity.

Thus to the statement made by Altamira in his lecture about Spain's recovery from her national pessimism to renewed faith in her high spiritual gifts, we can add that the intellectuals abandoned their policy of keeping aloof on principle from the political life of the country.

In particular the young generation proved itself capable of active opposition to the ruling authorities. This was shown by the student disturbances in January and February 1929 when Primo de Rivera granted reduced fees to the students in the military schools and put the universities under the control of the church. We find professors of the university taking part in the 1929 riots; large numbers sent in their resignations to Primo de Rivera. Amongst those to resign were Ramón Menèndez Pidal and also the leading Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset.

Thus the very sympathetic attitude taken up in Spanish literary circles and in fact by the whole Spanish intelligentzia to the April 1931 coup d'état is not in the least surprising, being merely the natural outcome of the whole trend of Spanish thought during the preceding seven years. Thus the radical change of temper in Spanish cultural and literary circles did not take place suddenly, but developed gradually from quite obvious causes. At a time of economic crisis, when the class war was becoming more intense, the bourgeoisie, could not remain passive to what was taking place around them. The provisional government formed by them is a bourgeois class-government. One has only to examine its composition to see that the fear of the victory of the proletarian revolution in Spain has united the party enemies of yesterday and has obliged the Spanish bourgeoisie to muster all its physical and spiritual forces. The writers and "cultural leaders of Spain" (to use the expression of the *Gazeta Literaria)* answered the challenge of the Spanish bourgeoisie by forming a special extraparty group, which none the less has a republican outlook called "In the Service of the Republic" (!). This group was organized shortly before the *coup d'état*.

The support given to the provisional government at the moment by the "cultural leaders of Spain" takes very various forms. They take part in the domestic affairs (even in questions of the reform of national education) and also in foreign affairs by representing the republican government abroad. Thus for example Miguel de Unamuno restored to his chair of Greek Philology in the university of Salamanca even by general Berenguer's government, was after the April 1931 coup d'état elected rector of the same university. But this is not the only part he takes in the new régime. When the minister of education Marcelino Domingo formed a "national council of savants", he proposed this same Unamuno as life president, a post which the latter accepted.

After this there appeared in the papers the news that Unamuno was being suggested for the post of Spanish ambassador to Lisbon, a particularly important position on account of the fact that in Portugal French and British capital clash. This, however, does not exhaust Unamuno's cooperation with the republican government. He actively supports it by disseminating republican ideas in the press, helps to solve the extremely complicated "regional" question, in particular the Roman Catholic and Basque question, and finally takes active part in the politics of the provisional government. A native of Bilbao (Biscay) and author of the novel *Peace in War* dealing with the siege of this town by the Carlists in 1874, Unamuno was one of the government delegation which took part in the celebrations in memory of the heroes of the civil war. At the memorial ceremony in Bilbao which took place on the 2nd May 1931 he even headed the government group made up of Marcelino Domingo, minister of education, Indalecio Prieto, minister of Finance, Manuel Azano minister for war, and supported every speech made by the government orators, one of whom (the captain-general of Madrid, who spoke in the absence of one of the ministers)

sang the praises of "the power of the bayonet" and the "army standing in defence of the government."

No less characteristic is the position taken up by another prominent representative of Spanish Literature, Ramón Pérez de Ayala, who at one time spoke with the greatest pessimism about the political future of Spain and the role of the Spanish intelligentzia. We need only mention his novel *Troteras y Dancederas* and the political essays written in 1917, at a time when the class war in the peninsula was becoming particularly severe, and later collected together under the title "Politics and Bulls." Under the new regime Pèrez de Ayala, together with Dr Gregorio Maranon, the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset and other Spanish "celebrities", organized the group "In the Service" of the Republic, but at the same time agreed to occupy the position of ambassador to London. Later he stood for the constituent assembly as candidate for his own Constituency of Oviedo (Asturia) and was elected. The service rendered in this instance to the provisional government by Pérez de Ayala cannot be over-emphasised. Asturia with its coal deposits is one of the centres of the Spanish working class movement and the victory of its own candidate here was of the greatest importance to the government.

Other very prominent representatives of the Spanish intellectual world take up exactly the same position with regard to the new régime. Amongst the ambassadors and diplomats appointed by the provisional government are Salvador Madariaga (author of the Utopian novel *The Sacred Giraffe*.) who has accepted the post of ambassador to Wasington. The news is published in the papers that the novelist Pedro de Repide who was recently a guest in the U. S. S. R. has been appointed ambassador to Cuba and the poet Goya de Silva to the Argentine, and that the greatest contemporary bourgeois satirist in Spain Luis Araquistain has been appointed secretary to the minister of labour in the present government. Most of the writers stood for the constituent assembly as republican candidates or members of the group "In the Service of the Republic" (José Ortega y Gasset for Madrid, and others). Even the most independent of the Spanish writers, Ramón del Valle Inclán, agreed tó stand in the elections as candidate for the Vigc constituency in his native Galicia. Also the Madrid society "Ateneo" [1] put itself completely at the disposal of the government, and its president Manuel Azana is minister for war.

In a few instances we find refusals, it is true, but these are all motivated by tactical considerations rather than by principle. For instance Maranon refused the post of ambassador to Paris as he considered it more important at the moment to take charge of public health affairs in Spain and keep up his connection with the youth of the country. Danvila, former ambassador to Buenos Aires, was appointed to Paris in his stead.

The provisional government never ceases to emphasise its close ties with intellectual and literary circles. When bourgeois circles in the town of Valencia raised the question of bringing the ashes of Blasco Ibanez thence from Mentoni the Madrid government showed its hearty approval of the proposal. However the question of making use of one writer or another is sometimes complicated by higher political considerations. This was the case when it came to nominate an ambassador for Berlin. First of all José Ortega y Gasset was proposed but afterwards Julio Alvarez del Vayo. The latter appointment was not confirmed ostensibly on the ground of objections supposed to have been raised by the German government. One can very well understand, however, that the author of several books about the U. S. S. R. and its sincere friend, was not the sort of person that the provisional government wanted in such a post. As a result Alvarez del Vayo was sent as ambassador to Mexico and Americo Castro, a well known philologist, was appointed to Berlin.

