INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

CENTRAL ORGAN
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WRITERS

Workers of the world unite!

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The Excursion Bureau organized a committee out of the leaders of the group. The question of our work on board was discussed, of the leaders' duties and the publication of the wall-newspaper. A number of worker-correspondents volunteered to take up this work. We discussed the plan of reports to be read on the countries that we were to visit, Germany, Italy, and Turkey.

We passed the shores of Sweden. The islands Gottland and Oland. On our left was Latvia. We caught a glimpse of Reval.

A. Salov.

We glided up the Kiel Canal. Before we got up to the lockgate, someone of us pointed out a launch coming in our direction.

There were about five people on it, and they waved their hats to us. They were employees from the Hamburg and Berlin Soviet trade delegations.

We shouted "Hurrah" to them in reply. Eight policemen were already waiting on the quay.

Two German boys from the Young Communist League, who had found out that the shock-brigade workers from the Soviet Union were coming, tried to come on board so as to speak to our Young Communists. The police would not let them. One Young Communist got through somehow, though. He ran on board the *Abkhazia* shouting — "Rot Front!" (Red Front).

Along the gangway came a group of Soviet people working in Germany. They were headed by Comrade Krumin, our consul-general in Hamburg. The Soviet colony in Berlin sent its representative, too.

Our Soviet Diplomats and Trade Representatives turned out to be former workers from the Moscow and Leningrad factories — Comrades Krumin and Bayat as well. They began to tell us about Germany. We sailed up the Kiel Canal as far as Hamburg.

A. Salov.

After dinner our excursion bureau gave a lecture over the wireless on Germany, Hamburg in particular.

Along the shores of the Kiel Canal stand houses, factories and schools. The festive appearance of the *Abkhazia* as it sailed slowly up the Canal under its red flag, and the songs that rang out from its deck, drew all eyes. Heads were popped out of windows, and here and there a clenched fist — the sign of "Rot Front" — was raised, and the words "Rot Front" floated across to us.

V. Shillin.

Hamburg

Two tow-boats came out and took us to the quay. We had no sooner arrived than we heard the greetings of the dockers: "Rot Front! Rot Front!" And one German worker called out in broken Russian — "Long live the shock-brigade workers of the Soviet Union!"

We replied and cheered. The police who came down to "welcome" us were not particularly pleased at this exchange of greeting. They went up to the workers and started a dispute about something or other.

A. Salov.

The port of Hamburg gives the impression of being well thought out and well equipped. The loading and unloading of boats is fully mechanized. There are fine port railways. The pavement is diabase, and this allows immense plaform-cars to be easily moved with the help of small tractors. The tractors have a very large production capacity.

I admired the mechanized loading of bricks, — no wheelbarrows, no gangways and not one brick broken in the unloading.

The unloading of the *Abkhazia* was carried on in the same way.

We saw floating docks, beautifully mechanized, great shipyards, colossal warehouses, scores of giant steamers. We had read in the papers all about the crises in capitalist countries, but mere printed paper is not as convincing as the sight before one's eyes. It was not Sunday and there was no strike on, and yet—the great warehouses stood empty and silent as if frozen. That was how they looked at home during the civil war. Only here, on the spot, can one realize the meaning of that capitalist catastrophe that is called the industrial crisis.

We were put ashore at one of the huge shipyards where 7,000 workers used to be employed. Now only about 800 are engaged there. But even these workers, who are exceptionally highly skilled, are kept going with a great effort.

At present they are working eight hours a day, but very soon the working-day and the working-week will be shortened, with corresponding reductions in wages.

Why? Because there is no work. There is a crisis.

All the workers wear tarpaulin overalls—their own,—they are not provided by the employers.

V. Shillin.

In the sheet-iron department the different processes of preparing iron are carried on. The equipment is very old. We had this sort of equipment 40 years ago, but now most of it has been scrapped.

The machine shops occupy a tremendous area. There are many lathes here, doomed to idleness on account of lack of work. Only in one corner of the huge workshop are the lathes working. We notice gearing that was got rid of long ago in the best Leningrad works as it was uneconomical and hindered the movement of the cranes.

We did not see anything new in the pattern-shop—the usual benches.

Some very simple patterns were being made by an ancient pattern-maker. There were no young folks to be seen.

The workers wore very dirty clothes. Almost all of them had pipes in their mouths. The heads of the departments smoked cigars.

In the dinner-hour we saw how uncomfortable the workers were. They ate standing at their lathes, amid all the noise and hurry. The better-off workers ate at the dining rooms in the shipyards.

As we left the shipyard, we saw opposite the head office, several score painted booths, made of thin boards. They had tiny windows. We thought, in our simplicity, that they must be dog kennels or pigeon coves.

What was our surprise, then, to learn that they were summer "cottages" rented by some of the better-off workers.

V. Shillin.

When we had finished the inspection of the shipyard, we sailed away in the launch to our *Abkhazia.* After a good dinner we went to see the sights of Hamburg. The Trade Delegation gave us a guide to show us around.

From the port, dark, narrow streets led to the center of the town. We divided up into groups of 20 each with a leader. There were 15 groups. Sometimes the groups collided with each other, and then together with the German Young Communists who were trying to explain things to us, we presented a whole procession. People turned to look at us in astonishment; others ran out of shops to see what had happened.

And we were something to look at!

There were young lads and lasses amongst us, and grown-up men and women, and old grey-headed people. All differently dressed. Some wore ordinary caps or hats, some caps with shiny peaks, The women wore red kerchiefs and shawls on their heads, Soviet fashion. Some were in shoes, others in high Russian boots. We all had Soviet badges in our button-holes, and we held our heads high and smoked our Soviet cigarettes.

Yes, with heads held high we walked through the streets of Hamburg.

After all, we had come to visit the workers of Germany in our own ship and not just anyhow.

We had come to the German workers—not as slaves, but as the masters of our country, the land of the Soviet that is building up socialism.

The sense of *their* own dignity could be seen even in the way our folks walked. I was not surprised, therefore, that the policemen were unusually polite even when we crossed the streets at points where it was not allowed. They did not stop us, but the traffic. The policemen held up their whitegloved hands, and all buses, motor-cars and bicycles stopped to let us pass.

We saw streets flooded with light, electric signs, arresting placards. We saw the great windows of smart shops with wax figures in them and live people, too, who took the place of the wax figures. There was everything that science could invent, everything for every need, for eating or wearing. In some windows hung the carcasses of pigs or oxen beautifully done up. The pork-shops and confectioners were loaded with every delicacy. The drapery and shoe-shops were full of goods. Everything shone, everything had a price on it, from the cheapest to the dearest. There was plenty of everything. Shops, and goods and salesmen.

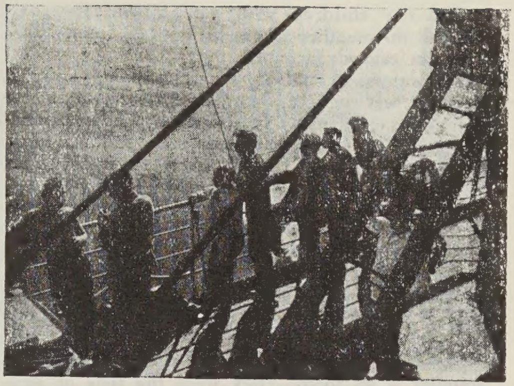
Only one thing was absent—customers.

We walked about "free" Hamburg all day, for many a long mile, but we never saw a customer. And it was easy enough to understand why; the crisis had deprived scores of thousands of workers of their wages and therefore of their purchasing power.

V. Shillin.

The police were picked men, well-grown, young, cleanshaven. They wore good uniforms, helmets and beautiful leather leggings. They were each armed with a revolver, a short sword, and a baton on a strap.

V. Shillin.



On Board

The class contrasts between the various quarters of the town struck one at once. Luxurious residences lined the shores of the lake. These belonged, of course, to the upper bourgeoisie. Then there were the districts where the intelligentsia and middle classes lived, and last of all, a labyrinth of dark tunnel-like lanes and alleys, some of them not more than six feet wide. This was where the workers lived, the creators of the world's wealth.

And how did the rich live, those who wring the last drop of blood from the workers?

The shores of the lake where the bourgeoisie took their ease and enjoyed life, was divided up into lots; each lot was fenced off in a different way. Trees had been planted along the streets, which were spotlessly clean. These were palaces —not houses. They were all built differently from one another, all two-storied. There were decorative plants and flowers in the gardens. The entrances and drive-ways were beautiful, the windows glittered like diamonds.

We entered the working-class district, and walked up one of the streets. I went first, stood with my back flat against the wall, and took four steps—I was already up against the opposite wall. We went on further. All the windows were either broken or open. The buildings were so rickety and in places leaned over at such an angle, that they seemed to be only about three feet across the street from one another. In fact, it was rather terrifying to go up a street like that at all.

We turned into a lane. I measured its width—two steps. We looked into one of the yards. Great iron bins stood in it—for rubbish. Under each window there were wooden brackets with ropes across on which washing was hanging out to dry. There were no wash-houses, or attics for drying the clothes. The people washed their clothes at home, dried them under the windows, and lived in the attics themselves. These, then, were the streets and alleys of the Hamburg proletariat. No sunlight here. Only eternal gloom.

V. Shillin.

It was terrible to see workers living like this. Rickety houses, ready to tumble down any minute. An awful stench, mingled with the odor of carbolic, came from them. Poverty peered from every crack.

We saw children with pale, drawn faces. Although the weather was cold, they ran about barefoot, in ragged garments.

We wanted to find out more about the workers' lives, so we wandered slowly from street to street. Hundreds of heads popped out of windows, hundreds of eyes stared after us, unable to understand why tourists should have come to their filthy alleys.

They asked us who we were, and when they learned that we were Soviet workers, they showed the German communist sign of the clenched fist and shouted "Rot Front!"

The children ran after us. They also clenched their little fists. The lane rang with their cries of "Rot Front!"

At a cross-roads we saw placards with the number 4 on them. They were the lists of communist candidates. The whole district had voted for them. . . .

And then up came a squad of police. The "Dynamo" engineer Rickman said: "See how soon they smelt us out! They got to know there was a landing party and are ready to meet the enemy."

A. Salov.

Germans from the Young Communist League and other organizations were waiting for us at the quay. The police were really alarmed this time at the behavior of the unemployed, who tried to show their friendliness to us. . . . Many of them were hungry; our shock-brigade workers shared their sandwiches with them. They devoured them like starving people.

In the evening I went round the town with a few comrades and a German stevedore, a communist, who had been unloading our boat. This man took us to a little room, and told us how the stevedores' union was carried on. He showed us various cards and forms. From there we went to the working-class district, where he was well-known for his work in the trade union and the Party.

It was cold and pouring rain . . . And in spite of the weather, on either side of the street women were standing. They were of all ages, and wore all kinds of clothes, but all had painted lips. One of them, a timid, neglected woman, glanced about, searching for a customer. Others, bolder, would tug at the sleeve of some passer-by, offering themselves for sale. . . .

We got to the home of a worker-communist, who had been 11 months out of work. It was on the second floor. We were warmly welcomed. As soon as the inhabitants of the flat knew why we had come, they revealed to us all the miseries of the German worker's life. It was a small flat of three tiny rooms. The floor was uneven and rotting. We went up to the attic where people had been driven, by poverty and need, to live. The roof let in the light, the wind, and the rain.

"This is supposed to be a good flat"—we were told. "As a rule the rooms and dwellings of the workers are much worse." *V. Shillin.*

Five of us Young Communists, went for a stroll around the working-class district of Hamburg. A German house-painter came with us. He took us up slums beside which even our old "Prolomka" would look like a fine, clean district.

In one of the narrow lanes we went straight from the street through an open door into a room that looked like a barn.

It was furnished with a bed, a table and two chairs. We were warmly greeted by a man and a woman, both still young. The wife, Maria, wanted to run out to buy something for us with what was probably her last penny. We would not let her go. We stayed there talking for a whole hour. They told us how terribly hard it was for workers to live in Hamburg.

We made our way along the market-gardens, now quiet, that surround the town. The dark silent outlines of huts became more frequent. At the door of one of the huts we stopped. A young man lifted the latch and let us into a very chilly room. In a moment a candle was lit and we could see a small room. There was nothing but wooden benches and a small table in it. In huts like these live paupers, petty thieves, prostitutes and unemployed workers who cannot afford to pay rent for flats.

We returned to the *Abkhazia.* We were silent all the way, oppressed by what we had seen.

G. Bebchuk.

When we went to the Zoo, I stayed on the platform in front, with Comrade Muratov, so that I could watch the driver.

Whenever the driver got up to a crossing he turned the switch himself, without getting out of the wagon. He simply opened a little window at the side, picked up the small crowbar that hung outside on the shield, and turned the switch in the desired direction.

There are no air-brakes. Only electric-brakes are used. The driver only uses the hand-brakes at a stop. There are no women to sprinkle sand in the lines. The sand is either sprinkled from a scoop or through a funnel attached to the platform (of the tram). No seat is provided for the driver; he works eight hours standing up.

V. Sokolov.

The trams are a living advertisement of the terrible unemployment. They are almost empty. And this is Hamburg, with a population of a million and a half. We were told that the trams were much less used now than before the war.

V. Shillin.

In the evening we broke up into small groups and went off to see how and where the workers spent their spare time. Unfortunately, we could see no clubs. There were plenty of cafés chantant, though,—at almost every step, with music or without. They were full of prostitutes.

V. Salov.

The restaurant-keepers vie with each in attracting customers.

Prostitution is developed to a very great extent in Hamburg. Hardly any female labor is employed on account of the great number of men out of work. When women do work, they earn very little. A shop girl gets from 35 to 40 marks a month.

Another instance of bourgeois culture—at a fair we observed the following "turn." Behind a barrier stood two beds. On one of them, lay a man covered with a blanket, on another, a woman. Above the beds was a shooting target. If a shot hit the mark the woman (or the man) fell out of bed—the woman being dressed only in an undergarment. *A. Salov.*

After three days in Hamburg our boat sailed to Naples, 1,954 klms. away.

The trip was to last eight days. *A. Salov.*

November 18-22.

Towards morning the wind dropped and the boat did not rock so much.

All the shock-brigade workers met at breakfast next morning and exchanged impressions.

"It rocked quite a bit, didn't it!"

"Yes, rather, haven't had a bite for twenty-four hours."

In the far corner the textile men from Ivanovo-Voznessensk laughed.

"And our Neverov fell out of bed. See what a bump he's got on his head—a souvenir of the North Sea."

After breakfast we read the White Russian newspapers published abroad. We read about a terrible battle that had been fought on November 8 between the G.P.U. troops and Stalin's men, at Krassnia Pressnia, in Moscow. How we laughed at their lies!

V. Shillin.

But these quiet seas were not for long. After we had left England far behind, we came into the Bay of Biscay. Towards evening the wind came up. . . . One by one the people slipped down to their cabins. *V. Sokolov.*

All three movie-men were lying down sick. What was to be done? Who was going to film the storm and our ship's fight with it?

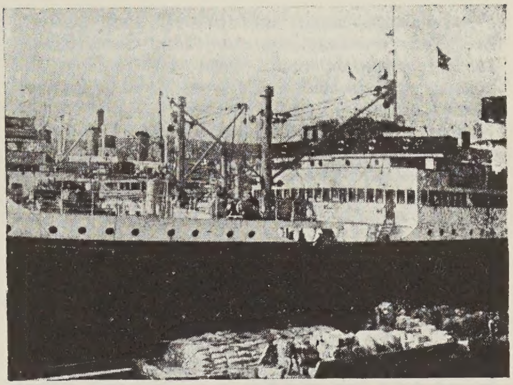
It upset me to think of it. I made a resolution: "It's got to be filmed no matter what comes or goes!"

No sooner said than done, and done in best shock-brigade style. I got hold of an energetic lad and together we persuaded one of the camera-men to get to work. We picked up the camera and the straps. To climb up to the bridge in this strong wind was an almost impossible feat. We could not keep on our feet. So we crawled, dragging the camera and the tripod after us. With great difficulty we put the camera in position. We had to twist our legs round the hand-rail so as not to be thrown down by the wind. We held on to the camera with all our might. We fastened the operator tight with straps. The boat was tossed about like a cockle-shell. Sometimes the waves swept over our heads. . . . But we got what we wanted. The storm had been filmed. Wet to the skin, we crawled back to our cabins.

A. Salov.

November 23-25.

"Get up, lads! Have a look out of the window! What weather! It's as warm and quiet as on a summer's day!" shouted Comrade Piatachkov. He had been looking after us all, while we were seasick, and now he rushed in to open the portholes.



The Abkhazia

A stream of fresh air rushed into the cabin. We drank it in greedily. We dressed quickly and hurried out on deck. It was really warm, clear, and calm. The sun shone brightly. After the spell of sea-sickness they had been through, some of the folks looked about as lively as dead beetles. They could hardly drag a leg after them, and clung to the rail all the time.

The bell rang for breakfast. We ate together for the first time in several days. The day went off very well. There were songs and plenty of fun. We forgot all our troubles and sang and danced.

The weather was much better than the day before. Far away we could see the outlines of steamships. We sailed through the Straits of Gibraltar from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. We had to go right up to the fortress, into the harbor and stand at anchor there. A surgeon had to be called in to attend to one of the women on board.

So we looked at this town, which is really a fine one, for a couple of hours. Gibraltar, a powerful outpost of British Imperialism, with its great cannon on the mountain side, guarding the path from the ocean to the sea.

We were surrounded by a whole fleet of small boats and launches with all manner of goods for sale. They offered us oranges, grapes, tinned foods, shirts, skirts, dresses, scarves, and shawls. The tradesmen were astonished that we bought nothing. They sailed off swearing and cursing us for not buying.

The Mediterranean was as smooth as a mirror. The decks shone in the sun. Our lads walked about half-naked trying to get sunburnt. Scores of dolphins splashed and leaped into the air.

V. Shillin.

In the Soviet Union foreigners receive free medical help. We had to pay ten pounds to the English surgeon we called in. That's the sort of medical aid that is given in capitalist countries.

V. Sokolov.

Comrade Zatuchny looked through his binoculars and called out:

"Come and have a look, boys. See that shore--it's Africa.—There's an elephant. See its tail wagging? Over there, near the rocks, look!"

Some were caught and put up their glasses. Everybody was laughing and joking. Some houses on the shores of Spain were visible. Near the houses, gardens and fields were divided up into narrow strips.

"Must belong to individual farmers, I suppose," someone remarked.

About dinner-time the sun was scorching. There were happy faces all round. The younger folks went up on the upper deck with cushions and blankets. They lay down in shorts to take a sun-bath.

Two lectures were given in the open air. These aimed at exchanging the experience of the shock-brigade workers. The first to speak was one of our best workers from the Stalin works in Leningrad, Comrade Shillin. He related how he had struggled for a Soviet Diesel engine which would be just as good as the foreign ones. Then Comrade Romanov from the Moscow "Sickle and Hammer" Works described how the rolling-mill won for itself the first place in the works and was awarded the Red Banner.

All the shock-brigade workers took an active part in the life of the boat. As soon as ever a lecture, a meeting or a conference was announced our comrades turned up to a man in ten minutes. Attendance was always 100 per cent. There were no idle folks on board. Everybody had something to do.

Only Ilyusha and the barber were hanging about doing nothing. But they caught it, all right. We "tried" them for neglecting their duties. This attracted the attention of all the passengers. There was plenty of laughter during the "trial."

A. Salov.

A calm, sunny morning. We caught up with the Soviet steamer *Bolshevik* going to Odessa. Loud "hurrahs" from each side. What a joy to meet one's own people, when far away from home!

In the evening there was a lecture on "The calling of the shock-brigade workers to literature." Some of the workers, who were just beginning to write stories and poetry, read their works for us. *A. Salov.*

Italy.

We sailed through the Straits. The red flags on the *Abkhazia* streamed out on the breeze. We passed some small islands. One of them was a deportation island. Our friends, those who had fought for the freedom of the working-class of Italy, dragged out their lives here. This island did not resemble the neighboring ones, to which the world's bourgeoisie went to enjoy themselves in palaces and gay villas. The island of the exiled revolutionaries looked dead.

A. Salov.

It was the 26th of November, and far away, where the deep blue of the sea melted into the blue sky the two beacons of Vesuvius could be seen.

"Italy!" cried someone.

In a few minutes the decks of the *Abkhazia* were swarming with passengers.

The movie-men rushed round the decks like mad, searching for a good place to take a picture from.

And the shore came nearer and nearer. Soon we could see every detail of that wonderful view along the foot of the brown hills. It was midday.

Naples lay bleaching in the hot sunshine. The railway climbing up to Vesuvius could be clearly seen. Two Italian tow-boats, snuffing and gurgling like fat walruses, dragged the *Abkhazia* into the narrow opening of the harbor. The fine massive buildings, half-hidden in foliage, and surrounded by beautiful gardens, Vesuvius smoking—all this was new and strange to us. We were astonished at the large number of police and others who keep order in fascist Italy. It was hard to find our colony owing to the crowd on the quay.

G. Bebchuk.

We approached the quay. About 20 boats were moored there. Motor-boats full of fascists hovered around us. One of our lads exclaimed:

"Who are those people with cock's feathers on their heads?"

As we came nearer we could see a number of officers and police, about 50 of them, all in different kinds of clothes and headgear. There were black hats, and three-cornered hats with coronets on them, and steel helmets. Some wore red belts and black cloaks.

A. Salov.

We tried to count the different uniforms. We got up to nine, including the general's with the red stripes down the trousers. We were waiting to see who would come. Some "important personages" came to examine our papers.

V. Shillin.

The "free" Italian citizens standing about on the quay, eyed us curiously.

The police, fussy and anxious, tramped up and down the quay. The workers stood about in small groups and, watchful of the fascists, were afraid to smile at us.

The local colony and the Trade Delegation welcomed us. And then a car drove up and the fascists stepped aside. A tall man got out. He was dressed in a grey suit and wore a wide-brimmed black hat.

"Who's that? Isn't it Maxim Gorki? Looks like him—"

We all rushed to the stern. A loud voice cried—"Long live Maxim Gorki!" and a friendly hurrah thundered out over the quay and the shore.

All the Italians on the quay rushed towards the place where Gorki was standing, but the police drove them off the quay.

Gorki was visibly excited. He rubbed his hands. All sorts of questions were hurled at him from the boat.

A. Salov.

When Gorki and the other guests from the Trade Delegation, came up the gangway, they were met by the excursion bureau. A short meeting was held on the upper deck.

First the chairman of the Delegation spoke and then Gorki.

Alexei Maximovitch took off his hat and obviously agitated, began:

"Comrades, there has never been such an occasion as this in my life. When I see you, the vanguard, the best shock-brigade workers of the Soviet Union, I can't find words to express my joy. We are living through great times now, and you are the heroes—who are bringing miracles to pass. . . ." His voice quivered, and tears shone in his eyes.

This short, sincere address touched all of us.

Then the shock-brigade workers replied. Comrade Bogdanov introduced me to Maxim Gorki. I gave him a copy of my book *The Birth of a Workshop.*

At the same time the two old friends—Gorki and the Leningrad shock-brigade worker, Shillin, met. *A. Salov.*

We embraced each other warmly. Our eyes, full of tears, expressed what words were powerless to do, what could only be felt.