Thus we see how the bourgeois intelligentzia of Spain hastened forward as one man to offer their services to the republic. We can only hope that the revolutionary ferment of the masses and the vicious circle of insoluble social contradictions, in which the new bourgeois government finds itself involved, will not be long in forcing a breech in this united front of the intellectuals. Be that as it may, Miguel de Unamuno in a speech made towards the end of June said, in reference to the constituent assembly in Bejar "that the future government would be able either to avoid civil war or would advance to meet it with a firm hand". "Peace is all very well" he said later on, "but you connot live at peace with corpses. 'Peace' — people are for ever saying to me, but I don't know whether such a peace is possible even. I believe rather in

[1] A learned society for literature and art, playing a very particularly important part in the cultural life of Spain. Spaniards refer to it as "The Forum of Spanish public thought". On the first day of the revoluton the members of "Ateneo" issued a manifesto declaring their sympathy with the republican régime.

a civil war without limit or end, since it is perfectly clear that the type of economic system on which present day society is based is bound to change."

In another speech Senor Unamuno hastened to give precision to his point of view on the future of Spain. According to him, "the spirit of the Spanish nation, essentially anarchistic, is alien to Communism." "The Spanish proletariat would not tolerate a sham dictatorship of the proletariat."

In the light of these ravings of the worthy professor, the representative of the "spirit of the Spanish nation", empowered to speak on its behalf, the above mentioned spouting about "a civil war without limit or end" which Spain must either be able to avoid or else advance to meet with a firm hand, assumes an entirely different aspect. The "Spirit of the Spanish nation" must be by no means so alien to communism as this knight-errant of the bourgeoisie tries to show. In spite of his assertions to the contrary, Communism must be a very real menace to his native land if the phantom of civil war thus interferes with his sleep and causes him to give such valuable advice to his class, which is being swept aside by the revolutionary wave.

Unamuno's exhortation that bourgeois Spain must either be able to avoid civil war or else advance to meet it with a firm hand, sounds like a piece of advice to take steps to check the revolutionary mass movement. This professor who is so concerned with the fate of his class no doubt wants to say that in order to avoid the fate threatening it the bourgeoisie must soon take to fascism.

Unamuno, the "mystic and Humanist", for all his communion with the "spirit of the Spanish nation" is a penetrating and ardent advocate of the interests of his class. In the sphere of politics he is highly concerned with warding off its doom.

The near future will show along what lines the further class stratification of Spain will take place, and which of the bourgeois writers will be found in the ranks of the fellow travellers of the proletarian revolution.

F. V. Kelin

GERMANY

"NATIONAL" OR SOCIALIST REVOLUTION?

Two years ago nobody in Germany knew the name of an insignificant lieutenant of the Reichswehr — Scheringer. Eighteen months ago he was arrested together with two comrades at a little borderland town in the South of Germany for taking an active part in Hitler's secret organisation. Scheringer believed that Hitler could lead the German people to freedom.

The next stage — is a trial at the Supreme Court. From the tribune Hitler delivers a long speech on legality. Scheringer begins to realize that National-Socialism is merely a tool of the governing classes and is not concerned with the liberation of the people. The study of Marxism leads Scheringer to communism. Lieutenant Ludine, who had remained faithful to Hitler, and consequently to the bourgeoisie,is released from prison while the communist Scheringer must serve his sentence in full, At first the bourgeoisie applauded warmly Scheringer's activity. And it was a heavy blow for them when Scheringer became a member of the Communist Party. He was slandered: it was said, as is customary in such cases, that he had been bribed. In a recent article. "Why I became a Communist" published in the magazine *Linkskurve* (organ of the proletarian and revolutionary writers of Germany) Scheringer describes the evolution of his political opinions:

"During the last few weeks I have received quite a number of letters, asking: How do you reconcile your becoming a communist with partiotism? As this question is of greatest importance for the preparation of the popular revolution in Germany I shall try to answer it on the basis of the evolution of my own opinions.

"I was bred in an occupied district. While still school-boys, my comrades and I saw our life object in the national liberation of the German people. We had got no political education and we thought that the social problem could be solved by annulling the Versailles treaty. At Coblentz we fought together with the proletarians against imperialist oppression and the intrigues of the separatists. Experience taught us that the 'worthy bourgeois' overflowing with nationalism, gave us no real assistance. They allowed us to be defeated and used their police against us.

"In 1922 I was imprisoned by the Americans, and the German authorities, in giving their view of my case, represented me as a hooligan whom it was highly advisable to tame. Later, I was again arrested, this time by the German during a raid on a printing plant belonging to the separatists. I succeeded in running away from the occupied district, but my mother was deported. I was sentenced in my absence by the French tribunal to 10 years hard labour.

"Since then I became convinced that it is absurd to sacrifice oneself for a government which together with the western powers safeguards "tranquility and order" and betrays its own subjects to the enemies.

"I realized that the first and essential condition for attaining freedom in Germany is an armed uprising. But I could not understand social first principles. I joined the organization of the 'Black Reichswehr.' Its slogans were: a march on Berlin, a military dictatorship and a struggle for freedom against enemy powers. At Kustrin the machine-guns of the regular army showed what results from a military Putsch organized without the participation of the broad masses.

"Prison again. After my release I decided to join the Reichswehr. In this hundred-thousand military organization I thought I saw the embryo of the future free peoples army, whose task was to organize the struggle for freedom all over the Republic, oppressed by reparations, and to lead the people to liberty. But, as an officer, before long I became convinced that the military command had quite different aims, and that for the most part the officers were quite ready to serve as a police-corps in the spirit of the "Versailles treaty." Furthermore, the connection between national and social problems became more and more evident to us.