For I had known Gorki as a youth, in the gloomy days of tsarism. It was from his works that I had learned to fight for freedom. Sitting behind prison bars, I had read his "Stormy Petrel" and sung his song. "'Damp and lonely is my dungeon. Beginning from 1905 I had, together with him, worked for the common cause. And so on right up to the October Revolution, in which a whole generation of the best revolutionaries lost their lives . . .

And now here was Gorki, and here was I—in a strange land, thousands of kilometers from our own country. *V. Shillin.*

We strolled along the quay to the public gardens, passing an ancient half-ruined fortress on the way. Groups of monks and young priests in long black cassocks with white collars and wide capes were frequent, but almost no working people. Everyone we met was a young priest, or an old one hardly able to move for fat, or else a policeman.

A. Salov.

We saw a group of Sisters of Mercy with stiff white aprons and kerchiefs. Our group-leader explained to us that in Italy there is one priest to every 15 persons. Every priest is "allotted" a group of families. He knows their lives in and out. A woman must go at least once a week to confession. Here, under pain of chastisement by the "almighty god," she must tell the priest all that goes on in the family, and especially what her husband or her friends are doing; do they attend any illegal meetings, what do they say about this or that government measure. This was not Hamburg, there were no communists about. In Italy the Communist Party works in dead secret. Membership in it is punished as a crime—with a sentence ranging from five years to life imprisonment. *G. Bebchuk.*

In the best streets the asphalt was polished by the tires of numerous motor-cars. Here and there one saw a policeman standing on a small raised platform. He held a white baton (in European style), for directing the traffic.

In spite of the fact that Naples has existed as a city for 2,000 years, its traffic seemed to us "barbarious," extremely backward and Asiatic. It had nothing in common either with the USSR or Europe. There were little gigs, and cabs of various kinds and flat carriages like platforms to seat six persons. For carrying heavy loads, etc., there were carts with two wheels the height of a man.

Asses and horses variously harnessed trailed up and down the streets. Swift cars passed by. Motor-lorries raced past carts with lumbering cart-horses. .... One could study the successive stages of the development of transportation here—from the primitive conveyances of ancient times to modern, civilized methods.

There were plenty of trams in Naples. Many of them ran close to the side-walk and this was extremely perilous for pedestrians. The streets were full of the rattle of carts, the cries of the drivers, the creaking of the primitive two wheeled carts, the bells of the trams, the hooting of the motor-cars, and the crack of whips.

How different from the streets of Hamburg! The street discipline in Naples was more in the Russian style. No fines were imposed, although we saw many notices indicating traffic rules.

After spending some time in the best quarters we got to the old town. What a difference! Narrow, tortuous streets, full of the poorest people. People sat about or strolled up and down near their dwellings. There were masses of ragged children everywhere. Dirt and rubbish were thrown straight from the windows into the street. The passer-by had to keep his eyes open. Both children and young lads begged and annoyed passers-by. They beseeched one for money and cigarettes. If one gave them a cigarette— a whole new herd of children would appear.

And then what astonished us most of all was washing. Except in the most aristocratic parts of Naples, lines of washing hung the length and breath of the streets. What a disgusting sight! It was everywhere, under the windows, on the balconies, on ropes, on poles, on wires. Night and day.

Even during demonstrations, none of our towns would ever be so profusely decorated with posters and flags as Naples with ragged washing. And this in the hottest, sunniest, southern weather, in a place where there is no winter.

V. Shillin.

We danced and sang on the open deck until late night. Many Italians gathered on the quay, and listened to the Russian songs with great interest. *A. Salov.*

The bourgeoisie from all over the world come to see Pompei. We saw many of them. One sight in particular was, for us, unforgettable. Two workers were carrying a cushioned litter, on which a fellow weighing about 20 stones was enthroned, with a cigar between his gold teeth. We were indignant to see such exploitation of human beings. This pot-bellied bourgeois was, apparently, tired of riding on expensive horses and in motor-cars, he wanted to ride on the shoulders of workers as well.

A. Salov.

We had a great desire to go and see for ourselves how the Italian workers lived. We broke up into small groups and wandered about the town.

We went up narrow streets, six or seven feet wide. The houses were five or six storeys high. In spite of the warm weather it was damp.

Apparently, these streets were never cleaned. Ragged barefoot children played about among the rubbish heaps. There was no other place for them. No gardens, or parks. Neither children nor grown-ups had the chance to breathe the fresh air, to feel the warm sunshine. They lived in dark crowded rooms. We went into a worker's flat. It was a squalid place. In a niche in the wall stood several images and "holy" pictures. A lamp or two burned before them day and night. They took the place of electric light, which the worker could not afford. People lived, crowded together like insects, in these streets. A hand-to-mouth existence.

We went on further. It was difficult to start conversation. We did not feel quite ourselves.

"What are you so thoughtful about comrade?" said someone. "You'll miss the 'heavenly kingdom' that way."

He was right. At every street corner there was a picture of the "Blessed Virgin" or "Christ" with a lamp burning before it.

We were surrounded by "angels." This earthly "branch office" of the "heavenly kingdom" amused us and put us in a better humor.

Women here were like slaves. Starvation drove many of them to the brothels,, which are nominally illegal in Italy.

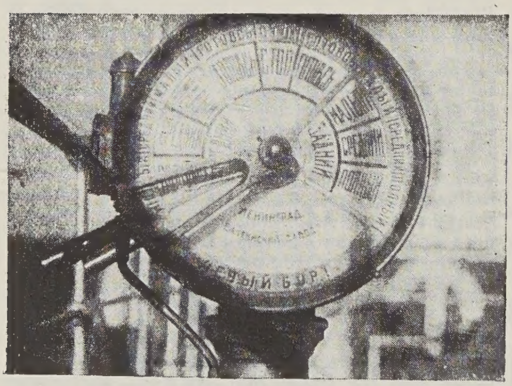
We took no notice of the spy who was shadowing us. We went from street to street. Everywhere the same picture of misery. We would have liked to have stayed longer, to have spoken a few words to the Italian workers, as we did in Hamburg. But here it was impossible.

We only saw the drawn, yellow faces, looking at us inquiringly, as much as to say, "Who are you?"

And whenever we whispered, *Russo laborito (Russian worker)* their eyes followed us eagerly, and they waved their hands stealthily to us. They could not understand how it came about that the workers of the Soviet Union were walking about freely in a land where fascism and catholicism raged.

We felt sorry that we were unable to tell our brothers, the Italian workers, how we are living in the first Soviet country and how, led by the Communist Party, we are building socialism.

A. Salov.



We went into a worker's flat. It was damp, dark and dirty. There was a kerosene lamp for light. The streets were so narrow that two carts could not pass each other. Almost all the houses had stone floors. The children were all thin, with pale, waxen faces. Tuberculosis takes a heavy toll of the inhabitants in the working-class districts.

Many of the childnen we saw were deformed—hunchbacked, crippled or suffering from rickets. Not only children, either; there were plenty of bow-legged, lame, and dwarfed grown-up people to be seen in the streets.

In the day-time the streets were alive with hawkers. They had asses harnessed to carts laden with vegetables and other produce, and their shrill cries filled the whole street. Whenever someone made a sign from the windows of the third or fourth floors, the hawkers would stop. A basket with money in it would be let down on a rope. The salesman would put the vegetables, etc., in the basket and it would be drawn up again.

V. Sokolov.

In the evening we saw how the baskets were let down, this time with rubbish that was thrown on the pavement. Then the people fetched out their braziers, lighted fires and got their food ready, there in the street.

V. Shillin.

In this place, the higher up a flat, the higher the rent. This as on account of the fact that during hot weather all the rubbish in the streets rots and stinks. On the upper floors this could not be felt so much. Poor folks, workers, and small craftsmen lived on the ground floor, in one room; in most cases it looks something like a garage or coach-house, with a big door. Inside there was usually a bed, a good-sized table and a small table, on which an image stood with a candle before it.

The Catholic Church has caught the working-class of Italy fast in its web. Unbelievers are regarded as equal to the communists, and woe betide him who is suspected of such a thing.

V. Medvedev.

The places where the poor and the craftsmen lived resembled the hovels where the Jews lived, in tsarist Russia. In dark, damp cellars there was a confusion of everything—tools and people and furniture. Here they worked, slept and ate. Syphilis, prostitution and images with lamps burning before them.

It all reeked of the Middle Ages, the Holy Inquisition. One thought of the tortured victims of the Jesuits.

V. Shillin.

November 28.

The last day of our stay in Naples—and only today did we get the chance of seeing the Italian factories.

We visited one locomotive and aeroplane factory which employs 1,600 workers.

There were no automatic lathes to be seen there. The gearing that has been done away with nearly everywhere at home was in full swing here. The equipment of the forge, the foundry and the spring-shop was quite old. There was no ventilation nor safety devices. But all was very clean;

there was no scrap or rubbish lying round. Smoking was forbidden.

We were astonished to find only young people working in the machine-shop. One of our party decided that it must be a technical school.

"No," said one of our comrades. "The capitalists find it unprofitable to employ grown-up workers. They try to exploit the young lads as far as possible. They get them much cheaper."

The engineer tried to take us round as quickly as possible. *A. Salov.*

The equipment and methods of work in the Italian workshop seemed to us, Leningrad workers, old-fashioned and backward.

There was very little light in these shops.

A great deal of muscular effort was required. The workers were told that we were tourists, but we explained that we were workers. They did not believe us at first. Then they gave one of the workers a plane that was out of order and asked him to plane with it. Our worker took the plane, put it right and did some good planing with it. He picked up another tool and did the next operation, cleaned the tool with emery-paper and the test was finished. *V. Shillin.*

The local papers gave the Italian workers false information about us. And in this workshop we had the chance of proving that we were workers. It was like this. When the group-leaders had left the forge and only two comrades, one from the Stalin Works and the other from the Lenin Works, and myself remained, the Italians were just taking out a mould from the furnace. We picked up hammers and took our turn. The Italians understood at once that "petty capitalists" could not strike like that. They looked at our hands and said in Italian.—

"Good work, Russians!"

V. Medvedev.

Our visit was over. We were given as a souvenir an album containing photos of all the articles produced by the works. A small detail—as we were going out of the gate we saw a big picture of Mussolini making a speech to the workers.

Another thing the managers called our attention to, was a portrait of the manager of the workshop, hung in a prominent place. In front of it was a bouquet of flowers. We were told that the workers liked their boss so much that they had hung up his portrait and decorated it with flowers.

We had our doubts about this story, but we did not wish, of course, to argue.

V. Shillin.

There was absolutely no chance to speak to the workers. They soon got to know that we were Soviet workers, however, and they tried to show their approval stealthily, from behind the lathes.

The annual production of this factory is 30 wagons, 20 locomotives and 300 aeroplanes. A worker is paid on an average 370 lire (not quite four pounds) a month. The working-day is ten hours.

From there we went to the "Neapolitan Textile-Mill." There were only 5,000 instead of the normal 10,000 workers. They work exclusively for stock. The owner of the factory showed us the stock-rooms, chock-full of bales of goods. That

A Social Evening

was one of the consequences of the crisis, the deadly disease of capitalism.

We were urged on at a good pace through the mill. The management did not desire to answer many of the questions we put and that hindered us from forming a complete picture of conditions in the factory. The engineer from the *Trekhgorny* Works, Comrad Shelekhov, said that the factory was much better equipped than our old ones, but that the new factories built lately in the USSR were far ahead of these.

One incident served to show us the real state of affairs in the mill. One girl, evidently only a learner, could not manage the thread. The forewoman noticed this and, in spite of the fact that strangers were present, gave the girl a resounding smack on the face.

One of our Young Communist girls from Ivanovo-Voznessensk caught sight of a loom like hers in a corner of the workshop. She wanted to show that she could work as well as the Italian girl. She went up to the loom, and the Italian gave up her place, first breaking-off the thread.

Our shock-brigade girl started working and managed the loom so well that they all admired her. She worked a few minutes, shook hands with the Italian worker and went away.

Seventy-five per cent of the workers in this mill were women and girls. Spinners and weavers got from two shillings to half-a-crown a day. Many looms were decorated with images or "holy" pictures. The Italian priests carry on a great deal of propaganda in the factories.

A. Salov.

There are a million unemployed in Italy. The crisis is most acute in the textile and silk industries. At present 55 per cent of the artificial silk factories are closed and 120,000 of the workers are out of work. A few months ago there was a big strike in the "Fiat" motor-works. It was put down with great brutality. Seven workers who were arrested for distributing leaflets were sentenced to 50 years imprisonment.

G. Bebchuk.

A calm warm evening. Three hours remained until the departure of the *Abkhazia*. Two motor-cars drove up to the quay. Maxim Gorki and our Soviet ambassador Kursky came to see us off. Our party gathered in the second-class hall for a meeting. Comrade Kursky made a speech on our relations with Italy. Then Comrade Vigalok summed up the results of our visit to Italy and read out the shock-brigade workers' address to Maxim Gorki. *A. Salov.*

Comrade Maxim Gorki!

We, the shock-brigade workers of the biggest factories and works in the Soviet Union, on our departure from Italy, tender you our greetings. We were awarded a trip abroad for good work in fulfilling the Production-and-Financial Plan. Here, far from the Soviet Union, we have become convinced once more of the rightness of our Communist Party and of our work. In the short space of time that we spent in capitalist countries we have seen with our own eyes the full extent of the social contradictions in the capitalist system and all the horrors of the crisis it has brought on itself.

We have seen whole armies of police and priests, guarding the pillars of capitalism. We were reminded of what we went through ourselves in tsarist Russia. And once more we felt the joy of the victory of October, 1917, and the consciousness that we were the masters in our own country. Here on the territory of the capitalistic West, we met you, Alexei Maximovitch, you who were one of the best fighters for the cause that we all serve. We shall never forget your kindness to us. You stayed with us all the time we were in Naples, and we felt that you were our great friend and elder comrade.

In saying farewell, we want to assure you that when we get back to our own socialist country, we shall fight with still greater energy, under the guidance of our glorious Communist Party, for the cause of socialism, for the rapid construction of socialism.

We shall fight with all our might against tendencies to deviate from the path laid down for us by Lenin and his Party

All our strength, and if it should be demanded of us, our lives, will be given to the victorious cause of socialism.

Hearty greetings to you, Alexei Maximovitch! Long live the heroic working-class of the Soviet Union, that produced the great fighter for its cause — Maxim Gorki! Long live the cause for which we are fighting and which will be victorious throughout the world!"

Alexei Maximovitch spoke and then shock-brigade workers.

"I want to return to the USSR a member of the Communist Party," announced Comrade Vassiliev, the greyheaded worker from "The Red Triangle."

An old woman-worker from Ivanovo-Voznessensk said with tears in her eyes:

"Comrades! I saw the slums of Naples and the terrible conditions under which workers in capitalist countries live. I don't want to stay outside the Party and longer. I ask to be taken into the Party!"

There are plain, simple words, so natural that they trouble the soul. And it was just such words that we heard from the lips of 12 shock-brigade workers, who announced one after the other, their intention of joining the Party. *A. Salov.*

To the tune of the "International," to shouts of "Long live the Soviet Embassy in Italy!" "Long live Maxim Gorki!" we put off from Naples. *A. Salov.*

Turkey

And now Naples faded away in the distance. We were going into the Aegean Sea. It was morning. The passengers began to appear on deck. On all sides people were talking and comparing notes about Naples. A Young Communist girl from Leningrad asked:

"Why, was that Italian doctor — the man who went about and interpreted for us — arrested?"

"Why? To prevent him speaking Russian, and going about with Soviet citizens."

"Three workers on the quay were arrested just because they wanted to come up to us."

We remembered seeing some prisoners being led in chains past us. All the power of fascism is in these chains. *A. Salov.*

November 29

A warm, bright morning. We sailed into the Tyrrhenian Sea. The wind grew stronger. The boat rocked a little. About 10 o'clock we came in sight of Sicily.

November 30

Warm and sunny. Exchange of experience between factories. Shock-brigade workers from Donbas, Moscow, and Ivanovo-Voznessensk spoke. The weather was fresher. *V. Shillin.*

Before we arrived in Turkey our Young Communists organized a brigade to help the boat's crew. By midday all the decks, the taps and the floors shone with cleanliness. The workers, sweating and happy, finished their work and hurried off to the showerbaths. The weather was beautiful. The knowledge that we would soon be in Turkey and that from there it was not far to our own country, cheered all our hearts. We were in high spirits. *G. Bebchuk*

December 1

We were sailing through the Dardanelles. The devastation wrought in the country by the imperialist war could still be seen. Several hundred thousand soldiers fell in this place. Dead forts stood along the shore... A huge monument to those fallen in the war. We passed the Dardanelles and sailed into the Sea of Marmora.

Our "floating republic" turned sharply to the north, and we left a good weather behind us. Now the warm smile of the sun did not gladden the hearts of the passengers as it had on the shores of Africa.

Meetings were held all day. Exchange of experience in socialist competition. Comrade Svetlanov gave a lecture on Turkey.

Evening came and the lights of Stamboul (Constantinople) could be seen away off in the distance. We were approaching the famous Bosphorus. *A. Salov.*

December 2

The Turkish police are the dirtiest and most placid, if one may say so, of all the police we have so far met with. The second day the police guarding us knew all our faces. Whenever we went down the gangway, where the police stood, we would hear, in broken Russian:

"All right, all right — please."

G. Bebchuk.

Stamboul is divided by the Golden Horn into two parts — Stamboul Proper and Peru. The last-named is the European side, Stamboul is the Asiatic quarter. Peru is comparatively clean, Stamboul is dirty and the streets are so narrow that two carts cannot pass each other.

There are very few industries in Stamboul and therefore almost no factory workers. Plenty of porters and stevedores can be seen about.

For a very small fee they carry any weight, in baskets on their shoulders, from one end of the town to the other.

A stevedore-porter earns from about 1 to 1½ lira (2 to 3 shillings) a day. Meat costs from 85 to 95 piastres (9½ d. to 10½ d) a lb. and rent is from 15 to 20 lira a month.

St. Sofia is a former Greek church that has been turned into a mosque. Inside there is a marble column, faced with thick bronze. In the column is a conical opening. According to tradition, if a sick person put his finger into this opening, which secretes moisture, he would be instantly healed. We followed the example of the ancients without any intention of insulting the Mahometan god, put our fingers into this sacred opening. But without result. Not only was healing denied to us, but we could not even feel any moisture. *V. Shillin.*

At the entry to the temple stood an urn from which a stream of water ran. The stream was cold. It was not ordinary water, but "holy." It did not draw any of us to the "heavenly kingdom," however. *A. Salov.*

A small group of our people went to a textile mill. It was the second largest in Turkey, but only employed 200 workers. The owner explained the conditions of work to us.

The workers receive a miserly wage. Men — one and nine pence a day, women — one and three pence and adolescents — 1 shilling. We saw worn-out children of ten working in the factory. The working day for all, without exception, is 12 hours. There are no holidays. Social insurance is unknown, and so are factory laws.

Industry is very poorly developed in Turkey. The main branches are — tobacco, wool, cotton, and carpet-weaving. Only 147,000 workers are employed altogether.

The proletarian holiday — the First of May — is banned in Turkey. Strikes are put down with extreme cruelty. We seldom saw any educational institutions in Stamboul, and very few cinemas, which are mostly in the principal streets. There were, however, cabarets and underground wine-shops at every step. Prostitution is very widespread. In one quarter of the town we counted eight streets with nothing but brothels in them.

A. Salov.

Sight-seeing in Hamburg

The streets where craftsmen and the poor of the town lived were no different from those of Hamburg or Naples. Just as crooked, as narrow, as dirty.

Not taking anything at its face value, a group of elderly workers went along with me at night to explore the slums of Constantinople. One could not help thinking that it was full of haunts for murderers and thieves.

In one part there was an extraordinary type of brothel. On both sides of the street were one-roomed dwellings with the doors opening straight on to the pavement. In these rooms half-naked women warmed themselves over small charcoal braziers. These victims of starvation and lawlessness sold themselves for a few pence.

V. Shillin.

The stevedores are exploited pitilessly here. There are very many of them. With ropes slung over their shoulders they carry their loads from the quays to the shops. They can hardly move under their loads. Here men take the place of horses and motor-cars. *A. Salov.*

There are two classes in the trams. The first-class consists of beautiful miniature cars with soft cushions. The second-class looks like the green boxes used in Moscow for rubbish, only a little bigger.

The port is not a large one, but it is very lively. There are none of the giant cranes and shipyards we saw in Hamburg, but on the other hand, there is not that terrible silence that struck us in the German port. Dozens of vessels crowd at the wharves, — Rumanian, Swedish, British. The half-lighted wharves hum with a thousand sounds.

We saw whole families living in one tiny room, where the door served as a window.

Looking at these poor dwellings one was reminded of the Hamburg Zoo.

G. Bebchuk.

There were many cafés and lunch-counters in Constantinople, as well as tea-rooms open day and night. As we went down near the port at night we saw a ghastly picture — the stevedores, after working all day in the port, spent the night in the tea-houses. Others sat there half-dressed, playing cards.

At night the outskirts of the town were not lighted, and it would be easy to break one's neck on the rough unpaved roads.

V. Shillin.

Roast chestnuts were sold at almost every corner. On the bridge we met a squad of Turkish soldiers. Their tunics and breeches were of coarse stuff like sack-cloth. Worn-out boots completed their uniform. We remembered our Red Army boys with pride.

On the eve of our departure from Turkey we all went to the fair. It was in the old part of Constantinople. There were hundreds of tents representing all the firms in the world, and more salesmen than customers. Many "ex-Russians." They traded in everything, beginning from roast chestnuts. *G. Bebchuk.*

The second day of our stay in Stamboul we visited the various factories — leather, textile, sugar, carpet and others.

Our group which consisted of old experienced workers went to the office of the Trade Delegation to hear Comrade Khodorovsky's lecture. Comrade Semechkin was chairman. There were so many of us that the hall was packed to over-flowing. We listened with great interest to this lecture, which related to the work of the Trade Delegation.

The political side of the lecture was particularly interesting for our party. A lively discussion took place after the lecture.

V. Shillin.

Our Ambassador, Comrade Suritz, suggested that we inspect the work of the Soviet offices in Turkey. I went with 11 comrades to visit the chief agency of the Sovtorgflot in the Near East. This inspection revealed many faults and shortcomings. We shall communicates our conclusions in this connection to the proper organizations on qur arrivel in Moscow. *V. Medvedev.*

The office of the Trade Delegation stood in the center of Stamboul. They had great wrought-iron gates decorated with the emblem of the USSR, and a fine asphalt court with flower-beds in the center.

The reception room was set out with dozens of chairs and tables. Rich chandeliers hung from the ceiling. In one corner there was a piano and good many stringed instruments.

Comrade Suritz explained — "We got all this ready for you. Wanted to give you tea — like old friends." *G. Bebchuk.*

The banquet was over. A few of the party stayed behind to help the Soviet Colony clear up, wash dishes and put away the chairs. In a word — to prepare the room for the rest of the program. Soon it was ready. The music struck up. Songs and dances followed.

December 5

Morning. No sun, but warm. Visitors from the Soviet Colony came with their children. The ambassador and the trade representative also same. After the meeting, candidates into the Party were to be received.

One by one our workers, people who had many years of factory labor behind them, came up and announced —

"I ask to be admitted into Lenin's party."

The last few minutes. The Turkish guards got quite excited over our going away and asked to be photographed. Our tireless movie-man complied with their request. They went off satisfied.

V. Shillin.

We sailed down the famous Bosphorus with its wonderful shores — into the Black Sea. Someone sighted two motor-cars racing along the shore. It was our ambassador, Comrade Suritz, and our trade representative, Comrade Khodorovsky, with some other members of the Trade Delegation. They were hurrying to greet us from their summer house on the shore. They stopped at the house, and gave us a salute, by lowering the red flag from the tall flag-pole of the house. Our boat returned the salute.

The shores of the Bosphorus disappeared. We were out in the open sea.

A. Salov.

Home! Home!

We sailed into the Black Sea. A cold north wind and a slight rocking drove us down to our cabins.

V. Shillin.

"Comrades, the shore — the Soviet Union!" We all rushed up to get a glimpse of a dark line of shore on the horizon.

"In two hours we'll be in Odessa" — announced the captain.

The crew decorated the *Abkhazia* with flags. Two launches came out to greet us. One of them was a military boat, in the other were workers and a band. The *Abkhazia* slowed down. Everybody came up on the top deck.

The tow-boat called out — "Long live the Odessa workers!"

A long, loud "hurrah" from our side. The band played a march.

The movie-man climbed up on the mast, and turned the camera on the visitors boarding our boat. We approached the quay. Several thousand workers with banners and flags and a Red Army guard of honor were waiting there. Our hearts beat furiously. We were coming at last to our own shores.

The folks on the shore shouted — "Long live the shock-brigade workers of the Soviet Union! Hurrah!"

The chairman of the Odessa town soviet opened the meeting. He asked us to help them to raise the level of work in some of the factories, where the program had not been fulfilled. We were welcomed by German, British and Italian sailors.

After the meeting, we broke up into groups and went round the factories making speeches. We told the workers our impressions of the countries we had seen, and about the lives of the workers in those countries. In the evening a big meeting of the Odessa workers and the shock-brigade workers, was held in the State Opera Theater, where Comrade Vigalok spoke on our foreign trip.

Next day, after seeing the sights of Odessa, we said farewell to the crew who had conducted the *Abkhazia* through six seas, and done it well.

Ilyusha and the barber cried. They were not offended that we had "tried" them for their lack of discipline. They had also become shock-brigade workers. They thanked us for showing them how to work in shock-brigade style.

At the request of the Odessa trade union council, six of us — Traskin, Piatachkov, (from *Krassny Putilovets Works)* Netujina, and Medvedev (from the 'Baltic" Works) Ivanov *(Electrozavod)* and myself (from the "Stalin" Motor-car Factory) were put on to work in three Odessa factories, to help the workers there to fulfil their program.

Thousands of workers with bands and banners, stood on the platform to see the trippers off. The Odessa workers had come to give the Moscow and Leningrad folks a send-off.

"You've got to carry on a final struggle for the general Party line, and to fulfil and even exceed the production and financial plan, and to finish the Five-Year Plan in four years —" the shock-brigade workers urged the Odessa workers.

The last carriage of the train vanished into the darkness.

The Moscow and Leningrad workers were hurrying back to their own lathes to start with new strength, the struggle for the third year of the Plan.

The shock-brigade workers stayed in Odessa seven days. Still, we shook the works up pretty well. On the eve of our departure from Odessa we gave an account of our work to the trade union council, and brought up the question of the dismissal of those chiefly responsible for the gap in the program: foremen, heads of departments and trade union workers. Then we put forward our proposals for the filling up of the gap.

A. Salov.

It is only when one sees the living conditions of workers in the capitalist countries that one begins to value, properly, our Soviet Union. We work for ourselves and they — for the capitalists. There is a wonderful future before us; theirs is a life without any hope. When one sees how the German and Italian workers have to lower themselves before their exploiters, one remembers some of the lazy grumblers and deserters here, and thinks — "It would be a good thing to send people like you, who only spoil the production-plan, abroad, to work in capitalist conditions for a couple of months!" I am convinced that they would some back to the USSR good propagandists.

After seeing the way one man exploits another abroad I want to shout to the whole USSR —

"Comrades! Let us redouble our efforts! Let's fight still harder to exceed the Production- and Financial Program for the third year of the Five-Year Plan! Let us be watchful of our enemies, of the kulak, the wrecker, the interventionist — and their agents. Let us close our ranks around our leader, the Communist Party and its Leninist Central Committee!

A. Salov.

Translated by
Anthony Wixley

Antal Hidas

And I'll be home within a year

Translation from Hungarian

Being a reply to the question — What would you do if a war was declared against the Soviet Union?

If in the Workers' fatherland, assigned where tools of war are made,
You'll find me with a furious band, the champion shock-brigade!

But if the war should reach me, where a worker is yet a slave,
I shall bend the barrels of their guns whom the lies of the rich deprave;
I shall wreck their factory through and through,
Give them sand for powder too,
Make shrapnel fuses stick like glue, and laugh to hear them moan;
There hand-grenades will never slay a comrade of our own.

Strike after strike there will surely be,
Squelching the giants of industry,
Squelching the giants of industry, of misery and war!

If in the Workers' Fatherland, where the chemicals are mixed,
You'll find me in a shock-brigade, no rest, no hours fixed;

But if the war should reach me, over there where I was raised,
I'll work them bloody sabotage until they're cracked and crazed;
I'll throw them all in darkness, clog the shafts with iron dust,
Set fire to the magazines, yes, show them lust for lust!
I'll perforate the gas masks, tear the gas lines all apart,
Hurl rocks into the steam vaults, destroy their very heart!

Strike after strike there will surely be,
Squelching the giants of industry,
Squelching the giants of industry, of misery and war!

If in the Workers' Fatherland, sent loading wartime freight,
I'll be panting on a shock-brigade from earliest morn till late.

But if the war should reach me where workers still are bound,
A monument of wreckage will be left upon the ground;
I'll loosen the bolts, tear up the boards,
Confuse the switches on the roads,
Incite the men against their lords,
Winning them to our side;
And the bombs I'll plant beneath each bridge,
Will help to turn the tide;

And then each man will turn his gun,
His flashing, fierce, triumphant gun,
Sending the real foe on the run, ending the cause of war!

Yes, if the war should reach me, while still in Moscow here,
I'll join the Workers' Army *and be home within a year!*
I'll be home within a year, let the bourgeois drink that down! —
I'll be marching home ecstatically, let the plunderers understand,
For the whole vast world will be our home, our Workers' Fatherland.

Translated from the Hungarian by
Leonard Spier.

Giovanni Germanetto

The autobiography of an Italian barber

Translation from Italian

CHAPTER I

Early Memories

The first memory I have is of suffering.

It seemed that I was awakened to life by pain, sharp and piercing. I underwent an operation on my left leg, which had been affected by infantile paralysis.

I can remember lying on a narrow bed. Around it stood my mother, father, the doctor and some relatives. I must have been about three years old at the time. I can remember the scene vividly to this day. The years that followed imprinted it on my memory for ever.

I never enjoyed the carefree childhood that other children have. I was unable to run or jump about but could only sit and watch the other boys and girls. And this caused me more suffering than all my pain. I very soon got into the habit of brooding. My brother and sisters, who were younger, but much healthier than I was (nobody else in our family was sick) had been taught to help me. This I found touching and at the same time humiliating. I grew up a nervous, irritable child.

I remember well the endless arguments between my mother and father over my disease. My father was a metal worker, and a non-believer. The working day of those times was eleven hours, but he often used to work overtime in order to make a little extra money for his sickly son.

His most cherished dream was to send me to Turin, to the famous Maurizian Hospital.

My mother, on the other hand, was very religious. She did not believe in doctors at all but put her faith in the saints and famous miracle-workers. Every day the poor woman discovered some new healer.

As a result of these parental disputes, I was in turn subjected to electrical treatment—for which my father paid with his overtime work — and carried off for "healing" to the various Madonnas and saints that happened to be in the vicinity.

My mother would pray and I would gaze around at the paintings on the walls and, in general, feel bored to death.

When I was six an old aunt of mine, Aunt Rosa, came to see us, I had often heard them talk about her at home. She was quite an important personage in a local religious community. It appeared that Aunt Rosa had heard of another "healer" in Mondovi. There was a big monastery in Mondovi. It had been built by one of the members of the Royal House of Savoy in token of gratitude to the Madonna for some battle won.

My father was very much against Aunt Rosa's suggestion, and argued that the journey would only tire me out, but in spite of this the three of us mother, aunt and myself went off to Mondovi. I was pleased enough to go this time. It was quite a long journey, first by train and then in a stage-coach.

We got there safely. The monastery was a very large one, and a great many people were going to it. A huge statue of the Madonna stood there with hundreds of candles before it. A priest in a red cassock preached. The other priests were dressed in black. All this was sufficiently new to engage my attention. My knees grew numb, it is true, but I did not complain, as I had been promised some chocolate as a reward. At last, we started homeward.

From the monastery to the little town of Mondovi it was necessary to go by an ancient, rickety stage-coach. At one of the turns in the road the horses took fright, ran away and tipped the coach over. The passengers, including myself, escaped with a few scratches, but my aunt, in spite of all her saints and madonnas, broke her leg and got the last three teeth in her head knocked out. That was all the healing she got.

On the whole, we were unlucky on these journeys.

Once we returned from a similar excursion wet to the skin. Whatever Madonna it was we visited that time — I did not remember her name — evidently did not want to heal me, but managed to send me home as damp as possible.

At that time — that is while the search for healing was going on — my father was working in Savigliano's machine shop. The usual working-day was then 11 hours, but as I have already said, my father often worked a couple of hours extra.

This enabled him to make ends meet somehow or other.

I remember clearly the first time that I heard of the eight-hour day. What a tragedy it was! That day my father came home pale, sad and bewildered. He fell, rather than sat down, on a chair. We thought he must be sick. My mother asked, in alarm:

"What's happened?"

"From tomorrow we're only going to work eight hours a day."

That meant poverty!

In the evening two workmen, neighbours of ours, came round to see us. They were in despair. One of them had eight children, the other five, and old parents to keep into the bargain. Mother tried to soothe Father by saying:

"We'll just have to pinch and scrape a little. And then one of the saints is sure to help us. God's good and he'll not forget us."

My brother and sisters were playing round the stove. It had gone cold. I listened to the conversation of the grown-ups for some time, but I could not understand why they should be in such despair now. I had often heard Father and his comrades complaining about the excessive length of the working-day.

One of the men said in answer to my puzzled question.

"We'll be getting less money now, my boy."

And then I thought of all the saints and Madonnas that my mother and aunt Rosa had prayed to. Aunt Rosa had to walk on crutches ever since the famous journey to Mondovi. My brains got to work, and many things became clear.

A month later the workers were only working four hours a day. Winter was drawing near. Some of the men would go secretly to the forest and cut firewood for themselves. One evening a friend of my father's brought home a cartload of wood. Next day the carabinieri, special police, came to his home and led him away handcuffed. My father was very much upset over this.

It was about that time that I first heard talk of the war in Africa. Once I saw soldiers going away. Women went to see them off and everybody was crying.

People talked of the great numbers of men killed. While the train was still standing there, two men brought up a couple of pails of wine for the soldiers, but the officers forbade them to drink it. The people protested, some hooted. I heard how people near me said:

"Poor lads! Going off to be slaughtered!"

Then — strange names: Dogali, Mikallé, Abba-Karim, Menelik, Jaitu, Baratieri...

At length the train steamed away.

One more event left its imprint on my childish memory.

This was the strike in the potteries of Mondovi. We had moved there not long before the strike. My father was working as a mechanic in a big china works. His business was to look after the machinery and do the necessary repairs. We lived in the works' yard, and so I used to spend the whole day among the workers. Here the working-day lasted 11 hours. It was the same for all — men, women and children.

The work was hard and the pay was beggarly. Men got 15 centesimo an hour, women — ten, and children 40 to 50 centesimo per day!

General conditions were terrible. The master's treatment of the workers was the worst imaginable. Once I saw him curse and dismiss an old workwoman because she had broken a small basin.

Italy was passing through an economic crisis. It was the time of the colonial war in Eritrea, when Italian imperialism, then in its early stages, was making its first incursions into Africa. A detachment of Alpine fusiliers had been sent from Mondovi to the war, and many were killed in that far-off country.

In the evenings Father used to read the paper aloud to us. My childish ears caught the echo of the general dissatisfaction and of the demonstrations in the big towns. I often heard, in the works itself, how the workers swore at the master behind his back, at the rich people, and the government.

There was one man in particular I liked to listen to. He was a cutter, a "foreigner," as we called anyone coming from another town, even if it happened to be in our own province. This man came from Tuscany, and spoke very pure Italian, which is a rare enough thing in Piedmont. He spoke well, too. I always kept near him. The workers all liked me, and the Tuscan used to talk to me just the same as if I was grown-up. None of them were afraid that I would repeat anything before the office folk who, they said, were all spies of the master's.

The workers did not even hide from me the preparations they were making for the strike. I was then fourteen.

The Tuscan used to tell me that in other towns the workers had been united into trade organizations. He always added:

"Here in Mondovi, the socialists are only busy with elections and they do all their politics in cafés. In our place they are —," here would follow a long string of curses.

One fine morning not a single worker could be seen at the gate of the works, although the first buzzer had blown long before. Only one "bubble" (as the workers called the apprentices) was standing at the gate munching a dry crust and waiting for the second buzzer.

Judging by the nervousness of the owner, the strike had taken him unawares. The clerks, it appeared, had expected it.

The owner declared to all those within hearing, that if the workers were not in their places in an hour's time, he would close down the works.

"I'm comfortably off as it is, you know. I was simply carrying on the business for you, to help your families. That's all the gratitude I get from you." And he plucked nervously at his moustaches.

In an hour's time a score of carabinieri came and stationed themselves at all the entrances.

I had known what was brewing and the strike did not surprise me in the least. I looked upon it as a natural thing, but I had expected more noise, fighting, maybe, and instead of that all the workers were sitting quietly at home.

The pottery-works was some distance from the town. In the evening the rooms of the "Workingmen's Circle" were occupied by carabinieri. Armed patrols went about the streets. Later on I found out that the workers had held a meeting outside the town, and that they demanded a rise of 50 centesimo a day, for all, regardless of age or sex.

The next day we heard that ten workers had been arrested and put in jail that night. Two days later, delegates from the workers appeared at the gates of the potteries.

The watchman said that he had orders to admit nobody. Some carabinieri came up. Finally the owner appeared, swearing and cursing, as usual.

The workers took no notice of his abuse, but simply asked to be received as the representatives of 800 workers.

"You may as well regard yourselves as dismissed," replied the owner. "I'll starve you all out yet if you aren't back at work in an hour."

This "hour" seemed to be an obsession with him. The delegates went off slowly, as if they were expecting that the master would think over his words and call them back. This scene made a very sad impression on me.

That day my father was down-cast and anxious.

Arrests continued. The situation grew steadily worse. Stones were thrown at the owner as he drove around in his carriage. Rumors were heard of attempts to burn down the works. Once a group of workers — my Tuscan was among them — set free an arrested worker. One of the carabinieri escorting him was thrown into the canal and the other took to his heels.

The struggle lasted for a few weeks, but hunger won.

The workers gave in and returned crestfallen to the works. They were forced to agree to the reduction of their pay by 10 centesimo and to the dismissal of several workers. Some of their comrades were still in jail. This defeat was a good lesson for the workers, however. They began to organize themselves, and many joined the Socialist Party.

A small weekly paper began to be published in Mondovi, in the birthplace of Giolitti — Giolitti, who for a quarter of a century had stood at the head of Italy's political life.

At that time I was doing a great deal of reading. I devoured newspapers and books of all kinds, beginning with the Bible and ending with *Capital*. My friend, the anarchist, Bisagni, explained *Capital* and many other things to me.

This anarchist had his own grandiose plan for a revolution. For this it would be necessary, he said, to make propaganda among the troops.

With this end in view he joined the army, to everyone's surprise, as a volunteer and worked up to the rank of sergeant. A few weeks after his promotion I read in the paper that he had been sentenced to 15 years' hard labor for "seditious propaganda among the troops."

My father gave up all hope of sending me to the Maurizian Hospital, but went on working 14 hours a day as before. He had got it into his head that he should give me some education, and make me a school-teacher — I do not know why, perhaps on account of my leg. But this turned out to be quite impossible — education in Italy was too expensive! And so with an aching heart he had to put away that dream as well.

It was necessary, however, to fix me up somehow. It ended by my being made a barber. My father was guided in his decision by considerations of my health again, I suppose. The work seemed to him the most suitable for me. And I — what did I know about it?

So I was sent to a barber's shop. I lathered people's faces and listened to the conversation, since I happened to be in one of those barbershops, where disputes go on from morning till night. The customers belonged to all the shades of the political rainbow, liberal, clerical, socialist, and democrat. Two of them became members of the Italian Parliament and one, Bottoni, a clericalist, became a minister. The master of the shop was a democrat. I, of course, went over to the side of the socialists at once.

It sometimes happened that in the heat of the discussion I forgot what I was doing and lathered the mouths and eyes of my customers instead of their cheeks.

I joined a night school for general education and devoured books and papers as before. I also became a member of the International Anti-militarist League. It was the time when the activities of Hervé were at their height.

I belonged to the Union of Socialist Youth as well and visited the Party circles regularly. Neither my father nor my mother knew anything about this. When I was expelled from the night school for giving a reply which the teacher regarded as suspicious, there was a terrible row about it at home. My father, like a true "free-thinker," refused to recognize the right to freedom of thought. My mother prayed to all the saints and madonnas that they would turn me again towards the true path.

There came another stirring event into the bargain. I had written a short article — my first attempt — appealing to the recruits. It was signed "A mother." It was just at the time of the annual levy. The public prosecutor found that my article was "an insult to the army." During the search which followed, they discovered a letter, with my signature, that I had sent to the editor together with the article. At the very moment when I was having a stormy altercation with the family, the order for my arrest came and was handed to my mother!

Trouble was threatening from another quarter as well. I had written an article for a socialist fortnightly, *Woman*. This article was entitled "Various Aspects of the Enslavement of Women." I had written it in collaboration with a girl, for whom I had, I must admit in confidence, a "weakness." I wrote the article myself, as a matter of fact, and she signed it.

But I was unlucky with feminine pen-names. The police found fault with this article as well, the girl caught it hot from her family and could not hold out. Although she was glad enough to see her name in print, still she gave the real name of the author. Then her parents started to scold me, as if my own had not done enough!

To add still another drop to my cup of bitterness a rather comical thing happened.

Once a choir-boy came into the barber's shop and while I was cutting his hair asked me:

"Can you make a tonsure?"

I had never done so, but answered bravely enough:

"Of course I can!"

And I did. I did it beautifully, too. When the priest saw this tonsure, he flew into a rage. He came down to the barber's shop, and then went to complain to my parents. He declared that this was sacrilege, that tonsures could only be made by permission of the church authorities, and he threatened us with all manner of punishments and horrors.

My employer scolded me heartily, my mother cried.

One disaster followed another. One Sunday I was arrested, along with some more comrades, at a mass meeting outside the town... We spent that night in a police-cell on a large table, along with a thief who had stolen a chicken, a pedler who had stolen a few coppers from the church collection-bags, and a drunken man who sang with all his might. This was my baptism.

My family called my grandfather in to advise them about me. It was made clear to me that I had either to give up "making a socialist of myself" or break with the family altogether.

CHAPTER II

The First Steps

On Sundays, when work at the barber's was finished I used to cycle off with a comrade to the neighboring villages and do propaganda for the socialist group of our town. My comrade was a full-fledged member of the party, but I was still in the "Youth" section.

That was what happened the time the Russian tsar came to Italy.

Avanti! started a campaign against this visit of the "Russian despot." The slogan was "Hoot down the tsar!"

As a result, Nicholas II, who had announced his intention of making a grand tour through Italy, had to content himself with a visit to Racconigi, less than a hundred kilometers from the French frontier. And even this short journey he made between lines of soldiers and police, through a deserted land. The inhabitants of the houses close to the frontier had been driven away, all the roads had been closed to traffic. It was strictly forbidden to approach the route followed by the royal visitor. The Russian Emperor saw nothing but bayonets on his visit to Italy.

The local socialists were arrested. Morgari, who as deputy could not, by law, be prevented from going wherever he liked, was to hoot at the tsar.

My comrade and I resolved to make our way to Racconigi on our good old bicycles. We did not take whistles with us, since the police were arresting everybody who carried a whistle, even children. But we could whistle through our fingers.

Unfortunately, we did not get the chance. Both our bicycles and ourselves were put under lock and key.

Morgari was able to whistle just once, he was dragged away immediately, in spite of the fact that as a deputy he was immune. But that whistle echoed threateningly in the ears of Nicholas II and he also went away.

Many years later he was to hear in his own country the roar of a storm through which the Russian proletariat hooted down their tsar once and for all time.

Propaganda at village meetings is an interesting business! Particularly in Upper Piedmont where the masters of the situation were (and still are) the big landowners, the priests and Giolitti.

We usually started — if we could manage it — directly after mass, so that the audience was already collected for us by the priest.

I remember the first time I spoke. It was in the month of August. Heat, dust. When, after a sweltering ride over a road that seemed white hot under the sun, we arrived at the square in front of the church, there was not a living soul in it. The poster announcing our meeting with the bold signature "Socialist Group" had vanished. The priest had threatened all believers who went to listen to us with hell fire. The church, therefore, was full of people. Even the carabinieri who were sent from the barracks "to keep order," had gone in.

We peeped inside, too, just in time to hear the concluding words of the sermon.

"And so, my children, go to your homes, and pay no heed to the words of the enemies of the church, the family and the fatherland."

This was really an excellent way of arousing the curiosity of the crowd.

The people poured into the square, and seemed in no hurry to go home.

Then an old shoemaker appeared. He had been in America and seen a good deal, and was, moreover, an earnest reader of *Asino* [1] and our weekly *Lotte Nuove* [2]. He it was who had pasted up the

"The peasants crowded round . . ."

notices of our coming. Now he fetched a table, placed it in the middle of the square, and stretching out his hand, announced solemnly:

"There is your platform!"

I got up on the table. The peasants crowded round. The priest eyed his disobedient flock from the steps of the church and smiled enigmatically.

As I opened my mouth a deafening noise drowned my first words. What on earth was it? A regiment of small boys appeared in the square, beating old oil-cans with all their might. I stopped. It was impossible to speak. The carabinieri listened curiously to this startling music. The priest looked like a general at some successful maneuvres. The music stopped quite soon, however. The cans got beaten flat and the children grew tired. At first the people laughed, but the din annoyed them at last, and protests were heard. Somebody shouted:

"Let him speak!"

There was silence. I opened my mouth once more.

The church-bells rang out, a cheerful, deafening peal. Evidently, the holy father had worked out his plan thoroughly. But soon even the bell-ringer grew weary.