"Then, together with some comrades, I joined the national-socialist labor-party. We believed that here, at last we were dealing with an organization, which aimed at revolutionizing and arming the masses, at social liberation and struggle against the Western powers. Our joining this organization was regarded as treason and we were sent to prison.

"Before the trial, I studied the economic doctrines of Marx. I then tried to obtain revolutionary national-socialist works concerning this problem, but it appeared that no such works existed. I began to doubt the reliability of national-socialist revolutionism. These doubts increased when the reactionary policy of the national-socialist labor party became clear during the winter of the same year.

"I read Marx, Engels and various books about the Soviet Union. Then a many things became clear to me.

"A visit to Berlin and München, where I had interviews with national-socialist leaders served as the impulse to the final decision. I saw clearly that the national socialist party is nothing but the Gugenberg party, masked by revolutionary phrases and socialistic demagogy. Accordingly, I handed a declaration to the Communist fraction of Reichstag about my disassociation from Hitler. I joined the ranks of the revolutionary proletariat. The bourgeois press either says I am mad, or prophesies my return to the national-socialist labour party. However, the gentlemen of the press will be convinced very soon that they are wrong. My decision is irrevocable: it is to be explained not by "mental disorder," but is based on the following considerations.

1) National liberation means, first of all, social liberation: it means the abolition of the capitalist system.

2) The capitalist system can be abolished only by the socialist revolution.

3) On the strength of historical laws the vanguard of the socialist revolution must be the proletariat, organized in the Communist Party.

4) Capitalism has outgrown all national frontiers; therefore its abolition is possible only on an international scale, by the joint efforts of the oppressed masses of all countries.

5) The immediate task is to organize a popular revolution in Germany, to abolish all agreements on contributions and to conduct a revolutionary struggle against the possible intervention of the capitalist powers of the West.

6) Only after a victorious revolution can national and social liberation of the toiling masses be realized in Germany, as it had already been realized in Russia."

JAPAN

JAPANESE REVOLUTIONARY LITERATURE AND THE I. U. R. W.

In connection with the decisions adopted by the Second Conference of Revolutionary Writers in Kharkov, a split has occured in the Japanese literary organization, "The Art Union of Japanese Workers and Peasants": six of its members have broken away and joined the NAPF, an organization of Japanese proletarian writers and artists. Concerning this, the general meeting of "The Art Union" addressed an open letter to the secretariat of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers. We publish this letter below, together with the reply of the I. U. R. W.

Open letter to the secretariat of the I. U. R. W.

We wholeheartedly support the Second International Conference of Revolutionary Writers held in Kharkov in

November, 1930, in the capital of the Soviet Ukraine, and we recognize its great revolutionary significance for the proletarian literary movement of the whole world.

We trust the organizational work begun by the IURW will proceed along the lines planned by the Conference and that the struggle against bourgeois culture the world over will grow deeper and wider. We believe that the work of the conference will attain its full significance only when the proletarian literary movement of the whole world — and in each country this movement is taking its own peculiar course — is represented at the conferences. Only then the conferences can become the center of proletarian writers' activities and their avenue of direct participation in the revolutionary tactics of the class struggle. Therefore, we are especially glad to learn that delegates from 23 countries were present at the Kharkov Conference, so that it was indeed an international conference.

But we learned from the February issue of the NAPF, the Japanese Left magazine, that Japan was represented at the Kharkov Conference by Nagatakan and Matsuyama. "The Art Union of Japanese Workers and Peasants," the only militant organization of Japanese writers which has been fighting for 11 years for the orthodox Marxist line in the revolutionary literary movement of Japan, does not know who these delegates are and how they were elected to the conference.

We believe that the Japanese Federation of Proletarian Writers and Artists sent delegates to the conference under fictitious names and in electing them made use of very dubious methods. Can they be considered representatives of the proletarian literary movement in Japan, are they worthy to attend a conference of such great importance, and were they elected to the conference by the right methods?

Here is a short history of the Japanese proletarian literary movement:

The proletarian literary movement in Japan began the struggle against bourgeois culture with the publication in December 1921 of the magazine, "The Sower." As the movement grew stronger, proletarian writers and critics, collaborating on the magazine, founded in 1924 another organ, "The Literary Front." Later on the Art Union of Japanese Workers and Peasants was organized, a mass organization of Japanese revolutionary writers who form the vanguard of the revolutionary literary movement in Japan.

During 11 years of hard struggle the Union has experienced severe splits. We excluded 20 or 30 traitors from our ranks in order to preserve our movement. They were excluded because of their ultra-Left tendencies unanimously condemned by the Kharkov Conference. But taking advantage of the peculiar conditions of Japanese literature, they continue at the present time to propagate left opportunism. In December 1927 they founded the All Japanese Federation of Proletarian Writers and Artists (NAPF) and began the publication of two magazines, *Senki* and NAPF. At the same time they endeavoured by all possible means to break the political and economic front of the Japanese workers and peasants. The two Japanese at the Kharkov Conference, who called themselves representatives of Japan, are representatives of this ultra-left group. Both of these delegates used the name of the Art Union — the oldest and strongest proletarian writers organization — to prove the validity of their mandates (NAPF is only three years old). These false delegates at the conference as well as their false information about Japan must be unmasked.

We protest against the resolution on Japanese literature adopted at the conference which was based on the one-sided information of the ultra-Left group. The Art Union of Japanese Workers and Peasants forms the basis of the Japanese proletarian literary movement and is not a group of Left social-democratic writers, as this movement is characterized in the resolution of the Japanese commission at the Kharkov Conference. The Art Union and its organ "The Literary Front" will continue the struggle it has been waging for 11 years under the banner of orthodox Marxism. We are the only group of Communist writers in Japan.