I began to speak. I had hardly got the first words out of my mouth when the leader of the carabinieri came up to the table. "Have you got permission to make speeches?"

"No permission is necessary," I answered proudly, as I knew the regulations quite well. "It is sufficient to give notice to the authorities. This has already been done, or else you would not be here."

"I took the notice to the mayor myself" the old shoemaker hastened to say.

"Where is the receipt for it?" asked the gendarme.

[1] *Asino (The Ass)* popular humorous anti-religious magazine published by the Italian socialists.
[2] *Lotte Nuove — The New Struggle.*

"They didn't give me any receipt."

"In that case you have no right to speak. I declare the meeting closed!" said the officer sternly.

"But, why?" I protested. "You're exceeding your instructions!"

"Aha! Exceeding my instructions? You're arrested! I allow no one to insult the honor and uniform of the carabinieri!"

And he dragged me down off the table. The frightened crowd, that had stood patiently through the din of the oil-cans and the chiming of the bells, now scattered in the twinkling of an eye. My comrade and I were taken to the police station.

In the office the officer of the carabinieri turned to me and asked:

"Well, do you admit what you said in the square?" And he began to fumble with the leaves of his notebook.

"Exceeding my instructions, was that it? You still stand by it. If so, sign here."

I signed my name. He got angrier than before.

"I'll show you 'exceeding instructions.' These fellows think I don't understand... Take them to the cells!"

Who knows what he thought the words "exceeding instructions" really meant? He already imagined himself concerned in some big case . . . Promoted!

We spent the night in the cells. In the morning we were set free again. My people had already learned of my arrest.

Once more a family council was called. My grandfather was again present.

"None of us was ever in prison before. You have brought this disgrace on us, you are an unworthy son — —" and so on, they all preached at me.

The old aunt who had broken her leg coming from the pilgrimage was there as well. She announced, in the true Christian spirit, that god had branded me before my birth since he had known how I would turn out. With this the family council closed.

I left for Turin.

CHAPTER III

Turin

In Turin I found work easily and threw myself into the life of the big city with a sense of complete emancipation. Work, the Labor College and the Labor Bureau.

Sometimes I thought of the break with my family, but it was like a memory of past suffering. Work in the barber's shop took up a great deal of my time. This shop was one of the biggest in the town. We worked from eight in the morning until eight at night. On Saturdays we did not finish till midnight, and on Sundays till ten. I earned on an average, ten lire a week. I lived in a garret along with a comrade, a mechanic. Our garret was away up in the roof. It used to take me nearly half-an-hour to get up there. Still, one could study astronomy from it without the aid of instruments. My comrade, however, took no interest in astronomy. He was always reading love-stories or penny dreadfuls. He was a morbid fellow, always looked gloomy and finished up by drowning himself in the River Po.

The boys I met at my work were certainly not mournful. I have been a great deal with workers of all kinds, but never anywhere did I meet with such smug and servile people as barbers. "Tips"—that was their ideal! And to earn even a penny (twopence was regarded as an enormous tip) they would do anything. They would flatter their customers, study their tastes and declare themselves monarchists, radicals, believers or unbelievers, virtuous or vicious, would interest themselves in the most inane jokes, laugh at the silliest puns and so on, as the case might seem to require. The immortal "Barber of Seville" is still kept alive. I have known barbers who were always able to give their customers addresses of shady hotels, "rooms by the hour," with exact prices. Some could even supply their customers with cocaine if required.

They were interested in races, state-lotteries, and all big events in sports, that is to say not in the sports themselves but in betting on them. I once worked with a barber in a tiny shanty outside the town. There was a huge notice-board outside, "The Philanthropic Barber." As a matter of fact, he did charge very little. He declared that he had mastered all the intricacies of the lotteries. The customers would tell him their dreams, and he would interpret them, and advise them on lucky numbers. For this he got good tips.

"The signor dreamed of arrest for murder?" My colleague would look thoughtful for a moment: — "That's clear enough: carabinieri — that's number 11, a corpse — that's 47, a murder — that's 90. Put on 11, 47, and 90: you'll win on all!"

But he himself, poor fellow, never won!

Another barber had an eye for horses and knew the pedigree of every one of them. He used to give advice to racing fans and betted himself. He always lost.

His spirits never fell, however, and he would begin all over again with every new race:

"Oh! that old horse? Why, it's no good at all. Now this one — yes, yes, that's a real thoroughbred, now. It's out of this or that stallion, it got the Grand Prix de Longchamps last year, and her mother — a wonderful thoroughbred — took the Amedeo di Savoya Prize! If you're going to bet on any, put your money on her!"

And the day after the races he would borrow cigarettes and money for his dinner from his comrades.

And then the bicyle races! Some of the boys used to go off "training" after their work in the barber's shop. They hoped to become champions some day.

They did not make friends among themselves. They were envious of each other and quarrelled frequently. The southerners, — there were many in the Turin barber-shops — boasted that they were the best artists (the barbers liked to call themselves artists). The northerners, of course, regarded themselves as geniuses and sometimes the disputes ended in brawls.

I used to laugh at them and tell them that the best artist of all was our employer, who managed to pick us all clean.

"That's true," some of them agreed. But when I mentioned organizing ourselves into a union, they were silent, and looked at me furtively.

"Do you want us to get thrown out?"

Our work was badly paid. The way we were treated was still worse. The customers regarded us as the lowest of the low. They spoke to us as rudely as possible — "Do my hair!" "Cut my beard!" Curl my moustaches!" And the barber was supposed to call everybody by their title, "Yes, signor commander!" "Very well, signor cavalier" and so on.

In the poor barber shops in the working-class districts the atmosphere was more democratic, but the pay was beggarly.

I was disliked on account of my sharp tongue. I remember once a barber from Pisa was arguing with a Sicilian. The latter boasted that he had once shaved the Marquis di Rudini, the prime minister.

The Pisan looked at him contemptuously:

"Why," he said, "when I was in Pisa I used to work for the king's court," and he looked triumphantly around at us all.

"Were you trimming the king's dogs or something?" I asked.

Well, that started a row! He would not make it up with me until I had let him have one of my more generous customers.

For all that, along with a couple of comrades, I carried on organizational work here, and, by dint of tremendous efforts, we were able to achieve some measure of success.

The "organized" barbers, however, had a bad time of it. The employers were always finding fault with them, and sacked them at the first opportunity. It was hard for us to find new jobs: we were all well-known.

Once it so happened that I got work right in the center of the town, in a splendid shop on the Corso Vittorio Emanuele, one of the finest streets in Turin. It was near the barracks and all the officers used to come to us, and occasionally, some of the soldiers. It was really curious to watch how servile the master and the assistants would get when some "big bug" from the regiment would come in.

And if the colonel himself came—whew! it was like the second coming of Christ. The master himself would fling open the door, with an obsequious bow—"Good morning, signor colonel!" and then draw himself up like a soldier at attention. All the boys would fly to relieve the colonel of his sword, gloves, cap and cloak. And the other customers, left neglected, would wait patiently with lathered cheeks and chins.

One Sunday morning, when the shop was packed with people, including officers and officials and even a bishop, the colonel appeared.

He shouted out in a commanding voice:

"Be quick there. I'm in a hurry!"

And since I had just at that moment finished a customer, the great honor of attending to the colonel fell to my lot.

I asked as usual:

"Who's next?"

The colonel came up to the armchair where I was working:

"Cut my beard and be quick about it, you!"

"Sit down, you!" I replied.

There was a dead silence in the barber shop. The assistants were turned to stone. The hands holding the scissors and razors stopped in mid-air, the master's eyes bulged, the colonel himself turned purple but controlled himself and took his seat in the armchair.

"Cut my beard and be quick about it, you." "Sit down, you." I answered the colonel.

I started work, trying to keep as calm as possible. The others were afraid to glance at me, but the master gave me a look that was intended to shrivel me up. The customers looked rather bewildered, but a couple of the soldiers who were being shaved away in the far corner were obviously delighted.

While I shaved him the colonel tried to address me more politely. He did not dare to offer me a tip and went out still purple. The master bowed and scarped and apologized to him for quite a long time.

As soon as the officer had left, my employer turned to me.

"You're sacked from this evening. I'll pay you for eight days ahead."

"But only crooks are sent off like that," I objected.

"Who taught you to speak to people like that?" shouted the master, in a rage.

"Why, the colonel," I said.

In the evening I gathered up my instruments and the little money owing to me and left the barber's. Then hard times followed. It was difficult to find work. All the employers knew me too well. My bad leg did not permit of my changing my trade. Black days of poverty came. Sometimes I got a chance to earn something, but it was a miserly sum. How often then my friend saved me from sheer starvation. He used to wash dishes in a restaurant and would fetch me what was left over.

But our union grew and strengthened. One fine day the barbers went out on strike. The rabbits had turned into lions! They threatened to beat the masters, and blow the shops to smithereens. The strike did not last very long, the employers made concessions. Wages were raised, and on Mondays all barbers were to be given a day off. But the system of tipping remained. The strikers had brought forward the abolition of this humiliating custom more for agitation's sake than anything else.

I could not find work any more in Turin, so I went off to Savona, and from there to Alexandria. I grew fond of traveling, but soon I had to come home. My father fell ill. The years of hard, unhealthy work on machine-repairing, which was carried on, for the most part, in under-ground rooms, the long working day and overtime had broken him down at last.

So I came home to Mondovi once more. Now nobody lectured me on my morals. Nobody tried to reform me. I lived my usual life—worked, studied and wrote.

My father died and I was left the head of the family. I was just 20. My mother was ailing, there were three young children and I was out of work. I lost my job because I happened to be a member of the board of the Barbers' Union, and also because I "wrote for the papers."

One of my relatives found me a job at last in Fossano, where I settled down for a long time.

My new employer, a member of the clerical party, read me a lecture when I started work.

"I've found out many details about you. I know that you're a good worker and devoted to your family. I've been told, too, that you are educated and clever, but—that you go in for politics. *Nobody in my place goes in for politics*, remember that! Do what you like outside of it, but inside —no politics!"

"Yes, but if one of the customers should happen to speak about politics himself, what have I to say?"

"None of my customers ever speak about politics. Only serious people come to my shop!"

"Oh, all right, then."

And so we moved to Fossano.

CHAPTER IV

The struggle in the small towns
Bartolomeo Vanzetti

Here I was, then, in my home. It was a little old town without much industry. There were many churches, barracks, a fortress, two prisons, a great number of tradesmen, an ancient aristocracy and an extraordinary number of priests. Then there were a regiment of infantry, a brigade of artillery and a squadron of cavalry. Small farmers lived round about, just outside the town. The entire population was 18,000. There was not a single workingmen's club, nor a library, nor even a reading-room.

There was a workers' mutual help society, but no socialist organization.

For all that I found myself a few comrades. One of them was a fellow who made fruit drinks, and was chiefly interested in inventing a flying machine. He called it the "orthohelicopter." It was to fly on the same principles as a bird. How many birds this poor fellow destroyed in his search for the fascinating secret of flight. All the little boys in the neighborhood would catch birds for him, and he would study the construction of their bodies and wings with untiring zeal.

Even before I arrived in Fossano, I was well-known to all the customers of my new employer —priests, officers, merchants, jailers, workers and peasants. In a small town like Fossano even my appearance was an event. Work here was quite a different thing compared to that in big towns. Our employer worked along with the assistants. There was always a terrible rush on Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday, the market day. My employer advertised me a lot, without, perhaps, intending to. As a result, the first day I started work I was the subject of an attack by one of the conservatives, who came to the shop every day, just to pass the time, as other people would go to a café. And, of course, I answered him.

In less than two weeks' time, the respectable barber-shop was turned into a political club. The funniest thing of all was that my employer, who had never in his life gone in for politics, was always the first to begin our disputes. In the morning when he had read the paper through, he would start his attack on me, regardless of whether there were customers present or not. Sometimes I reminded him of our first conversation: then he would shrug his shoulders impatiently and go on with his tirade against me and my socialism. As a matter of fact, it was thanks to these arguments with me that he later became a town councilor. He used to work himself into a passion about socialism being "a menace to be fought against!"—and then relate the most terrible things to be expected of it.

Meantime I became connected with the local socialists. Some workers joined us. We formed a socialist group and appointed one of our members as a regular correspondent of *Avanti!* and the weekly *Lotte Nuove* published in Mondovi. We succeeded in renting a tiny room where we held meetings, read lectures, and conducted study-circles for workers.

My employer was not angry when he learned of the existence of our group, but started, in his turn, to organize a group of the Christian-Democratic Party.

The first letter from Fossano to be published in *Avanti* and *Lotte Nuove* was like a stone cast into still waters. The little town stirred. There were three local weeklies, one—a colorless affair that simply chronicled the events of the week and congratulated newly-made "cavaliers" and "commanders" when they received decorations, the other was clerical and the third changed its colors with every new election, according to whichever party won. All three united against us. We were, it seemed, a danger to be dealt with summarily and without delay.

A lively campaign opened. A special section of each paper was devoted to the "crimes" of the socialists, and in every number an article appeared about their harmful activities. There were personal attacks on the older local members of the party, who were accused, by the way, of having allowed "a mere boy and a foreigner" to corrupt them.

My employer did not dismiss me, as I expected. The point was that I attracted customers to his shop. Friends came to exchange ideas with me, enemies came to argue with me, and many others

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[1] *Avanti! (Forward)* the official organ of the Italian Socialist Party.

to get a good look at the "socialist peril,"—and so money flowed into the till.

In a small town the most trivial happening may acquire importance. Hypocrisy and scandal-mongering were the order of the day.

The name, Fossano, which is derived from *Fons sana* (health spring) seemed almost ironic.

All its inhabitants gossiped about one another, beginning from General Bava-Beccaris, who earned an unenviable reputation for himself through the shooting down of a workers' demonstration in 1898, and ending with the poorest inn-keeper. That is why the "Café Grande," where the flower of the Fossano society, cavaliers, commanders, canons, merchants and business-men admirers of Giolitti's, met together was called "The Club for Scandal!"

The few socialists there differed very little from the rest of the Philistines. They only separated themselves during election time, when they would collect a fair number of votes and win one place in the council. After this they would lie low until the next elections.

I strongly suspect that some Catholic must have voted for them as well, acting from the conviction that "it is safer to have the minority represented after all." And then the socialist minority was so harmless. Generally speaking, the attitude of the Fossano voters at election-time might be summed up as follows:

"So-and-so is a very respectable fellow, it would do no harm to make him a councilor. He makes a good living, has plenty of spare time. He would be able to take up social work and we need not be afraid he would steal."

And so he would be elected. But we young socialists spoilt this good old custom. To the great astonishment of the respectable citizens we did not confine our propaganda to the election period, but we went to the surrounding villages on Sundays and carried on work within our circle during the week. Once, without giving warning to the radicals, we called a meeting, at which we defended the eligibility of our comrades and referred to the program of the Party. Such a thing had never happened at any election. The frightened citizens talked this over for a whole week, and then a new and even more frightful event happened.

The priests defended themselves against us desperately. They organized the worst of the peasants against us. Sometimes stones were thrown at us. We were almost always arrested. In the police reports it would be put that the police "saved us from the consequences of the public indignation."

My employer's services were often called for by the neighboring monastery, to which priests from other parts were occasionally sent for retreats.

Once I was sent there to shave the bishop.

"Don't forget, you must kiss his hand and call him 'monsignor'!"

And sure enough when I said "Good morning" the bishop stuck his hand under my nose. I shook it politely. . . .

They never sent me to the monastery any more. All the clergy in the town were offended and even my employer was seriously put out this time.

"You'll scare off all my customers like that! Just fancy, as if it was such a terrible thing to have to kiss the bishop's hand!"

Once at a meeting I met a baker whom I afterwards learned was Bartolomeo Vanzetti. He was dead against the socialists with whom he would have nothing in common.

I tried to convince him, to argue with him. But Vanzetti only shook his head.

We argued for a long time. He walked with me a good bit of the way. He spoke the local dialect. It was evident that here was a man who had read a great deal and thought a great deal, and who was, moreover, intractable.

I often remembered this meeting with Vanzetti, and wondered how he could have grown into an anarchist in such surroundings. But I never dreamed that I should one day be organizing a meeting of protest against the execution in America of the anarchist-baker from Villafalleto!

This meeting of protest was held in 1921. The speakers were three: a communist, an anarchist and a reformist. That time I made the acquaintance of the father and one of the sisters of Vanzetti, the one who afterwards made the journey of mourning to Boston. They implored me not to give a lot of publicity to the case, saying that if we were to take it up, then the bishop and the Member of Parliament would refuse to have anything to do with it. Later on I found out that the fascisti had made them do it. The fascisti bullied Vanzetti's father into forbidding the meeting that we had given notice of, and so it was not held. We left Villafalletto escorted by police, but not under arrest. I learned of these secret movements of the fascisti later, through the letter of Vanzetti himself. It was written in the Boston prison and published in one of the New York Italian papers in reply to my correspondence in one of our magazines. This letter, an unusual document of a man's cool clearheadedness, unmasks all the infamy of the clerical and liberal public men, who were already then bowing down before fascism. I appealed to Falletti, who was a member of the Italian Parliament, about the proposed meeting and he said:

"There's no need for any meeting. . . . I've already taken up this case although Vanzetti does not deserve that I should take any interest in him. He has disgraced his village, but still I'm sorry for his family."

When the remains of Vanzetti had been brought to Villafalletto, military law virtually reigned in the village. Only members of the family were allowed up to the grave, and even they were escorted by the police and the fascist militia.

CHAPTER V

The Socialist Organization and Our Lady of Lourdes

In spite of all obstacles, the work of our group began to bear fruit. The Labor Bureau grew out of our circle. But it was extremely difficult to find suitable premises for it. The little garret we had rented before was not sufficient now. We had already three unions: builders, metal-workers, and textile-workers. The group worked feverishly. The days of political disputes in cafés and barber's shops were over, now began the period of actual work of the organization of the working class.

After a long search we found a suitable house and then work went well. New unions, those of the bootmakers and the paper mill-workers were organized. I must confess that I failed to find even ten class-conscious barbers in Fossano. Ten was the minimum number required for the formation of a union. The class consciousness of the wielders of the razor in this place was even lower than in Turin, while the number of barber shops was much smaller.

We were comfortable enough in our new quarters. We had a big hall for meetings and several small rooms for work. In these the various study circles were held, a library was housed and medical and legal assistance given. Every week there were meetings, conferences, lectures. We were able to develop extensive agitational work and organize several successful strikes.

The battle, in the barber's shop went on, too. It was a wordy one. When I was out the respectable customers used to attack my employer for keeping me.

"It all started with this 'foreigner,' nobody even knows properly who he is—and yet everybody dances to his tune!"

They advised the master to get rid of me, but so as not to appear too hard-hearted, they said:

"Don't worry about him! Who knows how much he's earning as secretary and journalist? This dog doesn't wag his tail for nothing, you may be sure!"

My relations with the customers were growing steadily worse. Once some major or other decided to read me a lecture on morals:

"It's come to my ears that you've been seen with my soldiers. This, if you want to know, is a dangerous game! I absolutely forbid you to speak to my soldiers, otherwise . . ."

"What's all this?" I broke in, losing my patience. "I'll speak to whom I like and I don't give a rap for your threats! You seem to think you're speaking to a recruit. I absolutely forbid you to speak to me in such a tone!"

The officer, accustomed as he was to quite a different type of answer in the barracks, beat a hasty retreat.

The sergeant of the carabinieri and the Commissioner of the police shared the work of shadowing me everywhere I went. They would take turns at calling me to the police-station to give an explanation on Sundays and Wednesdays, when there was the biggest rush of work. This they did in the hope of forcing my employer to part with a worker who was so often absent. But the strange thing was that he stuck to me as hard as ever. He would fight me from morning till night, but would not give in.

Among the customers was a canon who believed that "one should respect the convictions of every man." He was the funniest fellow! He had taken it into his head to convert me into a good Catholic. He dreamed of taking me to Lourdes, in the Pyrenees to the famous Madonna who was to cure my leg! He would bring me religious pamphlets on our Lady of Lourdes. They provided me with material for the anti-religious columns of the *Lotte Nuove.*

When the canon decided that the soil had been adequately prepared, he began his sowing. One hot noonday the canon appeared in the barber's. I was alone and was astonished to see him. He was a man of regular habits, and this was not his day for coming.

"Well, isn't that nice!" cried the canon, as he greeted me cheerfully. "I was just wanting to have a little confidential chat with you."

"Sit down, won't you?" I said, thinking I was going to hear about some extraordinary miracle or other.

The canon sat down, wiped the sweat from his brow, took a pinch of snuff and began in the solemn tone that pastors have made their own:

"I know you are a socialist and an unbeliever. I myself am a servant of the Lord, His unworthy slave, often found wanting in the fulfilment of His will." Here he took another pinch of snuff.

I could not understand what he was trying to get at.

"You know how I worship the Virgin of Lourdes —"

"Oh, that's it," I thought, "another miracle."

The canon went on.

"Well, I'm firmly convinced that she would heal your leg. This healing will save you from your atheism. I know that only a miracle will convince you. The Holy Virgin will work this miracle. I have come to you now with a practical suggestion. No matter what your enemies say, I know that you are poor and you have not the means to go to Lourdes, even on the pilgrims' train that is leaving in a few days' time. But I have some savings. These I'll give to you to pay for the journey and for your stay in Lourdes. You will then be healed and will become convinced, against your will, of the fact that God is all-powerful. And since you are clever and honest and good, you will make a fine missionary. That will be a wonderful victory of faith that will reward me fully."

The canon was visibly moved. He perspired; a large brown drop of wet tobacco hung from his nose. He was a curious sight.

"And supposing I am not healed?" I asked.

"That is impossible, of course, but if you are not healed, then you have the right to write what you like..."

"But I've got that as it is..."

"Make up your mind, then, will you go or not?" cried the canon pathetically.

"I agree," I said, almost asleep. The canon beamed:

"I'll go and get you a place in a second class carriage at once. I'll come round tomorrow with the ticket — by the way, it's my day for a shave." He shook my hand and galloped away with incredible swiftness.

Next day, however, the canon failed to appear. He did not come the day that his next shave was due, either. After a while he sent my employer a note: "I cannot employ your services any longer. The reason I shall explain to you personally." The master said to me in a dissatisfied tone:

"You're the reason, of course. You've insulted his religion."

"Not at all! He wanted to send me to Lourdes and I agreed to go. What more can he want?"

My employer's face turned into a question mark: "You're going to Lourdes?"

"I'm ready to go. You know, of course, that the canon has been persuading me to go. Last week he offered to send me at his own expense, and went out to buy me a ticket. He never came back any more. He probably told his more sensible colleagues about my 'conversion' and as a result you lost a customer."

The story soon became well-known in the town. I never saw the canon again.

CHAPTER VI

Avanti and Mussolini

I had always a great desire to write. I began with short notes in our weekly and for a long time could not make up my mind to leave the bounds of my native place. I was very proud and happy when my first attempt appeared in *Avanti!*. The editor-in-chief was at that time Mussolini. He was a stern judge of our efforts. It needed a lot of courage to risk a flight from a newspaper in a little out-of-the-way town, to Milan, to the biggest party paper! But still, I made this flight, instead of the proposed journey to Lourdes at the unlucky canon's expense.

Mussolini! ... The editor-in-chief of *Avanti!* was always the real leader of the Italian Socialist Party, but *Avanti!* did not go well with these editors. And they all ended badly. The first or them, Bissolati, became a militarist and then the minister for national propaganda during the war. In the Chamber of Deputies he threatened to shoot the socialists! Enrico Ferri, at one time our candidate for Parliament, became a fascist. This was the most insolent mountebank that Italian politics has ever known.

Mussolini, now the butcher of the Italian proletariat, was perhaps the most popular of all the editors-in-chief of *Avanti!* When he directed it, the organ of the Italian Socialist Party ceased to be simply a repository for the endless weighty articles appealing in a disguised form cooperation with the bourgeoisie. That all disappeared with Bissolati and Trevess. Under Mussolini the paper became really militant. Now whenever I look through the dusty pages of poor old *Avanti!* that fell, at last, into the hands of Balabanova and Nenni I think involuntarily of the abyss into which the Italian Socialist Party has plunged in the end!

But Mussolini filled the whole paper with his own person. His name dominated all the six columns, just as today it graces all the pages of *Popolo d' Italia.*

These articles suited our Latin nature beautifully: words, words, words—solemn, florid, sonorous words. The last document of that period, his tirade against the war, was in much the same style. As a matter of fact we were all accustomed to that kind of propaganda. What was socialism? Justice and freedom. How could these be obtained? Only through cooperation with the more advanced wing of the bourgeoisie and by speeches of a more or less inflammatory character. How is a revolution made? Quite simply . . .

As a demagogue, Mussolini surpassed all his predecessors.

I made his acquaintance, in the offices of *Avanti!* in Milan, where a meeting of the correspondents of that paper was being held. He was not what I had imagined he would be. When I heard him speak I was disappointed. He talked about himself all the time, about his plans and his articles... This was on the eve of war in Libya. He gave me instructions, and explained how to write up correspondence. He talked for a long time.

He signed our correspondents' cards with a careless flourish. (My card, by the way, was afterwards, taken away, together with other papers, during a search). One felt that the "comrade" spirit was wanting in him. There was someting repellent in his attitude to the other editors too.

I saw Mussolini again in Turin at the elections to the Chamber of Deputies. He hoped that the proletariat of Turin would elect him as their candidate.

The workers refused, however, to accept any candidates from among the intelligentsia, although there were many who were hungering for a chance to take up this burden. Mussolini was also pining for it, but, hearing that a worker, Bonetti, had been chosen by the workers, he hastily withdrew. He came to Turin to speak at a meeting in defense of Bonetti's candidature. Mussolini was very uneasy before this meeting: the nationalists were in a fighting mood. He was not so anxious about the safety of Mussolini, as about the safety of the editor-in-chief of *Avanti!*

This reminds me of the unfortunate incident that happened to Comrade Ettore Crocce, a professor of the University of Bologna. He was beaten unmercifully by fascist students. The latter were, as usual, in the proportion of twenty to one. While they beat him, they shouted:

"We're not beating Professor Crocce, for whom we have a great respect, but the Communist Crocce!"

And kept on beating with all their might.

Mussolini was probably afraid of getting into a similar predicament. This was, of course, impossible in Turin at that time, but still the future Napoleon felt scared. When, however, Mussolini mounted the platform and heard the applause he became as brave as a lion.

I have never seen him since, but have had the opportunity of admiring his portrait in most of the police offices in Italy.

I got to know Serrati at the same time. What a difference between him and Mussolini! One could feel at once that here was a friend, a comrade. He inspired confidence, was interested in everybody, was full of consideration for others, asked for opinions and gave advice. At work he was stern, hard and unwavering. When work was over he joked and made fun like a boy again. I met him constantly. We were at many a conference and congress together, lived together in Soviet Russia and worked side by side in Italy right up to his death. There was a break in our relations when he was in opposition to us, but he came back to us again, the untiring worker and brave fighter that he always was.

Hard life, privations, prison, exile and emigration did not embitter him. In prison, in Switzerland, in America, on the islands far and near to which prisoners are exiled, he remained ever the same cheerful friend and considerate comrade, always ready to give the shirt off his back to anyone who needed it.

CHAPTER VII

The War of 1911

Agitation work, strikes and the consequent arrests diminished our ranks and the activity of our Labor Bureau. This was the usual thing in Italy. The gaps in our ranks had to be filled up, the Bureau to be reorganized from a local to a provincial one.

The province of Cuneo is mainly agricultural. Here the land is divided up into minute holdings.

The farms are, in fact, so small that in some of the mountain villages there are allotments yielding a harvest only sufficient for six months. There are many vineyards in the mountainous parts, but these are also broken up into small holdings. Mulberry trees grow here and therefore the rearing of silk worms is fairly widespread. There are great numbers of small shopkeepers and artisans. Industry is very poorly developed. Metal and chemical-works, tanneries and potteries exist. Conditions of work are very bad, and the workers are hardly organized at all. Even directly after the war there were no more than 12,000 organized workers in the whole province.

It was highly necessary to form an association of the local unions not only because the Party Head Office demanded it, but also because many firms had branches in various towns in that province.

A series of preliminary meetings had to be held before the district conference. For this reason I had to absent myself from the barber-shop on the best day for business — Sunday. This concerned my employer's pocket. He had put up with everything: the stormy disputes that I had aroused in his peaceful shop, my "explanations" in police stations, the attacks of the solid citizens demanding my dismissal, but he could not stand the loss of money. He rebuked me several times and was obviously very dissatisfied with me. But what could I do? I could not interrupt organizational work because of him. I found another way out. I knew a barber who had worked ten years in Paris. We resolved to start work on our own, independent of employers. When I informed my employer of this, he nearly had a stroke. He was actually very fond of me in spite of my frequent absences.

"Are you crazy! Who'll you get for customers? There's no chance for socialists in these parts. You saw what happened to Gagna. He had to go to America, and the others are all out of work. And Fuseri — that was the name of the maker of lemonade and inventor of the "orthohelicopter" which had not flown yet — Fuseri cannot even finish his machine. If you open your own barber-shop it's sure to be boycotted. And as for your companion — he'll never get any customers..." He could not find a good word to say about my comrade.

But we set up in business all the same.

Things went badly in the beginning: we only made 14 lire between us the first week. It was a fact, the solid citizens boycotted us. Little by little, however, we collected our own circle of customers. There were few new people among them. Most were comrades who sympathized with us: some of the old acquaintances, priests and officers came round, probably out of sheer curiosity. Time passed. We were able to make enough to live on, and we had unlimited freedom for discussion.

This was a period of feverish work. I made propaganda, composed proclamations and mass appeals, pasted them up. I was a candidate, a journalist and a newspaper-vendor all in one. In the evenings I would work in the Labor Bureau, writing applications, letters and filling up forms for those who had been injured or taken sick at work. We had established a bureau for medical and legal assistance. It was intended to save the needy from the hands of the private practitioners. For this I was arrested and sent up for trial. I was accused of "illegal practices" but was afterwards acquitted.

It happened as follows: A beggar came up to me in the office. He was a fine sturdy fellow, but nearly blind. He informed me that he had lost his sight as a consequence of an explosion in the mine where he had worked.

"Well, and didn't the firm compensate you for your being disabled?" I asked.

"Yes... they gave me a hundred lire."

He had some kind of documents. I promised to speak to our lawyer about it. He left his papers and address with me. It appeared that he would be able to get quite a solid sum out of the firm, on account of his being disabled. The mine manager got into a rage when he received our communication. He told the beggar to come and see him, and demanded to know who put the idea into his head that he could claim such a sum.

The blind beggar, for whom all "lettered" people were much the same, said "The lawyer in Fossano," and gave my name and address.

And I, who hated all lawyers, was not only mistaken for one, but dragged off to court for illegally assuming that title!

The firm called in their own lawyer, and he wrote to me. The letter fell into the hands of the police. I was called up to be questioned. I did not deny my part in the affair nor the fact that I had rendered similar assistance to other workers. The case, as I have said, fell through. I was acquitted and the bourgeois lawyers failed in the dirty trick they had intended to play on the "socialist."

Once more the Italian bourgeoisie was getting ready seriously for war in Africa. Giolitti's government, with the help of the millions of the Banco di Roma, was preparing public opinion for the conquest of colonies. The nationalists were particularly enthusiastic. They wrote articles describing Tripoli as the promised land, the granary of Italy.

Students left off worrying about Trento and Trieste and organized demonstrations, demanding the annexation of Tripoli. It was to be just a "military excursion," the patriots asserted. Public opinion was sufficiently influenced by able pens. Woe to the man who would dare to disbelieve in Tripolitan wheat, bananas, figs and the love of the Tripolitan people for Italy! The Arabs were, apparently, drawn up on the golden shores of Africa, just waiting for the arrival of the Italian troopships.

Even in the Socialist Party a few believers in the Arabs were to be found. They had to be expelled.

It was the Turks living in Italy who had to pay for this patriotic outburst, and also the socialists. The former because they had "oppressed the unfortunate Arabs," the latter because in many towns the departure of the troops called forth demonstrations that were not directed against the Turks. In Tuscany these demonstrations were of a particularly violent kind. The rails were torn up and in some places women with children lay down on the rails and refused to let the trains pass. The socialists and Turks were blamed for all this — therefore the shops and dwellings of the Turks were raided and looted and the socialists were put in prison and sent for trial.

In the streets flags waved, music played and soldiers went marching by.

War! War! And general discontent. But no one dared to mention this for fear of being taken for a Turk. We were called Turks then, just as in later years we were called "Austrians," "Germans" and finally, "Russian Bolsheviks."

Mussolini was against the war, and came up for trial on this account. Just at that time we were busy preparing a congress for the organization of a Provincial Labor Bureau. Comrades coming from all over the province for the congress, were arrested one by one. They were charged with the intention of taking part in a seditious meeting, and were each sentenced to a few days' imprisonment.

Many men from our locality had been called up.

One Sunday the new recruits arranged a demonstration that greatly disturbed the inhabitants and alarmed the authorities. They collected in the principal square of the town. There were several hundred of them. No exclamations were uttered, there was no conversation even. That dumb, immobile crowd made a profound impression. A few officers who happened to be in the vicinity, began to question the soldiers.

"What are you doing here?"

"Nothing. Just getting a breath of fresh air."

"Well, move on there, get moving!"

But nobody moved. Afterwards they went away as silently and suddenly as they had come. When I arrived at the square with the intention of making a speech, only a few soldiers and a great number of carabinieri were left.

Next day the carabinieri came for me.

"We know everything. It's useless to deny anything. We know your accomplices as well. They've reported everything to us already. So it'll be better for you to own up."

"Own up? What have I to own up to?"

I knew very well what they were talking about, but I was really innocent this time.

"Don't act the fool! And yesterday's demonstration — who got that up? We know that a lot of soldiers go to see you. Two of them are in jail already. Just see if you can deny your association with Corporal Comei and Sergeant Bibolotti. These birdies have sung for us already!"

"Evidently they know how to sing.[1] I've never learned to sing yet."

"This is no time for joking," shouted the Commissioner furiously.

"You'd better admit everything, that's what you'd better do!"

I could not admit to anything. I was searched and sent to jail.

"Just look at that now — our barber!" came a voice from the depths of the cell I was placed in. "What wind blew you here?"

This excellent major, a "hundred per cent" Italian, wrote the following clumsy report:

"Make careful observations of the well-known socialist barber. He is known as a very bad Italian and corrupts the soldiers. He was seen in the square on Sunday during the demonstration. He is gravely suspected."

CHAPTER VIII

Patriots. Cuneo. Love.

Meanwhile the "Arabs on the golden shores" were defending themselves desperately. The newspapers were full of reports of brilliant victories, but the "military excursion," begun in 1911, has dragged on until today. And even now one can read from time to time in the fascist papers that "The rebels, of whom only a few remain, have now been suppressed for good." It is still not clear why colonial expenditure should weigh so heavily on the State budget. Perhaps this phenomenon explains the news of soldiers' deaths, that the village mayors communicate, almost secretly, to the families of the slain? . . .

Reports from Libya were severely censored. The court was kept busy with cases against our papers, which printed articles on the war started by the imperialists. Reaction was raging everywhere. One evening I went to the theater, a very poor provincial theater. An extremely bad company was doing its best to spoil the opera, "Norma." Rossini, the composer, was dead, so they thought they could sing their worst with impunity. I was just thinking of going out, when suddenly, in the interval, a boy came in with the evening paper. As usual a new victory was announced. One of the actors came before the curtain and read out the telegram. The orchestra played the royal march and everyone save me stood up. The audience hissed at me. An officer shouted, "Turk! Turk!" "Imbecile!" I replied. "Go to Africa and try to be a hero there, not here."

The carabinieri appeared and took me off with them. The evening had turned out altogether badly for me. The howling of the opera company was succeeded by the tedious sermon of the captain of the carabinieri:

"You'll end badly, I'm telling you, and I know something about these things. You'd be a lot better off if you kept to barbering and didn't meddle with politics. The lawyers are the gentlemen to look after that... You've got a family on your hands, you should think about them! Really, it's absurd to think that I should always have to be reminding you of this! I'll be getting tired of it, you know..."

"And then maybe you'll leave off teaching me morals? That'll be something to look forward to."

"It's impossible to talk to you. Well, I'll have to detain you here a while. Sorry, but..."

"Then why don't you send me home?"

At that moment came a knock at the door, and the officer who had ordered my arrest in the theater entered the room.

"Let him go!" he said to the captain.

The captain was evidently delighted. Times were not what they are now. I decided to teach this young officer a lesson.

"I should like to know," I said to him, "why you think you'll get rid of me so easily, signor lieutenant? You know that it was illegal to order the carabinieri to arrest me. You'll answer for this!"

"You must understand — I'm an ardent patriot, and I was most insulted at the time by your behavior. Now it's all over, I'm very sorry....

The lieutenant was young, cowardly and evidently worried as to how the affair would turn out.

"If you're such an ardent patriot, then, why don't you ask to be sent to Africa?"

"It would kill my mother," muttered the lieutenant.

"Oh, is that it? And what about the other soldiers I suppose they're foundlings, they have no mothers, have they?"

[1] "To sing" in Italian slang means to confess, give information.

I was warming up. The captain looked upset and bewildered. He did not know what to do.

'Well, you'll see what'll come of this —" I concluded and went out.

Next day a photographer whom I knew came to my house together with an army veterinary surgeon. They came to ask me not to make the incident public — on account of the lieutenant's mother.... What consideration!

I was not, of course, silent about the matter. The patriotism of the filial son was rediculed in *Avanti!* and *Lotte Nuove*. This correspondence did its work. The fiery patriot was not left to gain his military laurels in flirtations and the pleasanter forms of sport, but was obliged to ask to be sent to the front. I wished with all my heart that he might stop a bullet as a souvenir of the war.

The incident produced a big impression on the soldiers. Many of them used to come in and see me in the barber's. Some came out of sheer curiosity, some to have a chat, and a few wanted me to allow the socialist paper of their province to be sent to my address since they were not permitted to receive it in the baracks. Officers would call round at my place, too. They were keeping an eye on the soldiers. The results soon became evident.

I noticed that not only had the soldiers stopped coming to me, but also other regular customers from the baracks. What had happened? It turned out that the commander had issued an order forbidding all the inmates of the barracks "to visit the barber's shop at No. 46, Via Roma, — kept by an anti-patriot and socialist — under pain of arrest and imprisonment."

The soldiers could not keep away for very long, however. They soon began to run in for a few minutes on the quiet to read the paper, in spite of the fact that it cost some of them several days in the guardroom.

Another form of attack was directed against the Labor Bureau. They wanted to drive us off of those premises at any cost. All sorts of tricks were tried: the neighbors complained of the noise, of our singing and playing on the piano. The owner of the house was cautioned by the police. He took advantage of this in order to raise the rent. At last he refused altogether to let us have the place. The committee would meet of evenings in my shop.

The priests took part in driving us out of our rooms. Then they formed a united front in a special campaign against the "socialist-barber." That was an amusing campaign! It was at the time when bobbed hair for women became fashionable. The society and demimonde of our little town were all desirous of following the fashions. None of the barbers, except my partner, who had worked in Paris, was able to cut hair *à la garçonne*. So our shop had the monopoly in ladies' hairdressing. We put a card in the window — "Ladies' Hairdressing." The priests became alarmed. They are always against every innovation. And here the impious hands of the socialists were to carry on this work of hair-emancipation. The pulpits thundered their disapproval of those who were disfiguring womanly beauty. Too late the priests noticed that they were simply giving us a free advertisement. The number of our customers doubled. Such is the power of fashion...

I believe that even now the *Perpetuas*[1] of the reverend fathers are bobbed *à la garçonne* and maybe the reverend fathers are as attentive about these matters as the gentle *Perpetuas* are about the tonsures.

Many tales are told of Cuneo. It is said that the inhabitants once made a public trial of a new electric plant: that when the government expressed its desire to have a plan of Cuneo, the city fathers sent the most beautiful tree from the principal boulevard, to the capital.

Some say that once the community resolved, for economy's sake, to dispense with the services of a hangman and his assistants. If the necessity should arise, they were to be brought from Turin. The Turin hangman, however, demanded 700 lire for a single performance. This greatly disturbed the city fathers and when they had recovered from the shock they thought of another plan, as wise as the first. The criminal was asked if he would hang himself for the sum of 200 lire, which, being a true son of Cuneo, he promptly did.

There is never smoke without fire. One can still see the campanile in Cuneo that bears the significant inscription "This tower was built here in the year..."

The natives greatly resent references to these legends, and they are the cause of many a brawl. The stamp-collector's[2] weak-willed son who now sits upon the Italian throne and meekly signs Mussolini's decrees, was himself born, if not actually in Cuneo, in the same province, in the town of Racconigi. It was in this noble town that Morgari hissed the Russian tsar. The king's grandfather was frequently to be seen hunting in the neighborhood of Cuneo. Not only for game, either. The more ancient inhabitants of Cuneo often whisper, slyly, that Victor Emanuel II was called the "Father of his country" because no small quantity of the royal blood flowed in the veins of the folk round about.

Cuneo is not only a town of fools and muddlers, but also the bulwark of ancient custom and Catholic fanaticism. Tradition reigns supreme—in thought, in morals, in life itself. I suffered painfully myself from this.

I grew very fond of a girl there. She seemed to like me, too. I never cared to put things off, so I explained my feelings to her. She did not seem to find any fault with them. Women are born diplomats. When they do not say no — it may be taken to mean yes. We went for walks together, and did everything that people in love usually do. But — there was just one "but." In these parts the question of marriage was a very complicated one for a socialist.

"You'll give up your ideas when you marry me, won't you?" she asked me.

"No," I said firmly.

At this she was offended and sulked for several days, but it passed off. Our meetings continued as before. We lived not far from each other.

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[1] *Perpetua*, common name of the housekeepers of the "celibate" catholic priests.

[2] The father of the present king of Italy was an enthusiastic stamp-collector.

I tried to convince her:

"Look here," I said. "I won't go to church with you, but I give you absolute freedom to try propaganda to convince me. Will that be all right?"

She did not object, but had not the courage to say "yes."

I could understand her hesitation. Nobody in that place had ever contracted a civil marriage. The girls there allowed the officers to court them in the arcades, and kiss them in the shade of the plane-trees, and sometimes even permitted themselves secret visits to bachelors' flats, but to get married without the priest and the mayor—that was unthinkable. What a scandal, what shamelessness!

Somebody once informed my mother that I was going to marry a Jewess.

"Is it true?" she asked me. "And where will you marry her?—in the church or in the synagogue?"

I laughed.

"Whether I marry a Jewess or a Mohammedan or a Protestant, mother, I'll not be married in church or synagogue or mosque. I'll do without the mayor as well!"

My poor mother only raised her hands to heaven in despair.

The parents of my future wife were Catholics, and so was she. And still she decided to marry me.

I was happy. I busied myself with looking for a flat, which was by no means easy. I was obliged to resort to a firm called "Benefica," that sold furniture on the installment system, and afterwards squeezed the last penny out of its customers. But I was not disturbed by things like that at the time. I was happy.

Not long before the day fixed for our wedding, my bride came to me and said:

"I've asked people what they thought and I've changed my mind. I'm very sorry for you but I can't hurt my parents and your mother. If you really love me, you'll make one sacrifice for me: marry me in church. Everybody does it and it's always been so."

It was a terrible blow to me. I knew that she was surrounded by the nuns and hypocrites from the whole district, but still I hoped. I tried all ways to convince her. As soon as she got away from the influence of her environment, she wavered, almost agreed with me, wanted to postpone the final decision. It was a painful, stubborn battle. I did not want to give in. I could not. The old traditions of this backward province must be broken down. I had no right to yield.

One evening—it was a dismal, foggy evening—we met for the last time. I used all the powers of persuasion at my command, I begged her to give in. In vain.

"Everybody gets married in church," she repeated obstinately.

"But you agreed already—I've never concealed my opinion from you!"

"I know, I know, you're right! I know I'm treating you badly,—and myself as well. But I haven't the strength. I'm afraid. Forgive me!"—and she burst out crying.

Nearby the River Po, hidden by the fog, thundered hollowly, dashing against the stone walls of the pier. The street-lamps glimmered feebly. A few people hurried past without looking at us.

"Well, is that your last word?"

"Yes—and what's yours?" she said weakly.

We looked into each other's eyes. She was very pale and still. I felt as if my feet were rooted to the spot. The minutes dragged by.

I made a great effort.

"Goodbye!"

And I went away. I never saw her again.

CHAPTER IX

The Beginning of the World War

Premises for our Labor Bureau had not yet been found. We joined various clubs in the hope of getting control of one. There was a fine place in the very center of the town. A new club had just been opened there. I joined it at once. Its members were mostly small shop-keepers. They began to talk about me: "Our barber has got to be quite a bourgeois, lately." During the election of the board of directors I was elected secretary of the new club. This was mainly due to the fact that the post of secretary is no sinecure. The other members chose less onerous and more prominent positions. The office was in my hands. I had an errand-boy as well, a bright little chap, who carried round the notices to members of the club and to members of our Party alike. He pretended not to notice when I held meetings in the library. None of the members ever even glanced into the library. They preferred the dance-hall.

I suggested to the club that we admit outsiders on payment of special, reduced subscriptions. This was to give them the right to enter the library only, not the dance-hall. The shopkeepers liked this idea, and so I managed in this way to make our use of the library legal.

When Sarajevo resounded with the shot that started the world war, the club members listened readily to our speeches against the war. At that time they were all against it, because the majority of them were still at an age when they might be called up. Later on, when they had been soothed with all kinds of reductions in taxes and had received big contracts from the army purveyors, they all turned into ardent militarists. They raved about "War to the victorious end, no matter what the cost!"

Giolitti was relegated to a back-seat and Bissolati became their god.

That was a lively time—between August, 1914 when war was declared, and May 1915, when Italy came into it!