We value highly the resolutions in the Kharkov Conference and we agree entirely with the line and aims the conference has laid down for the world proletarian literary movement. But we cannot agree with the resolution of the Japanese commission because it was based on the reports of unauthorized delegates. In the name of proletarian literature of the whole world, we ask:

Why did the Conference of Revolutionary Writers pay no attention to the whole history of the development of Japanese proletarian literature? Why were the delegates elected by wrong methods, delegates hostile to the interests of the Japanese proletariat? Why was not the Art Union represented at the Conference? Why do not those parts of the resolution which condemn ultra-left tendencies — one of the most important decisions adopted

at the Conference — refer to the Japanese pseudo-delegates?

How will these mistakes of the Kharkov Conference be corrected?

We repeat that we greatly appreciate the importance of the Kharkov Conference and are ready to support its resolutions. We are also ready to present at your demand an unprejudiced report of the true state of affairs in the Japanese proletarian literary movement and to produce all necessary materials.

Long live proletarian literature in Japan!

Long live the Second International Conference of Revolutionary Writers!

Art Union of Japanese Workers and Peasants (Rono geytsuka-Renmei).
Editors journal, The Literary Front.

Answer of the IURW secretariat to Rono geijutsuka-Renmei.

We are in receipt of your open letter. In our opinion your letter was self-contradictory from beginning to end. On the one hand you accept the decisions of the second International Conference of Revolutionary Writers, but on the other you make a violent attack on those Japanese comrades who helped us to organize the conference and carry on our work in the right direction and who are now showing the greatest energy in putting our decisions into practice. Your methods of attack remind us of the left-wing social-democrats of all countries. We shall consider and refute each of your accusations in turn.

I. You assert that the Japanese comrades (and there is something very suspicious about the fact that you found it necessary to mention twice that they were working under pseudonyms) were not authorized delegates. Our mandate commission, which is composed of one Russian, one Ukrainian,one German, one Hungarian and one American comrade examined their mandates and found them quite in order. Our invitation was directed to revolutionary writers' organizations all over the world and it was not sent by post but was published in the workers' press in Russian, Ukrainian, German, English, French, Czech, Hungarian, Italian, Swedish and Chinese. Our invitation was not published in Japanese because we had not at that time any connection with Japan. Neither we nor the Japanese organization which sent us delegates can take the responsibility for the fact that you did not read our invitation in *Linkskurve* or the *New Masses* which you duly received, or that you did not act upon it.

2. We were not under any misapprehension whatsoever about the Japanese delegates, and the position which they took up could not under any circumstances be called ultra-left or hostile to the Japanese proletariat. The very reverse was the case. Your suggestion that we let ourselves be taken in by false information is astoundingly naïve. We were working on the basis of actual material. Our attitude in all questions concerning Japanese revolutionay literature, as also our criticism, was based on a thorough acquaintance with Japanese literature, and Japanese political life. We may say that the conception of the history of Japanese revolutionary literature represented in your letter does not correspond to the facts. In admitting the dangerous understimation of the political and cultural importance of NAPF you are severely criticizing yourselves. No one who considers NAPF ultra-left or hostile to the Japanese proletarian organization can be our sincere friend or accept the decisions of the Kharkov conference.

3. We do not by any means decline to enter into any kind of work in cooperation with you, but the first condition of such work must be an immediate cessation of your demagogical attacks on NAPF and *Senki*. NAPF is taking and active part in the work and struggle of the international organization of revolutionary literature. The help that our Japanese comrades have given us in working out our general policy (at Kharkov more than anything else in refuting theoretically and demolishing in practice the right-wing and ultra-left tendencies), the part they have taken in the struggle against the white terror, against fascism and social-fascism and against the imperialist war threat has been of such immense value, that if we were to make a united front with you and you were to continue your attacks on NAPF and Senki, it would be the basest treachery on our part, both with regard to proletarian literature and to the cause of the proletariat in general. If you wish to fight in the ranks of the proletariat in general, if you wish to fight in the ranks of the organization of revolutionary writers of the world for our cultural and political program you must know that in Japan the way to us leads through NAPF, as has been proved by the best elements of your organization who have joined their ranks.

Secretariat IURW (International Union of Revolutionary Writers).

Béla Illés

For the general line of the I. U. R. W.—Against the "Literary Front"

The letter of the Secretariat of the IURW met with a great response both in revolutionary literary circles in Japan itself and among Japanese writers living in Germany, America and other countries.

One of its immediate consequences is this letter of the Japanese writers, representatives of the "Literary Front" in America. Their letter is addressed to the American section of the IURW. In this letter comrades Eitaro and Ayako as true though deceived revolutionaries announce their break with the social democratic organization, the "Literary Front" and their going over to the ranks of NAPF.

To the Executive Bureau of the Workers' Cultural Federation of N. Y.

To the John Reed Club of N. Y.

The capitalist countries of the world today face the greatest crisis in their history. Capitalism is speeding towards complete collapse. The toiling masses, thrown out of work by the shutting down of factories, etc., walk the streets in misery and starvation. The working masses are swinging to the left. But there can be no complete overthrow of capitalism without the leadership of the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat. Only the Communist International and its sections can lead the revolutionary proletariat in its fight for immediate and general demands. There can be no revolutionary proletarian artists' and writers' movement without orientation upon the line of the Communist Party. Any cultural organization which does not recognize the correctness of the Communist Party line represents a danger to the working class.

The Rono Geijutsuka Renmei claims that it supports the line of the Communist International. At the same time it violently attacks the Communist Party of Japan as being Leftist. In the art and literature movements it pretends to support wholeheartedly the decisions of the second world plenum of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers. Yet it openly attacks the NAPF, the writers' group of which is the section of the IURW in Japan. The demagogic Rono Geijutsuka Renmei uses revolutionary phrases to conceal its social-democratic character from the working masses. In practice, the Rono Geijutsuka Renmei attempts to prevent the toiling masses from entering the revolutionary movement.

Through our failure to fully understand the Japanese political and literary movements, we were deceived as to the real character of the Rono Geijutsuka Renmei. Thus we unwittingly helped it to conceal its social-democratic character not only by serving as U. S. correspondents for the *Bunsen* ("Literary Front"), the official organ of Rono Geijutsuka Renmei, but by actually affiliating ourselves to this social-democratic organization. We recognize this action of ours as signifying the basest treachery to the working class of Japan and the whole world. Therefore, in order to correct this serious mistake, we hereby declare the severance of all our connections with Rono Geijutsuka Renmei and, simultaneously, we pledge ourselves to uncomprisingly support the NAPF, the only federation of truly revolutionary art groups in Japan. Furthermore, we will serve exclusively as correspondents of the NAPF in the USA, and we will work actively to cement relations between the John Reed Club in the USA and the NAPF in Japan

Eitaro Ishigaki
Ayako Ishigaki

The political role of the "Literary Front" group in Japan.

The protest of the "Literary Front" against the Japanese delegation to the Kharkov conference is pure demagogy. Its purpose is twofold; on the one hand to hide from the toiling masses of the whole world the fact that its true function, as was disclosed at the congress by the Japanese delegation, is to betray the class it claims to represent, and on the other hand to deceive the working masses of Japan amongst whom its influence, is declining, into believing that it really supports the International Union of Revolutionary Writers. This is their favourite demagogical trick. When a sincere member of this group asked whether the "Literary Front" supported the Comintern and Profintern one of the foremost theoreticians of the group, Aono, hypocritically answered:

"If it was to our advantage, we would indulge in such nonsense and would say, like children repeating their lesson: 'We support the Comintern!'"

However they never once tried to make organizational contacts with the Comintern or Profintern. In fact their efforts would seem rather to be directed towards slandering the Japanese section of the Comintern in every way possible. The fact that they support the Comintern and Profintern from the point of view of Marxian theory has no-

thing whatever to do with membership of the communist party. "A Marxian understanding of some problem or other and membership of the Communist Party are two entirely different things." These people try with high-sounding revolutionary phrases and quotations, sometimes even from Lenin, Stalin and the theses of the Comintern, to hide from us the treacherous part they are really playing. In the some way, on the cultural side they confine their work to revolutionary phrases. They talk about the "art of weapons" and "art as a method of propaganda."

NAPF is trying to bolshevize art, to direct it in harmony with the program and the policy of the Communist Party and the revolutionary trade unions. Nevertheless Aono says:

"There is no centre of class forces to which our literary movement should submit. If our literary movement were obliged to act under the guidance of any organization, then we would have to give up all hope of its widespread development. Under these circumstances it would be very much more difficult for it to serve the interests of the whole class."

This shows the standpoint of the Lit - rary Front group. In their attempt to free art from politics these "communist" writers are just the some as their bourgeois contemporaries. They assert that literature must not be dependent on an organizing center.

We are not going to explain to them the A. B. C. of historical materialism. There is one thing we should like to emphasize, however. These statements have been made by a group of writers calling themselves orthodox Marxists and claiming to support the International Union of Revolutionary Writers. What does this mean? The "Literary Front" is closely connected with the Japanese liquidators and left wing social democrats. In their artistic work and artistic theory they represent the aspirations of the "left" social-democrats and although they make use of Marxian terminology and quote Lenin, they can never get away from their political premises or from their "liquidation" policy, legalism and unprincipled united front tactics. Moreover their radical phrases only hinder the advance of the Japanese working masses and weaken their growing confidence in the communist party. By professing to be so radical they are attempting to divert the masses from the Communist Party which is working under very difficult conditions. That is why they say that there is no single centre of class forces. That is why they are so disdainful of the NAPF principle that "proletarian artists should popularize in their works the illegal communist party and should inspire devotion to it amongst the masses."

In order to hide their real political function they resorted in their protest against the Japanese delegation to the Kharkov conference, to a shameless distortion of the history of the proletarian literary movement in Japan. Let us give a short account of the origin and development of this group. The Japanese Communist Party founded as a section of the Comintern in 1922 was dissolved by Yamakawa at a critical moment when nearly all the Japanese communists were in prison and when the white terror of Japanese imperialism had begun, after the great earthquake, to assume more and more brutal forms. Instead of reorganizing the scattered party on a mass basis, he suggested founding a legal party uniting the workers and peasants under the trade unions. His revolutionary political struggle theory was a mixture of syndicalism and open cooperation with legal social democratic reformism, slightly garnished with Marxist phraseology. Such a theory was bound to be left behind when the Japanese proletarian and peasant masses began to move forward. It could play no leading part in the rising proletarian movement, and so in the left wing of the group there grew up a genuine revolutionary ideology. Fukumoto criticized Yamakawa's views and formulated an entirely opposite standpoint. Fukumoto's theory marked a step forward in many ways, since it severely attacked the liquidation policy and the unprincipled united front tactics, and resulted in the re-formation of the communist party which had been dissolved by Yamakawa. But even Fukumoto made a number of mistakes and took to fractionism which led to splits in the mass organizations and resulted in the mechanical politicalization of the trade unions. In the summer of 1927 the Executive Committee of the Comintern definitely condemned the fractionism of Fukumoto and the liquidation policy of Yamakawa and pointed the way to genuine revolutionary Leninism.