Never before during the whole history of Italy had we witnessed such unrestrained, such headlong political somersaults as were turned in that nine months. At first the nationalist papers invited us to enter the war on the side of Austria and Germany, but a few months later they demanded that we support the Allies! Three hundred deputies—the majority in Parliament—left their visiting cards in Giolitti's hall and identified themselves with the neutral policy of the all-powerful minister, and then all at once turned into fiery militarists. Mussolini issued, on behalf of the Socialist Party, a proclamation against war, and in less than six months was drawing his sword.

The general situation did not improve after war was declared. The monarchy was in a chaotic state. The king was a king no longer, even in name. During his absence at the front, the Duke of Genoa had been appointed guardian of the throne. He was now in his dotage. The king was not, however, the leader of his army, since it was commanded by General Cadorna. Cadorna was reactionary, and a hypocrite, hated by the soldiers for his cruelty. He was made a field-marshal. His closest friend and counsellor was his confessor, through whom the Vatican acted, with the assistance of a whole network of field chaplains. This gang of priests, militaristic at the front and neutral in their parishes, gained complete control over Cadorna.

The struggle began between the Central Powers and the Allies. Millions were squandered, and around these millions danced the war profiteers, —manufacturers, merchants, land-owners, politicians, and journalists, — from the hack-writers of the *Idea Nazionale* to Mussolini.

The Italian Socialist Party called on the masses to protest against the war. Anti-war demonstrations were held everywhere. Mussolini, who had the insolence to make pro-war speeches several times, was howled down.

Socialist meetings were forbidden. Many socialists were arrested. The militarists spread themselves all over the country, doing war propaganda.

It was about that time that I got to know Cesare Batisti, a socialist deputy from Trento who had turned militarist. He was touring Italy, making appeals for the liberation of Trento and Trieste from the Austrians. Later on he was taken prisoner by the Austrians and hanged. He was always surrounded by a crowd of army profiteers. In a Cuneo theater he was hooted down, just before that I met him in the train.

A wealthy lawyer, a member of the Democratic Party, was seeing him off. He was saying:

"You will see, *Onorevole*,[1] what a welcome you will get in patriotic Cuneo!"

Batisti listened to him with a preoccupied, listless air. It seemed as if he had begun to understand where his idealism was leading him, what his "fatherland" really was, and what these representatives of it were worth.

He replied coldly:

"In Brescia and Bologna I was howled down!"

He had foreseen the "welcome" that awaited him in Cuneo.

Mussolini was now expelled from the Party and had founded his own paper. He asserted that he had left *Avanti!* with five lire in his pocket. The millions of the Bank of France allowed him to perform this miracle. He started a libelous campaign against Serrati, who had been appointed editor-in-chief of *Avanti!* in his place. Serrati was even accused by him of having committed a murder while in America. There had been a time when Serrati had shared his last crust with Mussolini, and had spent a great deal of time on his revolutionary training. Bacci and Lazzari, associate editors of the Party organ, were also made the victims of virulent attacks on the part of the renegade.

All the month of August, 1914, trains laden with guns, munitions and soldiers passed through Cuneo on their way to the forts of the French frontier.

A few month later all these war supplies were shipped back to Venice — on May 24, 1915, Italy declared war.

Music, flags, speeches. . . . Every day more soldiers were sent to the front. Reserves were called up. In many cases both the father and the sons were called up at the same time. Recruiting increased. Only very old or disabled men were left at home. Every day we sent off some of our comrades. Our organization suffered a great deal from it. Only a few men remained in it. The workers that remained in the factories, now controlled by the war ministry, were afraid to say a word for fear of being sent to the front. The militarists—lawyers, journalists, chemists and "only" sons—all proved to be "Z" men, unfit for active service. They entrenched themselves in the rear and became "indispensable," while peasants and laborers, and skilled workers were sent to the front. From time to time the remaining members of some family or other would be called to the Town Hall to receive the sad news. Every day want increased, bread grew dearer and deteriorated in quality. But every day the band played, flags were hung out of the windows, and bulletins of our victories over the "ancient foe" were published. Police censorship, concentration camps, martial law, arrests, heavy sentences became the order of the day. Trains went out bearing young and healthy people. Other trains came in, hospital-trains, which emptied themselves of stretchers covered with mutilated bodies — remains of men. Bands of deserters, in chains, were driven back to the front.

War! In the trains, in the cafés. in the streets, in the villages—and everywhere interrogations, examination of documents. The mobilization machine sifted people carefully, afraid of letting slip even one man who might be fit for cannon-fodder. Each time, however, it failed to touch the "indispensables." Socialists were especially hunted for. I was called up six times for examination. Our activities, limited and repressed as they were by the police, were still a danger. Our newspapers came out with great blank strips in them, but still they came out. We were shadowed at every step.

At that time I was secretary of the socialist Federation of our province. Correspondence was made extremely difficult by the censorship, so I had to travel about a great deal. My bicycle came in handy but I was often stopped and sent back. I was obliged to go by train to more distant parts. This was even more difficult. It sometimes happened that when I arrived at my destination I was sent straight from the station to the prison. Here, the best that could be expected was to receive a paper sending me back home. This paper I had to present to the commissioner of the police at home, and listen to a lecture from him in return. Sometimes I was escorted home by two gendarmes.

The police did all they could to prevent our holding meetings of the executive committee of the federation, meetings that were in any case few and far between. The censorship hindered correspondence, and we were carefully watched.

Just as at the time of the war in Eritrea, soldiers were forbidden to visit our barber-shop under pain of severe punishment and of being sent to the front. And for all that, they ran in and out as before, to tell us what was going on at the barracks, pay their subscriptions to the paper

[1] *Onorevole* title of deputy in Parliament.

or read it. Not only did we not break off our relations with the soldiers, we even used the staff typewriters for our circulars and Party documents.

CHAPTER X

Prisoners

The first war-prisoners arrived. Dirty, tattered, hungry. The first batch was brought in like cattle. They came in cattle-waggons, marked "40 men, 8 horses."

So did our own soldiers, by the way. But there were many more than 40 war-prisoners in those waggons. They were taken to the remotest corners of the peninsula. They made a terrible impression. I never once saw any of the workers laugh or jeer at them, although the militarist papers did their utmost to fan the flame of hatred for the "enemy." They passed through the streets, pitiful, bowed, tormented lads, escorted by a few soldiers from the reserves, unfit for active service. There was little difference between the victors and the vanquished: the same rags, the same weary gait, the same mournful, vacant eyes.

Several thousand prisoners were sent to Fossano. They were housed in wooden barracks. They worked and received in return black bread and some thin broth. We could help them very little. Our soldiers were severely punished if they were observed to be in communication of any kind with the prisoners, or "assisting the enemy."

The commandant of the concentration camps, and his underlings were ultra-reactionary and treated the soldiers with extreme cruelty. I published—and strange to say, the censor passed it—an account of how this commandant had sent a sick soldier on a long march, and how the soldier had died on the way. Then I told how the soldiers, clad only in their shirts, were forced to work in the snow, and beaten with the butt-end of the rifle for trifles and many more things that I had found out. The commandant flew into a rage. He sent for me and wrote an order for my "detention." When we distributed our proclamations, he was nearly beside himself. He never suspected that these sheets had been typed in his own office. I was called to his office and shown some of the proclamations.

"You know something about this, don't you?"

I picked up the sheets and gazed at them intently:

"Can't make anything out of it all! What language is it?" I asked.

"This is no time for joking, young man. We know all about it. You write these things and someone translates them."

I resolved to be cautious, to neither deny nor confirm.

"If you were in the military zone, you'd get six bullets in your back for this! Here you'll to deserve shooting or hard labor?"

"This is all very interesting, of course, but who can prove that I've done anything bad enough to deserve shooting or hard labor?"

"We know everything. You trust others too much. They report to the right quarter, and you've got to pay for it. So it's all the better for you if you admit everything, and then you'll get off lighter."

But I would not admit anything. And since there was no evidence against me, they had to let me go.

The unfortunate war-prisoners came off badly. Many of them died. They would sell anything for a bit of bread—soldiers' crosses or medals for bravery included. There were too many of them and we could do so little to help. We did what we could: we showed up abuse of authority and cases of ill-treatment in our papers. We tried to cheer up the prisoners, sent them proclamations and letters. Some of them already began to understand Italian. Any of our soldiers who happened to come into contact with them, made friends with them and helped them, as far as they could, in spite of the threats of the officers. Once I saw a touching sight.

An Italian soldier, armed with a rifle, was escorting an Austrian prisoner who was carrying a big clumsy bundle. The Austrian was an oldish man and he carried his burden with difficulty. The soldier, who was younger, took pity on the man and offered to help him. I saw the Austrian's eyes light up with gratitude. Then the soldier halted and said:

"Here, you carry my rifle, and I'll take your bundle."

Thus they went on, the two "eternal enemies," the victor bending under the burden, and the prisoner, carrying a rifle. I stood staring after them a long time.

Another time I saw a soldier taken ill while superintending the work of two prisoners. He fell down on the ground. The prisoners immediately ran up and tried to bring him round. Then they carried him into the barracks.

Peace! Peace! Everyone was thirsting for it—the victors no less than the vanquished. This word could move the human heart to such a degree that I once got arrested because of it.

I used to go sometimes to a cinema owned by a man I knew, and from sheer boredom would play the pianola. Once, after the inevitable dose of patriotic films, they showed an ordinary love-story. Two men in love with the same woman; they get ready to kill each other when they find out that the woman had flirted with both of them and had a third lover. When the rivals learn this they make peace.

The words "Peace has been proclaimed" were flashed on to the screen. The audience, which was composed principally of soldiers, greeted the words with thunderous applause, and shouted "Hurrah for peace! We want peace!" I went on playing without noticing what was going on on the screen. The operator immediately stopped work and the lights went up. The words on the screen vanished, but the audience continued to applaud and shout. The soldiers jumped on the benches and shrieked out the magic word. The carabinieri in attendance lost their heads and bolted.

The soldiers were not allowed out of the barracks next night. The police searched for the instigators and, since I had been playing the pianola that evening in the cinema, they fell on me. Not only did they arrest me, but they threatened to deprive the proprietor of the unlucky cinema house of his license if he ever again allowed me to play his pianola!

CHAPTER XI

Encounters

I had to go up for medical examination. It was either the third or the fourth time.

I went to a large, dirty room in the hospital, smelling of carbolic. Down at the far end of it the International Military Medical Commission: an Italian colonel, an English Army doctor and a French officer.

What sights that dismal room saw! Hunchbacks, idiots, the halt and the lame, people suffering and distorted by rickets — all were there. They had been examined over and over again, and still they were called up to lay bare their wounds and defects once more. All of them might have been sent home after a first glance, without any medical examination, and still many of them were accepted as fit! My turn came at last. I was laid on a table covered with oil-cloth. The Italian colonel started to measure my bad leg with the greatest care.

At last the Frenchman said:

"It seems to me the case isn't worth considering for a moment. Let him go."

The colonel replied in bad French:

'I'm of the same opinion, but special orders have been issued, and I don't care to take the responsibility."

The Englishmen had gone away for a moment.

"What sort of orders were those?" I asked in French, not so much in the hope of getting an answer as to see the colonel's face. He gave me a withering glance and bawled out, "Silence!"

Still, he had to let me go. While the colonel was dictating the decision of the commission to the secretary, the French officer came up to me.

"Are you a socialist?" he asked.

"Yes, I said, what about it?"

"Nothing. I thought so. I'm a socialist, too."

"What kind?" I asked slyly.

"When are you going away?" he asked, avoiding a direct answer to my question.

"Tonight at eight."

"Then maybe we could have dinner together?"

"Why not?" I said.

Twelve o'clock struck.

"Clear out, all of you," shouted the sergeant. "You can get your papers after three. Look sharp!"

The future defenders of the fatherland were driven out, some only half-dressed, with their shoes in their hands. I went out with the Frenchman.

We sat down in a restaurant nearby and began to talk. My companion was a man of middle age with a pointed beard and round spectacles.

"So you're a socialist?" I asked after the waiter had brought the soup.

"Yes," said the Frenchman, "I've been a member of the Party for many years now. And you?"

"I'm been in it since 1903. First I was in the Youth section and now I'm in the Italian Socialist Party. But you seem to be busy defending your — er — country?"

"Of course," announced the French socialist. "I'm bound to do that. We're in an exceptional position. We were attacked, just like the Belgians. And then our behaviour is fully justified by the policy of the German socialists."

"Karl Liebknecht, for instance?" I put in.

"Oh, Liebknecht — he's a hero," my companion rejoined. "But the German social-democrats betrayed the International!"

"Just as the French did!"

"And the Italian socialists?"

"Our political platform is essentially different from yours. We expelled Mussolini from the Party and refused to follow him, while you followed the patriots and joined the bourgeois ministry. Isn't that so?"

"Yes, that's so. But you had plenty of time to think over the situation," he said by way of defense.

We argued for a long time, but the Frenchman stuck to his opinions.

"Only when German militarism is done away with, will it be possible to work for socialism," he persisted.

"That's a fantastic dream. We shall all be worn-out and beaten, to the great delight of the bourgeoisie on both sides," I argued.

We parted coldly. I went back to the hospital for my papers.

A long line of men who had already undergone examination, were waiting for their papers and telling each other their experiences.

"Just fancy, I'm to be taken after all. You'd never have expected it, would you? Here I am, 44 years of age, and two sons already taken. One is at the front, the other has been wounded, and I'm ruptured myself."

"They'll operate on you and send you off to fight," said a hunchback with bright, clever eyes.

"Yes, but you know," the father of the two soldiers informed him in a frightened voice. "I always refused to have an operation on purpose, so as I wouldn't be sent — and now —"

The hunchback laughed.

"Oh, it's not so bad at the front after all," a man on crutches put in. "I've read Mussolini's "War Diary —"

"Well, go yourself then!" shouted several voices.

"You're just saying that because you won't have to go!" some one said angrily.

"I'd send everyone who wants war and thinks it's not bad out there to the front. Everyone! And people like that fellow with crutches as well!" said a person in enormous spectacles of incredibly thick glass.

"That's one for you!" shouted the hunchback to the one on crutches.

"Oh, then the war would soon be over!" cried a tiny fellow who had come with a child in his arms.

"You're all defeatists!" the man on crutches tried to shout above the din. "I'd go if I could. We'll all have to live like savages again if we don't win. Haven't you read how the Austrians are bombing the Red Cross tents?"

"And don't you know that our army is transporting shells through the Red Cross?" asked a peasant whose throat was terribly swollen with goiter.

"Liars! It's the defeatists who set these rumors going... You're lucky that there are no carabinieri here!"

"Or else you'd denounce us? You damned spy! Just try it once and you'll go back home with a broken jaw!"

The peasant with goiter went for the man on crutches.

The latter got frightened.

"I'm not talking about you — you're being fooled."

"Ugh, you son of a bitch, you! I suppose you've got a shop or something that's doing well out of the war, eh?" the peasant would not let go.

"Oh, no, nothing of the sort!" the man on crutches was highly offended.

"Then you must be cracked, that's all," concluded the peasant, amid general laughter.

A sergeant started to give out the documents.

The man who had sent his two sons to the war and was suffering from rupture was acepted as fit for service. I saw him speak to the little man who had got an exemption certificate.

"How much would you take for that?" asked the first man, pointing to the certificate.

The little man smiled and, rising on tiptoes whispered:

"It's not for sale, you understand, but if you happen to have a few hundreds," he looked round and dropped his voice still lower, "or better, a few thousands. Then I can tell you of a way to save your skin..."

"You mean it?"

"Honestly! But — keep quiet! Where are you from? I'm going away at eight-fifteen. To Alba."

"I'm going by the same train to Cavallier Majore — So we'll be going part of the way together and have time for a talk," the peasant rubbed his hands with satisfaction.

The tiny man nodded and started to wipe his child's nose.

"Papa, when are you going to dress up like a soldier?" the small boy asked curiously.

"I'm not going to be a soldier," replied his father, "and don't bother me when I'm talking to someone."

The little boy was thoughtful for a moment and then piped up.

"Will they make you a soldier when you grow up a bit?"

This remark amused all the sick and mained, the majority of whom had been accepted by their fatherland as sufficiently grown-up.

CHAPTER XII

Reaction. Hunger. The Turin Rising

The spring of 1917 was a particularly uneasy one. There were disturbances in Milan. The workers were in an agitated state in other big industrial centers also, especially in Turin.

Turin and Leningrad have something in common. Many big factories are concentrated in these towns and consequently, a great part of the active, militant proletariat. Turin, like Leningrad, possesses its own revolutionary traditions. Many of the great strikes have taken place there.

The Socialist Party failed to bring about a general strike at the beginning of the war. An insurrection broke out in August, 1917. The Party again failed to lead the rebellion and so it was drowned in blood.

I often had to go to that town in order to keep up connections with worker comrades. Conditions in the metallurgical works, where a militarv regime was now established, were extremely hard. Workers, not only men, but also women and children, were thrown into prison for the slightest offense. If a worker left his job he was punished by martial law. No compensation was given those injured at work. The trade unions, represented by Colombino, Buozzi, Guarnieri and others, in the Committee for Industrial Mobilization, did nothing. The local socialist organization was, of course, against joining the Committee, but the reformists in the workers' trade unions agreed to cooperation with the manufacturers.

Strikes were called, but not often. Impressive demonstrations against the war occurred during the funeral of the victims of the explosion in the Borgo San Paolo powder-factory.

The arrival of Goldenberg and Smirnov, the delegates of the Russian Provisional Government, was welcomed in Turin with an outburst of great enthusiasm and big demonstrations. It was quite impossible to find room in the Labor Bureau, for all those desirous of hearing the Russian delegates. They had to speak from the balcony. It was the first open meeting held since the entry of Italy into the war. To the great surprise of Goldenberg and Smirnov, the workers cheered Lenin and the bolsheviks. This happened in June.

At the end of July bread became scarce in Turin. Although it was black, heavy, much adulterated and contained very little nourishment, it was still the staple food of the working-masses. The population found its scarcity disturbing. To wait long hours in a queue only to see at the end the notice "no bread" was extremely irritating. The crowd greeted the "no bread" signs with hisses and howls of indignation.

On August 22 there was no bread at all in the shops.

In several factories the workers did not resume work after the dinner hour.

"Why aren't you working?" asked one of the masters.

"Because we've nothing to eat," came the reply.

"I'll send a lorry for army bread," the employer suggested.

"Down with war!" was he reply. Towards 5 o'clock in the evening the workers from all the factories were in the streets. Men exonerated from service tore the tri-color bands from their arms and joined the strikers.

The secretary of the Labor Bureau was arrested. The reformists tried to publish an "appeal for order," but they did not succeed. A workers' delegation was dispatched to Milan, to the central committee of the Italian Socialist Party, and the trade union conference, with a request to support the movement. This request was refused.

So the insurrection developed without any guidance. A women's delegation went to the Prefect and was given some vague promises in return. The crowds in the streets swelled day by day.

A smart motor car passed by, and a light voice came from within:

"What a fuss about bread! Why don't they eat cake?"

The crowd responded: "Don't worry, we shall!" The raiding of the confectioners' shops began. The disturbance spread from the center to the outlying parts of the town. Barricades were erected, but they were badly made, and it was easy enough to take them. In Borgo San Paolo a church was burned down where, just a year before, the monks had flogged a boy.

The first conflicts with the police came. The first victims. The workers raided shops selling guns and revolvers and armed themselves. The police were reinforced by regiments of soldiers. The rebellion centered chiefly in two suburbs: Borgo San Paolo and Barriera di Milano. Since these places were situated at opposite sides of the town, the rebel forces were split into two by the troops.

But even these regiments of the government seemed unreliable. The soldiers looked pale and sullen, the officers — bewildered. The women would take food over to the soldiers and say:

"Don't shoot down your own flesh and blood, lads. Remember, the workers are your brothers!"

A detachment of Alpine infantry was given the order to shoot, but disobeyed and handed their arms to the workers. The crowd cheered them. Not one of the soldiers belonged to the Party Various slogans were thrown out by the crowd. They changed swiftly. At the beginning these were demands for bread and then:

"Down with war!"

Then:

"We want peace! Down arms!"

"Come out of the trenches!"

The rebels seized one of the police stations. The crowd pressed forward to the center, to the Prefecture, to the Police Headquarters, and the barracks. Just as it was, without leaders, the crowd aimed straight at victory, at seizing the power.

Armored cars made their appearance on the scene, machine-guns rattled, tanks crawled out. From that moment the dead were beyond counting. The town was plunged into darkness, where only the clatter of machine-guns and the roar of the cars could be heard. I shall never forget that day.

The proletariat showed wonderful heroism. I was told that when the heavy tanks were turning in the direction of the suburbs, a group of women broke through the cordon or soldiers and barred the way of the tanks. They hung on to the machines with their hands and would not let them move. The order to turn the machine-guns on them was disregarded by the soldiers. The soldiers, white as death, with sweat and tears running down their faces, refused to shoot.

But resistance could not be kept up for very long. There were many rumors abroad. Some said that the Italian Socialist Party counselled the workers to return to the factories. There were no leaders... In a few days the insurrection had been suppressed.

According to official reports the number of killed was 42, but we counted more than 500, while the number of wounded ran into thousands.

The police forbade the relatives to identify the dead! The victims were buried unidentified. The Party, together with the Confederation of Labor, published a manifesto calling on the proletariat to resume work...

Arrests continued to be made for about a month after the suppression of the insurrection. Serrati was also arrested in Milan.

During the trial the accused clung to the Party political platform, but not one of them spoke a word in defense of the heroic behavior of the proletariat of Turin.

The amnesty of February 22, 1919, set free all those implicated in the insurrection. Dissatisfaction was rife everywhere. Echoes of the Turin insurrection were heard even in the little town where I lived. It was 60 kilometers away from Turin and absolutely cut off from it during the trouble. Still, rumors of events trickled through, and the workers, peasants and soldiers were greatly excited. The papers, of course, were silent. I read the accounts of the Turin insurrection in the French papers. Even *Avanti!* only gave a short notice of it in small print, and never made the slightest attempt to publish any details of even historical value. Of course, the censor might not have allowed it, but at least the headlines and the blank spaces would have been evidence in themselves, as is always so in these cases.

We wrote proclamations about the insurrection and had them translated for the prisoners. In our shop it was the only subject of conversation, especially as I had spent those days in Turin.

General Cadorna's bulletins about the victories won by the glorious Italian army continued to be published.

And in the meantime the Italian army was retreating in complete disorder and went on retreating until it reached the River Piave, in the Venetian Alps.

CHAPTER XIII

The Congress of Florence

Caporetto!

The roads were crowded with soldiers who had deserted their regiments, with refugees fleeing further inland on carts laden with all their goods and chattels, and small children. At the sides of the roads, wounded men left neglected, groaned and died. Bridges were blown up before the fugitives could get across them. Frightful scenes by the stormy rivers, the thunder of artillery, both enemy and Italian, mowing down the panic-stricken population from both sides.

The officers went almost crazy trying to prevent the defeated army from retreating. All in vain. Panic drove the avalanche down to the River Piave, and fugitives and deserters were scattered all over the country.