The revolution in Japanese proletarian art which led to its becoming imbued with politics took place at a time when Yamakawa's theory had already lost its influence on the political and economic struggle of the Japanese proletariat, and the teaching of Fukumoto was beginning to show itself amongst those who were inclined to the left. Fukumoto's disciples carried over into their art all their leaders', political mistakes. They held that in order to crystallize a revolutionary nucleus for the proletarian movement in art all

that was necessary was theoretical struggle, and accordingly they gave up all practical work. They justified splits in artistic organizations on the grounds that such made for "ideological soundness." They held that artistic organizations were at the same time political organizations. But their great merit was that they looked upon the proletarian movement in art as one whole and always connected it up with the political and economic struggle of the proletariat. They were thus able to introduce into proletarian art the right political initiative and under their leadership valuable work was done in solving problems of organization. They failed to understand the peculiar nature of art, and hence this initiative did not lead to practical results. This is particularly true of their practical artistic work. What they produced was insufficiently concrete and had no value as propaganda. Certain proletarian artists who had already achieved something in the literary line began to oppose the followers of Fukumoto. They protested against the way in which the specific features of art were ignored, and against the identification of the artistic organizations with the political. Unfortunately they did not realize, however, that their protest was really a protest against Fukumoto's whole teaching. They confined themselves to a criticism of Fukumoto's followers in the realm of art while they shared his political views. Many talented writers of working class origin belonged to this group, but they were infected with utilitarian tendencies. They confined themselves to artistic work, to the narrow circle of problems peculiar to art. They did not sufficiently reflect in their art the political struggle of the Japanese proletariat, and did nothing to strengthen the connections between proletarian art and the masses or tighten up the organization of their group. For this reason they provided fertile ground for the propaganda of Yamakawa's followers until these showed themselves to be socialdemocrats and began an open attack on the true revolutionary section of the Japanese proletariat.

The differences in the Union of Japanese Proletarian Artists led to a split. The artists who were against the followers of Fukumoto formed Rono Geijutsuka Renmei. This splitting of the movement into two proletarian artistic organizations having the same political convictions was of course bad from a class point of view, but it was perfectly in keeping with the fractionism of Fukumoto. However when in July 1927 the Commintern had critically examined the policy of the Japanese communists, and had given its judgment, the proletarian artistic movement rectified this mistake of Fukumoto's. As a result also of a criticism of its own position by the revolutionary wing of the Japanese working class movement, proletarian art as a whole began to rectify its mistakes.

At that time yet another split of a very definitely political character took place in Rono Geijutsuka Renmei. The liquidators — Yamakawa and Co. — after they had been defeated by Fukumoto, made an attempt to win back their position in the Japanese proletarian movement, making use of the Comintern's criticism of the left wing. As a matter of fact the criticism of the Comintern was not directed only against Fukumoto's fractionism. Its criticism of the liquidators was still more severe. Yamakawa and Co. however, distorted the facts, asserting that this criticism applied only to the fractionists. They decorated their old liquidatory theories by quotations from the theses of the Comintern on the Japanese question and organized a bloc of "left social-democrats". The Rono Geijutsuka Renmei also suffered from a left social-democrat bloc. Those of its elements which supported the Japanese Communist Party, although they had a majority, were, owing to bad internal organization obliged to leave their organization and also their publication *The Literary Front* in the hands of the left wing social-democrats. In so doing the left them a powerful weapon, since this magazine had already existed for many years and counted more than 7000 contributors. At this time the left wing of the Japanese proletarian artistic movement began to rectify its mistakes under the guidance of the Comintern's criticism. The Union of Proletarian Artists outgrew its fractionism. Thus the differences between the two great artistic organizations in Japan — the Union of Proletarian artists and Senye Geijutsuka Renmei — began to diminish. At the same time the left wing of the Japanese proletarian movement began to consolidate its forces for the creation of a strong line of battle against the ever increasing offensive of capitalism. Realizing that such a step was necessary in the interests of the class war, the two organizations joined together and formed the All-Japan Union of Proletarian Artists (NAPF). Thus it was that the differences between the communist union of artists and the social democratic group become emphasized. The artists who joined NAPF carried on an energetic campaign against the Literary Front group.

They fought against the influence of this group on the masses and at the same time carried on work within the group

itself, trying to free the more talented writers of working class origin from the influence of the social-democratic leaders, and to attract them to their side. Under the leadership of the Japanese Communist Party, whose influence on the Japanese masses is continually growing and becoming more deeply rooted, the level of political consciousness of the artists of NAPF has been raised. The struggle with the left social-democratic group has become more and more bitter and the members have become better equipped theoretically. The "Literary Front" group on the other hand, has been gradually losing its contact with the masses, and the more talented and class-conscious artists have left its ranks and definitely taken up their stand on the side of NAPF. As a result of this isolation the "Literary Front" is becoming demoralized. At the present moment the "Literary Front" is nothing more than a group of writers disposing of their so-called proletarian art on the bourgeois book market.

The history of Japanese Proletarian Art during the last ten years thus discloses the treacherous role of the "Literary Front" and shows how this group is gradually falling to piece. The "Literary Front" magazine which once had 7,000 subscribers and was the pride of the group, has now lost a large number of its supporters. The group itself consists of a dozen or so writers. Their works are adorned with the ideology of the *Lumpenproletariat* and are filled with pessimism as to the future of the working class. They all describe either the poverty of the *Lumpenproletariat* or the anarchical revolts in which they take part (eg. Maedakawa, *The Beggar*, Hayama *The League of Swindlers* Ivado *The Sea of Corpses*, etc.). They describe the life of the unemployed but fail to connect it up with the class struggle of the workers. Their art cannot free itself from naturalism and remains merely descriptive of the life of the sections of the population who are being pauperized. In the works of these writers it is impossible to find any practical realization of the high sounding phrases of their theoretical leaders about art being a weapon of the proletariat or art being a means of propaganda.

Just as the writers belonging to NAPF make close contact with the working masses through reading circles and the organizations of worker correspondents the activity of the "Literary Front" is confined to mere bourgeois journalism. This is one of the causes of its demoralization. Some of them even, in gratifying their ambition as journalists, have gone so far as to publish the works of proletarian writers in bourgeois papers under their own names.

The complete theoretical bankruptcy of this group is also disclosed by the way they terrorize any of the more honest writers who go over to NAPF. The Literary Front tries to keep its members by force.

It goes without saying that these ludicrous attempts cannot save it from ruin. Its influence is on the decline. But we must not ignore its importance while the left social-democrat group still continues to have any influence on the Japanese masses in their economic and political struggle. This left social-democrat group enjoys the direct and indirect support of the Japanese police. Our task therefore is, under the leadership of the Japanese communist party, which is fighting in spite of persecution and imprisonment for influence over the toiling masses, to lay bare on every occasion the demagogy of the left social democrats and put an end to their influence on the masses. Only by carrying on an energetic campaign with this end in view can we hope to bring the Literary Front group finally into liquidation.

Koneu Senda

HOME STUDY ON ALL QUESTIONS OF PROLETARIAN ART.

One of the largest publishing houses of left wing persuasion, is publishing a series of books under the title *Home Study Courses on all Questions of Proletarian Art*. Not long ago we received the first volume of this series. More than a hundred talented artists headed by comrades Akita and Eguchi are contributing to this publication. They are all members of the various organizations included in NAPF. This work constitutes an epitome of all the theoretical and practical work carried out by NAPF (the only organization of revolutionary art in Japan) through long years of bitter struggle. The object of the publication is to make these valuable achievements available to the great masses from whose midst the most formidable champions of proletarian culture must arise.

Tokunaga Naoshi who has had such a wide practical experience and who is also taking part in this work, writes in the foreword to the first volume: — "Of those young people who write to me about their wish to become writers, every year the number of worker and peasant authors increases. And every time I read through the manuscripts of

these young authors I try to explain what I wrote about in my article 'How to write Novels.' The majority of the manuscripts which are given to me merely spoil valuable material. This is a great pity — what is the cause of it? Worker and peasant authors lead a life rich in experience and they naturally wish to make use of this experience in their literary work. Thus a worker once sent me the manuscript of a novel describing the terrible death of his friend who was a crab fisherman. He told me that he had written this novel in accordance with the last wishes of his friend and that if it was not worth publishing he would bury it in his friend's grave. When I read this novel I was greatly saddened by the fact that very valuable material, worthy of the attention of the masses, had been completely ruined. I said to the author 'I altogether sympathise with your good intention, but your real intention has not been expressed in this novel. To print the novel as it stands would be acting against your dead friend's wishes. You say, sentimentally, that if your manuscript is not printed you will bury it in your friend's grave. That might give you personal satisfaction, but if you really want to keep your promise to your friend you will make all the efforts you can to produce a novel which is as far as possible suitable for the times.' There are many examples of this sort. It is to young worker and peasant authors who are setting themselves tasks of this kind that we dedicate this series, *Home Study Courses on all Questions of Proletarian Art.*"

It is only necessary to study the first volume to convince oneself that the contributors have taken pains to explain things clearly so as to put complicated problems as simply as possible for the masses, avoiding at the same time any tendency to popularize to the detriment of theoretical soundness.

The series is to include all the most important branches of proletarian art: literature, drama, the fine arts, the cinema and music. Each of these subjects is divided into two parts, the theoretical and the practical, and a series of articles on special questions is added. Apart from these articles forming part of the systematic arrangements of the various branches, the elementary problems of the sociology and history of art are dealt with. Such leading theoreticians and political figures as S. Nakano, S. Katsumoto, S. Yamada, and T. Kataoka contribute to the general theoretical section. What gives such great practical value to the publication is that our best workers in all branches of art take part in the exposition of methodological problems. These include the writers N. Tokunaga, T. Kobayashi, S. Kishi, the theatrical producers, S. Sano, I. Hishikata, the actors S. Takizava, K. Kavarazaki, painters: T. Okamoto, T. Jabe etc. It is interesting to note that the leading bourgeois artists have also sent in work. Their essays are published with an introduction by members of NAPF.

Much attention is paid to the artistic work of other countries. This is not only shown by the fact that the artists of NAPF write about the most important works of Soviet art, but also by the fact that such prominent proletarian writers as Auerbach, Illes, Wittvogel, Renn and Biha take part in their work.

The whole series consists of 12 volumes. One volume comes out every month, and each contains more than 370 pages and costs only 1. yen.

The following are the contents of the first volume:

General Section: S. Nakano, "What is Proletarian Art."

Literature: Y. Chujo, "The Present Situation in Soviet Literature."

T. Tatena and T. Fujisava, "The Problem of Style in Proletarian Literature":

T. Tokunaga, "How to write Novels."

Drama: T. Murayama, Proletarian Drama.

Cinema: I. Iwasaki, "The Evolution of the American film, a Marxist Essay."

Fine Arts: I. Nagata, "Contemporary" Developments in Painting and Prospects for the Future.

Music: Livoba, "Music in the Old and the New Russia."

Articles on Special Subjects:

E. Hashimoto, "Maxim Gorki, Biography."

I. Nagata, "Biography of Proletarian Artists in Germany."

International Section:

N. Mori, "Charlie Chaplin, the German Workers and the Class War."

I. Yuasa, "Soviet Writers' Organizations and their Publications."

S. Matsumoto, "Film Production and Organization in the Soviet Union."

This list of contents of the first number is sufficient to show the great range of subjects. This series, in fact is the only one of its kind outside the Soviet Union. It is also very important to note that all the authors, even when dealing with the most specialized subjects are careful not to lose sight of their close relation to political and economic conditions.

Comrade Nakano says in his introduction: "The aim of this series is not by any means merely to popularize problems which have already been threshed out. Its function is to create a workshop

for collective activity in order through mass discussion to work at solving the new problems that are for ever arising. This second task is much more important for us than the first. There are still many problems which we have not yet solved. The handful of artists and writers contributing to this number cannot solve them on their own resources. To their efforts must be added those of the reading masses working together. Only through close cooperation between authors and readers can this series be made really successful."