When it became impossible to conceal the ruin of the army, the authorities looked round for some door at which to lay the blame for the catastrophe. They found Turin — and the insurrection. The newspapers that had formerly sung the praises of the heroic Italian soldiers, were now full of the meanest and most rascally insults for them. Everyone, beginning from Cadorna and ending with the lowest cur tried to outdo the others in slander and threats. But even at that moment, when their "fatherland" was actually in danger not one of the gentlemen entrenched at the rear, would go to the front. They confined themselves to louder demands for severe punishment of the "traitors." "Shoot the dogs, shoot them!"

The bourgeoisie, who were terrified for the moment by this catastrophe, made numerous fine promises to the proletariat. But for the time being it only seemed to mean the further reduction of food rations, meager as they were. The population of the prisons increased. A diligent search for deserters and social-defeatists went on as well. Gangs of deserters were sent off in chains to the front, the military prisons were full to overflowing, mass shooting of offenders went on daily in the war zone. The name of General Graziani, the ring-leader in these shootings became a synonym for hangman.

And just at that very moment, when the ruin of the State machine and the army was complete, the working-class was not sufficiently well-organized to aim the last, decisive blow at its enemy.

The runaway soldiers threw down their rifles by the roadside, instead of turning them against the bourgeoisie. The peasants ran away into the woods instead of seizing the land, and the workers did not seize the factories! Why?

Why was no voice raised from amid those masses, worn and weary with long years of war, from the ranks of the ruined army, no voice calling for one mighty blow at the class-enemy, at the land-owner, at the manufacturer, the gendarme, the king, the priest? Why?

Because the political organization of the proletariat had not reached the proper level. At that critical moment the Italian Socialist Party was found to be, for all practical purposes, non-existent. The voice of one its leaders, Turati, only rang out once to say; "Our country depends on Grappa." This slogan was taken up by the bourgeoisie, since Turin wanted to save the country of the bourgeoisie at Grappa.

British, French, Czecho-Slovakian, and American soldiers were sent to the Italian front, and with their help the war was resumed. By means of shootings and promises the Italian bourgeoisie managed to collect the scattered regiments. They forced Cadorna to retire, and bit by bit got back to their former state.

Just about that time the Italian Socialist Party called an urgent congress in Rome.

Orlando, who was then Prime Minister, forbade it.

The congress was absolutely necessary in order to mark out the line of the Party, to show that Turati with his "country depends on Grappa" (this speech of his had been printed and distributed among the troops), was by no means representative of the Party. We had to show that the bulk of the latter was against war, and demanded, not "protection against the invasion of an enemy power," as Orlando declared, but peace.

And so the congress was forbidden. The right wing of the Party took it as a matter of course. The majority of the members resolved, however, to hold the congress secretly. The reformists agreed with Orlando that it was unnecessary.

It took place for all that, not in Rome, but in Florence. The members were sent a special notice. It mentioned the precautions to be taken to keep the congress a secret from the authorities.

I was at that time secretary of the district federation of Cuneo. I called the members together and read the notice to them. The old members were quite put out.

"What's this — a secret congress? Have they gone crazy over there? What's it for? The congress was fixed and Orlando has forbidden it... Well, after the war we'll show them what democracy can do! But now — we can't do anything."

But I stood firm.

"We voted for the congress and now we've got to go through with it."

Someone moved that I should be elected as a delegate to the congress. The others gave a sigh of relief. It must be admitted that not one out of the whole federation, joined the communists after the split in the Socialist Party. Next day, as I worked on the heads of my customers, I was thinking hard of the most convenient way to disobey the order forbidding me to leave the town. Suddenly the imposing figure of the captain of the carabinieri appeared in my doorway. I was accustomed by this time to the visits of other officers of the carabinieri, but the captain himself... It must mean something serious.

"I must talk to you. Can you come over and see me?" he asked politely.

"Yes, but just tell me this," — I said, knowing the usual sequel to these conversations. "Have I to bring my underwear and books with me or not?"

"Oh, no! don't dream of it. It's only for a few minutes."

"All right, then, I'll come along as soon as I finish."

Our customers were used to interruptions like these. Once I had to leave a man with only half his beard shaven, and that particular "conversation" delayed me two weeks.

This time, however, the captain kept his word and I was only delayed half-an-hour. When I went in, he was sitting at the table with some papers before him. He straightened his glasses on his nose, fingered his moustache, and coughed two or three times as people do when they find it difficult to begin. Our captain was no orator.

All these preparations took up as much time as it took me to read a short document lying — upside down to me — in front of the captain. It was a rather interesting letter from Orlando.

"Strictly Private."

The Secret Congress of the I.S.P. in Florence.

> *"It has come to the knowledge of the Home Office that the well-known socialist-barber (my name and address followed) is to take part in the Congress. You are instructed to keep him under the closest observation, and to prevent with all the legal forces at your disposal his departure for Florence. This must be managed intelligently."*
>
> *(signed) Orlando.*

"So you have to go to the congress?" began the captain.

"What congress?" I said in a surprised tone. "Didn't you know Orlando has forbidden it?"

This reply was evidently not the one that the captain had expected. He took off his glasses and wiped them carefully, and I read the document through again.

"I'm not speaking about the Rome congress, but about the one that's to be held secretly in Florence," he went on at last.

"I've not heard anything about that congress. Must be some mistake."

"They don't make mistakes in the Home Office. Maybe you haven't received the notice of it yet?"

There was no doubt but that the captain was being very intelligent this time!

"What exactly, in a word, captain, do you want from me?"

"Just this. Since you are sure, of course, to be invited to the congress, I've received orders to warn the Florentine police about you. They will protect you from the local nationalists."

The captain had become courteous and diplomatic.

"If that's all the matter, there's nothing simpler," I replied. "If you will promise I'll tell you when I'm going, that is as soon as I get an invitation to the congress."

"That's fine! Oh, I like to deal with intelligent people — one can always come to some agreement! So that's settled, then?"

I said goodbye to the captain and went back to the shop.

In two hours' time I was pedalling away to on my bicycle to the railway station in the neighboring town and from there I got a through train to Florence. All the delegates arrived promptly and safely, even from the most remote corners of Italy. The congress might have been held with perfect ease, if it had not been that the organizational committee proved about as intelligent as my captain. They had arranged for the secret congress to be held on the premises used by the Provincial Socialist Federation. Forty delegates came to the first meeting and about a hundred police and carabinieri appeared at the same time. The police began with the usual "Open in the name of the law!" filled the hall and invited the organizers to come to speak to the Prefect.

The sequel to this conversation was that the congress was prohibited in Florence and its province.

The funny thing was that later on Orlando, or rather the Prefect of Florence, informed us that we could hold our meetings until midnight. This gave us the chance of thinking over the situation until midnight. In addition to representatives of the federations of the different provinces, the meeting was attended by Serrati, Lazzari, Fortichiari, Gramsci, Caroti and Bordiga.

That night I heard Bordiga for the first time and his speech made a great impression on me. After that speech in a house, surrounded by police, with the threats of arrest hanging over our heads, socialism seemed nearer to me, more tangible. I was used to long articles and vague, stilted congress speeches sprinkled with words like "justice," "freedom," "the brotherhood of man," and so on. At least D'Amicis always spoke like that. I was used to Lazzari's diatribes, Turati's finished polemics and to Mussolini's quick blows. But none of them ever came down to earth. It was all theory and rhetoric. Bordiga kept on earth, simply and naturally. The idea of socialism lived and became a tangible thing.

New horizons opened out before me. The events in Russia grew near and comprehensible. At that moment Bordiga was much closer to me than Gramsci, whom I perhaps understood better, but whose calm sagacity seemed foreign to me then.

It was as if they complemented each other. One was a tall, impressive orator, capable of swaying his audience, the other a puny, quiet thinker.

Bordiga analyzed the situation in Italy. He spoke of the significance of the defeat at the front, the dislocation of the State machine, and concluded with this appeal:

"Action is necessary! The proletariat is tired of waiting. It is armed. We must act!"

Serrati, Lazzari and the majority of those present voted for a continuation of the former policy "not to support and not to sabotage."

Still, Orlando feared a change of policy and wanted to forestall it. About midnight came a noise at the door, a knock and the familiar words: "In the name of the law!"

We had just time to come to an agreement about continuing the meeting in the house of a lawyer whom we knew (afterwards a reformist and later — a fascist).

We went out. The square was full of detectives and police. Each of us was shadowed. Gramsci, Lazzari, another comrade and myself put up for the night at a hotel. As soon as we got up to the door, our "shadows" vanished. When we got to our room we peered out from behind the window curtain and saw them standing at the corner. What should we do?

The hour appointed for the continuation of the congress was drawing nearer, and it was clear that the "shadows" would follow us and interrupt the meeting again. We called a council of war, and it was decided that two of us should "sacrifice" ourselves and decoy the "shadows" off the track of the others. The choice fell on me and the other comrade. Lazzari and Gramsci must be present at the congress at all costs. We went off in different directions so as to separate the spies from each other.

Thus began my midnight tour of Florence, unfamiliar, dark and deserted. I had hoped to find a cab or a taxi in which I could get away from my "shadow" to the meeting. But it was hopeless. Florence was deserted. At the corner of a street a patrol looking out for deserters stopped me and demanded my documents. My shadow crept up and whispered something to the sergeant in charge of the patrol. They let me go and the shadow started off behind me again, and once more I went on my wanderings around the sleeping town.

A taxi at last! I jumped in and shouted out the address of my hotel. The driver started the engine and my shadow was left rooted to the pavement.

On the way I gave the driver the other address and in a few minutes I was among my comrades again. The meeting was soon over. Several resolutions were taken and copies were handed to each of us for our respective localities.

Next day, since my train did not leave until evening, I went round the "city of flowers" with a comrade. We were shadowed all the time. Evidently the Prefect of Florence was still waiting for the congress.

CHAPTER XIV

Peace and the Russian Revolution

Since the army had retreated from Caporetto to Piave, the front was established there. Orlando was succeeded by Bosselly, an old man in his dotage. The new cabinet called up for service old men and mere youngsters alike. Again I had to appear for medical examination, this time at the staff headquarters. Doctors of highest military rank, with gold braid on their caps were there, foreigners as well; in a word it was the usual international commission. And I was let go this time, too.

The war dragged on.

No one, not even the Socialist Party in Italy, desired the Caporetto debacle, but the idea of a long drawn-out war was repellent to all. Trevess announced in the Chamber of Deputies: "This winter not one man should have to remain in the trenches."

Even the Pope, who had been sending his chaplains to the front to keep up the spirits of the fighters, turned out to be a defeatist after the Turin inscurrection. In his apostolic message he protested against "this useless destruction of human life." This did not fail to make an impression at the front.

"Time to finish!" the whisper went round.

The soldiers would drop into the barber-shop and if no one was about, they would say:

"We should do what they did in Russia."

So they said. But the bloody machine of war still worked on, and police reprisals increased every day. My trip to Florence had enraged the gendarmes of Fossano. I was kept under the closest observation. Evidently the captain of the carabinieri and the police commissioner had received a stern reprimand on my account.

Then, to add to the horrors of the war an epidemic of "Spanish" influenza swept over the country. It bore off up to 120 people a day in Turin alone. The food shortage irritated the people, especially the women, who had to stand in long queues by the shops until they were sick and weary. They cursed the war openly.

"To hell with them and their wars!! Rich folks don't have to stand in queues, of course! They can eat chickens and white bread . . ."

"Time to stop it!"

"We should do what they did in Russia!"

"That's right, we want a revolution!"

"We"ll have our own Lenin, too!"

Lenin! The name was sometimes pronounced like a cherished word of hope, sometimes like a threat. It was to be seen written on the walls of houses, at the foot of monuments, everywhere.

Once as I was leaving the Turin office of *Avanti!* a passing patrol stopped me and sent me off to the Turin central prison, San Carlo.

I found there an extremely varied company: drunkards, thieves, drug-fiends and a few soldiers. There was a terrible racket. They were all swearing and shouting and the air was so bad that it was almost impossible to breathe. A drunken man got up on the table and started to make a speech. My entry did not interrupt his mouthings.

"Yes, there's no justice here — and I can prove it to you!"

"Got to sleep, you ape!"

"Shut up, you gabbler!"

"I'll prove it! I've been in America. As soon as I heard we were at war with the Germans, over I came. Joined up as a volunteer. In a month's time I was at the front. But my nerves were bad and I asked to be sent back. And just think, signors, they refused me . . ."

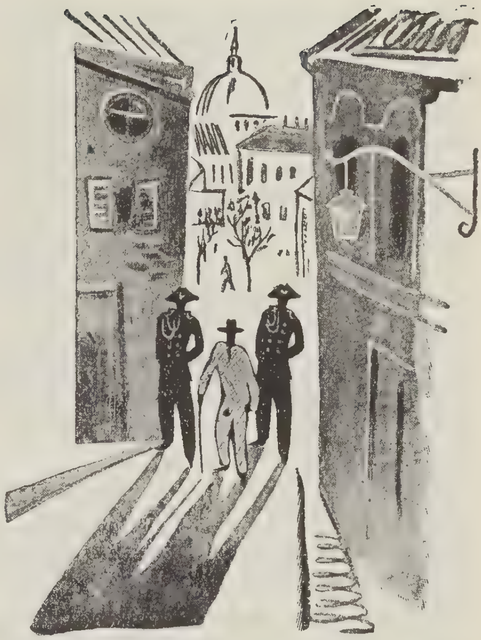
'Umph! you're a damned fool, that's easy to see! And a volunteer into the bargian!"

"So I ran away. Worked in a munition factory And now they've got me. Got drunk and got caught. That's how it is. There's no justice in this world! After all, I was useful to my country!"

"Coward, coward, coward!" roared a soldier at him. "Came over to fight and now you're hiding behind other people's backs."

And he knocked the orator off the table.

"And I," said the soldier, turning to the rest of us — "I never wanted the war, I fought against it. Twenty months I spent at the front! How many times I've been close to death! How many comrades I've seen drop down before my eyes! Hunger, filth, shootings, court martial . . . Oh, I can tell you, I sometimes wished I could get a bullet through my head: it would have put an end to everything — but it wouldn't come! And when I came home on leave and saw what was going on here, I couldn't hold my tongue — and that's why I'm here! And that ape came all the way here from America, the fool!"



"I was arrested . . ."

He stopped, out of breath. I looked at him attentively.

"And what are you in for?" he asked me.

"I'm a socialist."

"Long live socialism!" he roared out. "Hurrah! Do you see that!" and he pointed to the wall.

High up on the wall, almost illegible in the dim light, was an inscription in enormous letters: *"Long Live Lenin!"*

The door opened again and again to let in new prisoners.

The air was thicker than ever. My head felt as if it was in a vice. At dawn I dozed off for a little while as I sat on the floor. In the daylight the words "Long Live Lenin!" shone out clearly on the wall. Everybody could read it. The jailer came in and read it, too.

"Who wrote that?"

Nobody answered.

"I know you won't tell: you're all a pack of swine! Call the painter!"

A painter came in with a bucket of whitewash and a long brush and daubed over the ominous words. Towards midday the whitewash dried and "Long Live Lenin" appeared as bright as ever. Again the painter came, and again, as soon as the whitewash dried up, the inscription became visible. At last the jailer sent for a stone-mason and the latter scraped away conscientiously, letter by letter. The words went in deeper, lost colour, but could still be easily read.

"It's no use trying to wipe out that name," the man from the Alpine regiment said with great satisfaction.

I was let out after four days. The inscription still remained on the wall.

On the way to Fossano I met an old peasant, a distant relative of my father's.

"Good morning," he greeted me.

"It's a long time since I've seen you," I said, "What happened to you?"

"Well, you must know, it was no fault of mine. Our new priest, he's an important sort of person, you see—well, he forbade me to go and see your people. He told me that — that you were one of those, I forget what they're called now, who want to divide up other people's property. Don't you imagine though, that I would believe a word about you, but just so as nobody would throw it up at me, so to speak, I try to go to your house as seldom as possible."

"Nice tales the priests's been telling you, uncle. It's true there are some things we'd like to see divided up, — for instance, the land belonging to people like Rovere. It could be split up into lots for all the peasants who've been bending their backs for the rich and could never get out of debt."

"That's right, now, that's right! That would be only just! But our priest says that you're not going to do that. He says that you're going to rob a poor man of one pig if he happens to have two, and the same with chickens and rabbits and all . . ."

"And how many rabbits and chickens does the holy father cost you in the year?" I could not hide a smile.

"Oh, that I don't know, now . . . We must keep up the church you know, earn our way to heaven . . ."

"By feeding the priest?"

"Well, we won't say any more about that, then. I wanted to ask you to do me a favor — in fact two. You write for the papers and you can talk better than the priest himself . . ."

"High up on the wall, almost illegible in the dim light, was an inscription in enormous letters . . ."

"I'd be glad to do anything I could . . ." I said.

"I've got news that my Luigi, — God preserve him — has been taken prisoner by the . . ."

The old man stopped and scratched the back of his head.

"By the Austrians?" I suggested.

"That's it, that's what I wanted to say. Well, I'll write to him myself, at least, not myself, I've forgotten how to write long ago, Marietta will write. Only the address is a bit complicated. May be you'd write it for me, would you?"

I promised.

"And then I wanted to ask your advice. The church is going to be repaired, and money is needed. The priest has found a bank that will give him a loan, but they want the signature of two people to guarantee the I.O.U. Well the priest thinks a lot about me, you see, and so he asked me do it. I know how to sign my name — I'm not saying that for a boast, don't think it — but I don't quite understand this business of the I.O.U. What is it, anyhow?"

"It's like this: whoever signs the note must pay the money out of his own pocket, if the person who borrows this money can't return it," I explained.

He fell into a profound study.

"Ah, now I understand. Don't say anything to anybody, will you, or else it might look as if I didn't quite trust the holy man. What do you advise me to do then?"

"I strongly advise you not to sign the I.O.U. Now I can see plainly why your priest doesn't want you to see me. This 'holy man' isn't afraid that I'll take your pig from you, but that I'll open your eyes to his tricks."

The poor fellow was seriously upset and did not know what to think.

"I know how it'll be — you'll end by signing the I.O.U. and have to pay, and then you'll come and say: 'Oh, if I'd only listened to you then!'" I said, laughing: "Tell me Luigi's address, and I'll write off a few envelopes at one go."

We took leave of each other. Some time later I learned that the old man had paid the I.O.U. and greatly regretted not having followed my advice.

When I reached Fossano the commissioner of the police took away the certificate given by the Turin police and informed me:

"If you dare to go away another time without my permission, I'll put you in prison for three months. It's time to put a stop to this! Why did you go to Turin?"

"I bought soap and things like that for my barber shop."

"We know very well that you are mixed up with Italy's worst enemies, with the people who are against the war. Where did you spend the last five days?"

"In the company of the most awful blackguards. You guessed right. I spent the time in the San Carlo prison along with a man exempted from service, with a brothel-keeper, thieves, cocaine-traders (also excused from active service), with police spies who had never seen the fighting line and with a lot more rabble . . ."

CHAPTER XV

The Congress of Rome and November 4

Russia's attitude to the war was now clear. In a country where at first all had been united under the banner of "war to a victorious end," a revolution had taken place. The empire of the Romanoffs tumbled down like a house of cards. The workers and peasants fraternized with the soldiers, who turned their weapons against their own bourgeoisie and cared nothing for the Entente.

The colossus that was the military power of old Russia, and in which the Allies had put so much faith, crumbled away. The banks of London and Paris were panic-stricken. The most absurd rumours floated about. It was asserted that the Bolsheviks had sold themselves to the Germans, and that that was why they were agitating for peace! The proletariat was vilified, but the Provisional Government was pandered to. The bewildered bankers put all their hopes on this government. The international bourgeoisie did its utmost to convince the new government to remain faithful to the Allies and force the Russians to fight. It was possible to come to terms with the Provisional Government, but quite useless to attempt it with the workers' and peasants' government. So then another line had to be taken — that of intervention.

The working masses were entirely on the side of the Russian Revolution. All information about Russia was listened to by the workers. They felt that here was the thing that was lacking in the traditional socialism.

In Turin, where capitalist industries had developed on a larger scale than in the other Italian centres, where the "maximum of profit with the minimum of expense" was an actual fact, thanks to good organization and the peculiar conditions created by the war, the masses were bound to be welded more closely together. The very conditions of work — the mass-production system — urged on the workers to unite, to greater solidarity. This happened of itself, since work no longer took the form of individual tasks but of collective effort. The machine welded the workers together. The stopping of one machine meant the interruption of work for a whole system of machines, a reduction of wages, which were very small in spite of the hard work.

These workers were particularly responsive to any ideas or news from Russia. The reformists tried to struggle with this striving towards the new. They felt that they would not be able to influence these workers any longer.

The peace of Brest-Litovsk, which the entire bourgeois press endeavoured to picture as "Bolshevist treachery" was interpreted by the proletariat as a resolute step towards *peace*.

The bourgeoisie was almost hysterically afraid of this word. How many people had been sentenced just for this one word! I remember a village innkeeper, who got his head and his windows broken simply because his inn was called the "Hostel of Peace."

The Russian Revolution and everything more or less connected with the bolsheviks became more popular every day in Italy. The name of Lenin, in particular, was on everyone's lips, while Wilson, after whom so many squares and streets in Italy were called and who had even earned himself a page in *Avanti!*, was not taken the slightest notice of by the workers. "He who does not work, neither shall he eat" — that was the slogan that the Italian working class substituted for Wilson's "fourteen points," that had won the admiration of bourgeois Europe.

It was under these conditions that we decided to call a new congress, this time in Rome. Again I came into conflict with the local police.

"You won't get away this time!" the captain and the commissioner declared triumphantly.

"But I wouldn't go even if you gave me permission," I said.

"Why?" they shouted both at once.

"Why do you think that I'm to be chosen as a delegate to every conference."

"Oh, yes, we've believed you before! You can ask for permission, by the way!"

I had the delegate's ticket in my pocket at the moment.

The Home Office gave its official sanction to the congress of the Italian Socialist Party that time. They tried, however, to hinder it by roundabout means and to reduce the number of delegates. I was, of course, among those whom it was necessary to prevent attending the congress. It was clear enough that three or four days before the congress I would probably be put in jail. Just a week remained until the congress. What should I do? A policeman was always at my heels: he was standing at the entry to my flat from early morning and shadowed me all day long.

I made all my preparations and then one morning I rode from my flat to the barber-shop on my bicycle just as I was, in my white linen barber's coat, without a hat. In about twenty minutes time I rode up to the barber-shop.

My partner was standing in the doorway, reading the paper. There were no customers yet. It was a bright sunny autumn day, just the weather for a good ride... I turned my bike round... In three quarters of an hour I was in the village on the other side of the river. My comrade was waiting for me there with a coat and hat and other things. He took me to the nearest railway station in his own cart. From there I went by a roundabout way, not along the shores of the Tyrrhenian Sea, but by the Adriatic railroad, to Castellamare.

Familiar sights met the eye along the way. Arms, flags, and armed people, but there were fewer war slogans, and more daring, outspoken remarks about peace. In my compartment a soldier was telling his adventures to a group of passengers. He was ill-clad, his face was thin, worn and dirty. He would interrupt his stories to say vehemently:

"I'm not going back there any more, no — not even if they drag me there! Let anybody who likes it go, but not me!"