NORWAY

THE PATH OF THE RENEGADE.

When the split in the Swedish Communist Party occurred in the autumn of 1929 Ture Nerman, a "proletarian" writer well known beyond the borders of Sweden, went over to the right wingers. Together with them he was excluded from the party. This summersault was of particular interest to Nerman's numerous readers who knew him as an author of militant poems, as a bard of internationalism to whom the idea of patriotism was utterly foreign.

A very short space of time sufficed to turn an ardent supporter of the Russian Revolution into a hypocritical enemy and mudslinger. This proletarian poet, once so popular, has now become the laughing stock of the press while his former comrades in struggle speak of him as "the court joke of the bourgeoisie".

This lamentable fall of an erstwhile famous poet, respected by all for his singlemindedness and nobility of character, is yet another proof that it is impossible to break with the revolutionary proletariat and its party and at the same time remain a revolutionary writer.

Nerman became connected with the workers' movement while still a young student and was accepted as one of the greatest and most gifted poets of the proletariat. His trenchant and satirical anti-bourgeois and anti-religious poetry, written in the most finished style and full of the fire of youth, made his name one of the most renowned in modern Swedish literature.

Nerman took part in the Zimmerwald Conference. On this occasion he associated himself with the left wing proletarian movement and became an enthusiastic student of Lenin. He took an active part in the split of the Swedish social democratic party and in the founding of the left social democratic party from which later the communist party was formed. He was one of the first Western European poets to visit the Soviet Union. His graphic correspondence from "Lenin's country" awoke a very wide interest in nonpolitical circles.

At the time of the first split in the Communist Party most of the parliamentary party officials (members of the Reichstag and municipality) and the intelligentzia, refusing to accept the 21 conditions, left the communist party and went back to the social democrats. Nerman remained in the party and was bitingly sarcastic at the expense of the petty bourgeois deserters. Even at the time of the second split in 1924 when the leader of the party and founder of the revolutionary left wing, C. Höglund was expelled from the party for his lack of discipline and his opportunist policy, Nerman still remained firm.

Nerman was the author of fiery and rebellious songs which could often be heard at workers' meetings. These songs had a very great influence on many of those workers who, not having come to full class consciousness, were still hesitating. Nerman pointed out that it was unworthy of an old revolutionary and internationalist like Höglund to put wounded selfpride and petty bourgeois nationalist interests before the international organization, which, for every honest revolutionary, should come before all else.

And yet Nerman, too, left the party. And this time his position as a popular poet in a revolutionary movement in which the level of political education was low, and where the influence of individuals played a very important rôle, was effectual in deciding the attitude of numberless workers who did not understand what was going on and who acted only according to the example of their leader whom they trusted. They trusted him because he justified his step by radical speeches and by taking a new oath of allegiance to the world revolution and to the Soviet Union.

We have a good, a very good watchword,

And that watchword is — Moscow!

He called himself and others who had been excluded from the party, real communists, asserting that their expulsion had been the result of a very deplorable misunderstanding. They would go on working for the Comintern and they would appeal to the VIIth World Congress which would certainly take them back again.

Nerman did not keep his word. Less than a year after this boast, when the victories of the Soviet Union had been admitted even by the most notorious of his opponents, when not only communists but also many bourgeois writers began to put in their voice in defence of the Soviet Union, Nerman asserted in his speeches and articles that "now it was certainly more difficult than it was formerly to defend the Soviet Union."

He repeated this when the International Red Aid asked him to sign the appeal of the International Committee in defense of the Soviet Union. This declaration, it may be mentioned, was signed by many non-communist writers such as Upton Sinclair.

Thanks to the post having been refused by another renegade bought over by the social democrats by a promise of high office, Nerman unexpectedly became senator. In the upper chamber he used the mandate stolen from the communist party. It was there that he first made a speech as "representative of the people".

Nerman, the one time "bard of the proletariat" now spoke in a light and frivolous manner about armaments and striving for peace, about social needs and all the usual humanitarian nostrums. He delivered his whole speech in the form of verse as though there was nothing serious on hand and as though he were entering a competition between divinely chosen representatives of art. The princes and foreign diplomats present listened with interest to this extraordinary recitation of a poet who was famed as a bolshevik. The bourgeois press ridiculed him mercilessly, but the social democrat organ admitted that "this ingenious and elegantly delivered review of the questions of unemployment, peace and democracy had a very definite practical value. He had expressed everything with refinement and confidence and with a most agreeable show of feeling."

In the old days Nerman had made fun of those lower middle class people, who left the communist party, terrified by its proletarian discipline, but he showed no desire to abandon his own position as an "independent writer." The revolutionary theoretician was afraid of the practical difficulties involved in the daily routine of the revolutionary struggle. It was much easier to sing about it enthusiastically than to take an active part. Nerman did not want to become a practical party man for fear of losing his "personal freedom." He wrote couplets and songs which were sung in the best theatres and in the cabarets before bourgeois audiences. This paying kind of artistic work prepared the way for his betrayal of the proletariat.

Ture Nerman of past fame, who for two decades bore the honorable name of proletarian writer, is now, in the capacity of a member of parliament, helping what he had previously sarcastically referred to as a "workhouse" government to make the machinery of the bourgeois state run smoothly. This brings him in 8,000 *krones* annually. He is helping the social democrats in their work of dulling the class consciousness of the proletariat, about which he formerly wrote, half sarcastically, half in pity "we are entering into the kingdom of the future rather than fighting for it."

This would be "independent artist" who like them all is dependent on his bourgeois publishers just as the "free" Western European worker is dependent on his employer, this one time revolutionary poet who allows himself to speak in hexametres about the needs of the millions before a well-fed bourgeois audience, merely with the conceited idea of showing off his great artistic gifts, still has the insolence to call himself a communist and to speak in the name of the proletariat.

Editor in chief: Bruno Jasienski