Nobody made any objection to his remarks. At one of the stations a troop train met us. It crawled past slowly, silently; not a song came from it, not a cheer... As soon as it stopped, a youthful nationalist got up on a box and started to make a speech:

"Soldiers! Victory is near! Hold on now, strike the final blow and finish off our ancient foe! Our brave soldiers..."

"Aw, shut up, silly clown! come along with us if you like it so much!"

"Listen!" cried the speaker, but was not allowed to go on. A piercing whistle interrupted him.

"Come on with us, little hero!"

And the hero was treated to a stream of the most virulent curses, and pelted with crusts of bread, oranges and cigarette-butts. He vanished in a moment.

The congress at Rome was held in the People's Palace. I had never yet attended such a lifeless apathetic congress as that of 1918. Not one word was said about the temper of the masses, or about the imminent treachery of the reformists. It divided its time between Turati's self-defence, and the howls of the demagogue Bombacci, who seemed about to expire after every speech he made. Lazzari, Vella and Serrati — the secretary, the assistant-secretary and the editor of *Avanti!* were in prison at that time, one in Rome, the other in Sicily and the third in Turin.

The delegates seemed to be more occupied in looking at the sights of Rome than with the congress itself. The capital gave the impression of being a lively, festive town. Music could be heard everywhere, newspapers came out every hour, the streets were a never-ending stream of pedestrians and vehicles. We went about gaping curiously at all this like true provincials. One of my comrades from Piedmont came with two enormous suitcases full of food.

"The cost of living is very high in Rome—" he told me. "I brought some food and a few bottles of wine with me."

One of his suitcases was stolen from him the day he arrived. He was very upset, but not for long.

"What lovely girls in Rome! What fine monuments everywhere!" he had admiring exclamations for everything.

I returned to Piedmone via Florence. At Empoli a train-load of badly-wounded soldiers met us. Some were blind, some had lost an arm or a leg, or both, some were indescribably mutilated. Ladies from the Civic Mobilization Society did not venture near this time with their cigarettes and boxes of sweets.

At every station the third-class waiting rooms were crammed with soldiers, waiting to be sent to the front. The same familiar pictures, only this time the colors were faded and soiled. At Turin handbills were thrown out on the platform. They were directed against the Russian Revolutionaries who had "proved traitors to the Allies." Much later, when the factories were seized, thousands of these handbills were found in the safes of the "Fiat" Automobile Company.

To my great surprise I was not detained in Fossano, and the captain, for once, did not read me a lecture.

A little later, on the night of November 4, a special message arrived from General Diaz, Cadorna's successor, informing us of the signing of the armistice.

Victory! The people crowded into the streets. It seemed as if everyone had gone mad. Only the war-profiteers looked blue. For them the armistice meant the end of the soaring profits. It also meant something worse: the day of reckoning! They were now to be called to account by the survivors of the war, and to answer before the proletariat.

CHAPTER XVI

The High Cost of Living

So this was Peace! The soldiers were being slowly demobilized and returned to their homes with parcels of clothes, the only spoils of war that the victorious army could boast of. These famous parcels contained a change of underwear and a suit-length, tied up in a cotton handkerchief decorated with a map of Italy complete with Trente and Trieste! What irony! The manufacturers made profit even out of these parcels. They cheated the "victors" and the government. Neither the underwear nor the suit-length would stand any wear.

About the towns and villages of Italy the victorious, the "glorious soldiers of Italy" strolled in groups. So did the defeated, the prisoners of war. Both were equally dirty, ragged, both wore the same expression of hunger and suffering, both walked like men tired to death. The only difference between them lay in the famous "parcels."

Italy was faced with the dreary prospect of unemployment, neglected fields and a huge national debt. Invalids, orphans, old folks left without bread-winners ... half a million soldiers killed by the "enemy" or shot by Graziani and Cadorna. Add to this the number of children dead from malnutrition, the thousands taken off by the influenza epidemic or killed on the first, badly-built barricades in the streets...

And as a reward for all this — a parcel of rotten clothes and the exuberant promises of the bourgeoisie. The capitalist press declared that Discipline was necessary, otherwise "Victory (always with a capital letter) would lose its value." In other words "Martial law is necessary to protect us at our feasting."

This fear and the efforts of the bourgeoisie to preserve at all costs what it had stolen could be seen in everything. In spite of the armistice, the newspapers continued to come out with big blank spaces in them. Arrests, useless and unwarranted, never ceased. The survivors of the slaughter looked on at everything with growing indignation. The demobilized got ready for action.

By that time we had finally and officially got control of the "family" club. The former petty-bourgeois owners were too timid to protest. The socialist section and the Labor Bureau were housed here. The hatred of the shop-keepers, the priests and the gentry, for this inimical organism was indescribable. A secret battle began.

Agitation among the workers bore fruit at length. Workers' committees were formed in the factories. These were composed of representatives of the organized workers, members of trade unions, and were run on the lines of the future factory and works' committees.

The congress of the Federation of Metal-workers was the first to open the struggle for the eight-hour working day and the establishment of a fixed minimum wage. Other trade unions followed them in this struggle. The industrialists were alarmed and tried to resist, but were obliged to yield. As Secretary of the Labor Bureau, I was sent to carry on negotiations with the owner of one of the big silk-filatures.

The members of the workers' committee who were to go with me to the owner met me in the yard of the works.

Workers were watching from all the factory windows and greeted us with applause. We met the owner in the office. He looked like a sausage-maker whose goods have all gone bad on him. It was a short interview. He said, trying, to preserve his dignity:

"I am a modern industrialist. I have never been against workers' organizations. But I should like to see a serious attitude taken. I am willing to recognise your commission and to talk to you. And since the rest of my colleagues have agreed to the eight-hour day, I shall also accept it."

The manufacturers yielded on this point because they hoped thus to stem the tide of events. But no agreement could be reached on the question of a minimum wage. Still, all the workers of the committee were almost crazy with delight.

In the evening a huge meeting was held in the Labor Bureau. Since the rooms of the former "family" club would not accommodate all the workers, I was obliged to speak from the Balcony.

From that moment things began to happen with incredible swiftness. Mass meetings of workers everywhere. Red flags, the sign of the hammer and sickle. At every step the words: "Long Live Lenin!" "Long Live the October Revolution!" A wave of strikes swept through Italy. Even office-workers, professors and judges were caught by the rising tide of the workers' mass movement, organized themselves and demanded better conditions.

At the Socialist Party Congress in Bologna the resolution to join the Third International was accepted with enthusiasm. Even the reformists did not protest this time.

Still, the condition of the workers remained, in spite of the rise in wages, lower than the pre-war level. Then there was the growing unemployment. But the workers were forging ahead. A general strike was declared in Turin. The Sardinian infantry sent there by the government, fraternized with the workers.

The working masses were no less active in the small provincial towns. But as usual, the Socialist Party dragged along at the tailend.

There was "peace," but there was not enough food, and prices rose every day. The municipal councils tried to introduce fixed prices, and the food disappeared altogether. The irritated workers turned to the Labor Bureau.

"What is the Party doing?" "What instructions is the Party giving?"

And the Party still went on chewing the cud of war, investigating the trickeries of the supply-corps, collecting evidence of the barbarity of the hangman-generals, and things of that sort. The situation became still more threatening, and so hopeless that even the authorities lost their heads and gave up.

Our mayor decided to take drastic measures. One fine day he called an Extraordinary Meeting of the town council. It was, indeed an extraordinary affair, since it was taken part in by representatives of the local mutual aid society, the savings bank, and various sporting associations: then there were shop-keepers, manufacturers, priests from various parishes around, the commissioner of the police, the captain of the carabinieri, the governor of both the local prisons, and — our Labor Bureau! There was only one point on the agenda — "Measures for the relief of the present economic crisis." This short program was preceded by a long speech, a masterpiece of the mayor's rhetorical style, in which words like "our country, victory, progress, democracy, God, and the monarchy were curiously intermingled.

As soon as we got to know that this conference was to be held, we called a meeting to decide what our attitude should be. After long argument and all sorts of suggestions — for instance, an old member proposed that we should urge the people, to raid the shops, we decided to demand the following:

(1) The stock-taking of all the goods in the shops.

(2) The requisition of all food-stuffs.

(3) The opening of special shops controlled by workers.

(4) The organization of an armed militia at the expense of the community.

A commission was chosen of representatives of the different factories. I was to speak on behalf of the commission.

At last the evening of the famous meeting arrived. The town hall looked quite festive. The corporation officials appeared in frock-coats and tall hats. Before the entrance and up the stairs the police and the fire-brigade were posted, in full-dress uniform. The mayor, a big landowner and a member of the clerical Party, was playing the gracious host. He welcomed our commission with a low bow.

Then he opened the conference with a solemn speech.

"With the help of God, and the heroism of our sons, led by His Gracious Majesty, our beloved monarch, our country has won back its natural frontiers, and has freed from the yoke of the ancient foe, our brothers from Trente and Trieste" — the mayor flowed on, wiping away the perspiration that dripped from cheek and brow on to his starched shirt. "This glorious victory has placed Italy in the front rank of the Great Powers, and we are proud of this —"

The mayor paused, expecting a storm of applause, but it did not come. I took advantage of the opening and proposed that we should come down to business.

The mayor choked and was silent for a few seconds. It was evident that "business" was much more difficult than speech-making. At last he found a way out:

"Does anyone desire to speak?"

"I do."

"Well, do, please!" the mayor said hastily.

"I am speaking on behalf of the Labor Bureau," I began thus giving the right of citizenship to our hated organization. "You are all aware of the fact that things are in a bad state, a state not created, however, by the proletariat. We had hoped to hear some serious and practical suggestions, and instead of that have had to listen to patriotic reminders of our country and victory..."

At this point I was interrupted.

"We demand respect for our convictions. Our country..."

"That's enough! We've had enough of you and your country! We want bread!" shouted a woman member of our commission, a spinner.

"That's right! Give us bread and not speeches!" shouted another workers' representative, the one-eyed Gisleno.

"We want to listen to practical suggestions and not to waste time," I concluded.

The mayor did not know what to do or to say. Evidently, he had no suggestions ready. One of the officials present, the chairman of the mutual aid society, begged permission to speak:

"It's a disgrace that the town council should come to a meeting like this without a concrete plan. This discredits us in the eyes of our opponents, the socialists! I have been out at the front, and I support the existing order, but I consider that you have acted wrongly and I say so openly."

"I would ask you not to forget that the mayor is to be treated with respect!" shouted the mayor, red with indignation.

"You think you can make me hold my tongue that way, do you, signor mayor? You're mistaken!" the other man flared up. There was an uproar. Then, amid the general confusion the commissioner of the police got up to speak:

"I suggest that each of us should say what in his opinion, would make for the improvement of the situation. I personally think that the shop-keepers should be strictly forbidden to raise the prices on food, and that if they continue to do so they should be prosecuted."

"That's just what I wanted to say," said the mayor, glad of a way out.

One of the shop-keepers, a rich war-profiteer, objected: "This applies to the wholesale dealers. They dictate the prices and they are constantly raising them! We can't do trade at a loss!"

The atmosphere grew hotter and hotter. The owner of an iron foundry and a number of factories called for "union" and "sacrifice" on the grounds that the return of industries to peace-time work demanded tremendous efforts. "People of means are now extremely cautious about investing their capital in industry, on account of the loss of equilibrium caused by the demands of the workers and the disturbances..."

"That's a patriot for you!" cried one of the workers and added a word that almost cracked the glass in the windows.

"Well, what are we going to do, after all?" asked the chairman of the mutual aid society with a sneer.

The mayor rose, purple and bewildered, and announced in a melodramatic tone:

"Since I am not treated with the proper respect, I tender my resignation! I must refuse to be your mayor as from today!"

This announcement did not create the effect he had evidently expected. His resignation was accepted without any comment. Only one of the metal-workers remarked ironically:

"Now you've got into a mess, and you want to clear out. It's evidently easier to make speeches than to do business! You should be ashamed of yourself!"

"I tender my resignation," the mayor repeated in a melancholy tone. "I request the workers to act in my place. You will notice that I do not ask my colleagues to do so, because they have left me unsupported at this critical moment." Then, turning to me, he cried — "I deliver my powers into your hands!"

Nobody in the audience uttered a word. Suddenly, through the puzzled silence our song rang out:

> "Avanti, popolo alla riscossa!
> Bandiera rossa, bandiera rossa
> Trionferà . . ."

The workers among the audience sang it and the workers outside in the square joined in.

I looked around the hall. Frightened yellow and white faces, smiling convulsively, hatred in their eyes.

At last the chairman of the mutual aid society stood up.

"I suggest that the town council should adjourn to the mayor's study and discuss practical measures there," he said.

The mayor and the councillors accepted the proposal and the mayor was the first to hurry off to his study. Some time later the town council appeared once more and moved the following resolutions: to introduce fixed prices, to lower them by 50 per cent and to propose to the Labor Bureau to see that these resolutions were carried out!

In the square the crowd was singing:

> "Avanti, popolo, tuona il cannone
> Rivoluzione, rivoluzione!
> Avanti, popolo, tuona il cannone,
> Rivoluzione vogliamo far!"

And then "Long Live Lenin!" and "Down with the King!"

With this threatening mass outside, the proposals of the town council were accepted without one protest. Even the shop-keepers raised no objections.

I asked permission to speak. Terrified glances were turned on me.

I read out our four points.

Under the window they sang.

> "Bandiera rossa,
> Trionfera.
> Evviva il socialismo
> E la libertà."

The mayor turned a sickly greenish hue.

"So you don't wish to accept our proposals. The counter-proposals of the Labor Bureau may be regarded as a refusal?"

"We cannot accept them without the definite guarantees we suggested. Without them, your proposals are just a means of hood-winking the working masses."

"Is that your last word?" asked the mayor.

"Yes! Because you are incapable of enforcing the fixed prices, or of lowering them. It was a brilliant idea of yours to make us responsible for the enforcement of your resolutions, without the necessary authority. This shows that you are not sure of yourselves and want us to take the responsibity for the consequences. No, you can look after the carrying out of your own proposals!"

Down below in the square the people shouted and whistled. The mayor announced:

"Time to decide! Will those in favour of the town council's proposals, raise their hands!"

Everybody, except the members of our commission, obeyed.

"Now, let us inform the citizens of our decision."

The attendants threw open the doors leading on to the balcony that hung over the turbulent square. The mayor, deadly pale, came out escorted by the now very disturbed councillors. Whistles, hooting, shouts of "Down with them!" "Give us bread!" etc., greeted their appearance.

"Citizens!" came the trembling voice of the mayor. "Fixed prices, reduced 50 per cent will be established as from tomorrow, with the consent of the shop-keepers and the approval of the local authorities.

"We know all about these fixed prices! Let the workers' committee speak! Where's the secretary of the Labor Bureau, let him speak!" the crowd demanded.

As soon as we came out on the balcony there was a storm of applause.

The "International" rang out and again applause. At last they let me speak.

"We have presented your demands to the conference. They were not accepted. You are offered "fixed prices," which no doubt, will be no more enforced than they were before. We regard this as provocation, pure and simple. The bourgeoisie wanted this war, and now they want the people to pay for it. The time to get even is coming. Be prepared and disciplined. Wait for instructions from the Party and the Confederation of Labor. We shall win yet!"

Just at that moment I caught sight of soldiers coming down one of the streets leading to the square. Raising my voice a little, so as they could hear, I added:

"The soldiers are coming. But they are proletarians and sons of proletarians like we are. They won't shoot at us. Go to your homes. Long live Revolutionary Russia. Long live socialism!"

The crowd dispersed, singing the "International." The soldiers did not fire a single shot.

Next day there were big notices up everywhere about the new fixed prices, but the windows and shelves of the shops were empty of goods.

What was to be done? The Party issued no instructions. In a small town like this it was impossible to start an isolated movement. There were passionate outbursts of indignation. The government moved its forces from one place to another, putting down the disorders and endeavouring not to keep the soldiers, who were not to be trusted, for very long at one job.

And we — I speak of the leaders of the socialist section and the Labor Bureau — fanned the flame and prepared the masses in the hope that the Party would come to a decision at last and come forward.

Now we had workers' committees in all the factories, and delegates from each workshop.

The bourgeoisie retreated slowly, trying to get in a dastardly blow from behind the corner. They got to know of our disputes in the Labor Bureau about the raiding of the shops. That was when we were discussing the points to be brought up at the Extraordinary Conference in the town hall. Rumors were out about that I declined this suggestion because I had been paid 10,000 lire by the shop-keepers for the protection of their shops.

CHAPTER XVII

"Copper-beard"

Our seizure of the former "Family Club," now turned into the Labor Bureau, greatly annoyed the local press. That the root of all the trouble should lie, thanks to the smartness of the socialists and the weakness of respectable people, right in the centre of the town, in an excellent hall! this was too much! What were the authorities thinking about?

The authorities? But where were the authorities at that time?

The three local rags — the Christian-democratic, the clerical, and the liberal-democratic — never stopped talking about this, but it was hard to move us from our place. Then the irritated priests turned to their favourite weapon — libel, and directed it on me. "It's absolutely necessary," they thought, "to blacken this disgusting barber and his associates in the eyes of the public."

Then they started in to do it in a literary way.

A story came out in one of the newspapers. It bore the fine-sounding title of *Citta del Sole (The City of the Sun)*. The hero of this story was called "Copper-beard," and was endowed by the author with all my distinctive marks. It was difficult to get at us directly. All the members of our section were workers, a rare enough thing in the socialist movement of that time. The only "intellectual" was a doctor. There was not a single lawyer. It was, therefore, extremely hard to pick holes in us. And still the priests found a way! No one can beat them at vilification and slander. The description of the *City of the Sun* answered to that of Fossano. "Copperbeard," of course, stood for me. At that time I wore a beard of a color reminiscent of the Fossano housewives' copper pans on the eve of a big holiday.

Here are a few excerpts from the famous story.

> "We are in Copper-beard's study. There is a big table covered with papers, bookcases filled with the works of Marx, Engels, Turati and other socialist saints. There are rich silken carpets, a telephone, a richly-carved golden armchair and heavy velvet curtains. Copper-beard himself is sitting in the armchair smoking a perfumed cigar. He gazes thoughtfully at the smoke. He is very well dressed, and wears a heavy gold watch chain, and rings on his fingers. He is tall and thin, with dark eyes and black hair, and his beard is copper color. As he walks he limps slightly and leans on a beautiful cane with a gold handle. Suddenly there is a knock at the door.
>
> "'Come in!' Copper-beard calls out. A small thin man comes in.
>
> "'Comrade,' he says, 'here is a delegation from the workers. Can they come in?'
>
> "'Did you ask them what they wanted? No? What an ass you are! How many times have I told you that I can't waste my time in empty talking. You can let them in this time, but see that they wipe their feet well first and warn them not to spit on the floor. These swine al ways have a stump of a cigarette in their mouths!'
>
> "The delegation comes in. It consists of five workers, ragged, dirty, and worn-out. What a difference between these people and Copper-beard!
>
> "'What do you want?' Copper-beard asks curtly, ignoring their greeting and not inviting them to sit down.
>
> "The workers stand twisting their hats in their hands and evidently do not know how to start.
>
> "'Well, hurry up, I've enough to do without you.'

"'It's like this,' one begins, 'We're being paid very little in the factory. We came to ask you if you could do something for us, write a letter for us...'

"'I understand. How many are there of you?'

"'Five hundred and sixty, and we're in a very bad state. If you would help...'

"'You're badly off, because you are sheep! All right then, let me have 10,000 lire, and I'll write a letter for you, make a speech wherever it may be necessary, in a word, help you. It's understood, of course, that you'll vote for me.'

"'But where are to find 10,000 lire,' the terrified workers exclaim.

"'Collect it! that's easy enough, I'm not asking for much. I'll get a rise of three lire a day for each of you. There are 560 of you. That means that you will make an extra 1680 lire a day. More than half-a-million a year. Decide now — yes or no?'

"Copper-beard toys with a paper-knife of gold and mother-of-pearl.

"'All right,' the workers say, 'We'll bring the first installment on Sunday.'

"And they go out with low bows. Copper-beard is evidently very pleased. He rubs his hands, and then writes a few lines on fine paper. A blow of a silver hammer on a beautiful bronze bell and the small man appears again.

"'Take this letter to the address given.'"

"... Night. The streets are deserted. A tall man is going slowly and unsteadily down the boulevard. When he comes to the darkest part, he stops and looks round suspiciously. Then he takes out a key, opens a door hidden by foliage, and disappears. He mounts a staircase and opens another door, turns on the light and throws off the scarf half-covering his face.

"It is Copper-beard. He undresses and arrays himself in silk pyjamas. The room is richly furnished. There are alcoves, divans, carpets, statues, mirrors, and obscene pictures. It is softly-lighted and delicately perfumed. Copper-beard looks impatiently at the clock and listens to every sound from outside. Time is getting on. He throws away his cigar-stub in irritation, and lights another. Suddenly he jumps up. The sound of the door downstairs is heard. Steps...

"A woman wrapped in furs comes in.

"'Good evening, my dear!'

"Copper-beard tries to embrace her.

"'Leave me alone. I've got a headache,' she says, throwing off her cloak and sitting down.

"'Give me a cigarette and a glass of port.'

"Copper-beard is all attention.

"'Do you know what I saw today in Turin? By the way, why do you send me out to amuse myself in Turin with a paltry five hundred lire! Well, today I saw the loveliest fur coat and it only cost fifteen thousand lire! I decided to buy it for myself. You'll give me the money, won't you? Anyhow, whether you give it me or not, I'll get it.'

"'How'll you manage that?' asks Copper-beard suspiciously.

"'All I have to do is to say I want it — if it wasn't that I loved you, I would be wearing it already. But you'll buy it for me, won't you? You'll be proud of your Nina.' She embraces him. 'Will you buy it for me?'

"'Yes, my love!'

"The light goes out. There is a sound of kisses."

"Copper-beard spoke brilliantly at the meeting:

"'Workers, while you are slaving away for a crust of bread, the bourgeoisie are surfeited with gold. You have no boots for your children but the bourgeoisie adorn their wives with diamonds. Peasants, the sweat pours off you as you gather in the harvest under the hot sun. And your masters spend money on balls and entertainments or gamble the wealth that you have toiled to draw from the earth, at Monte Carlo. The fruits of your labors are thrown away. The only time that these gentlemen took any notice of the workers and peasants was when they needed them to send to the war.

"'Down with the oppressors! Long Live the Revolution!'

"Copper-beard comes down smiling from the platform. Shouts and applause follow him."

This sensational novel was printed in serial form for a few weeks. The author evidently intended to blacken the reputation of my comrades and myself. At first we thought of prosecuting the author on a charge of libel but it turned out that there were no legal grounds for this. So I turned to the press and wrote a letter to the chairman of the People's Party, a Catholic. There was no reply, but the story became slightly altered in tone. Then I wrote a second letter to the owner of the paper.

"I have received no answer to my letter. If, within the next ten days you do not prove your insinuations, as I suggested in the first letter, I shall have the right to call you a scoundrel, a fraud and a vile slanderer."

The owner of the paper was a lawyer, a Catholic and a "gentleman" but he swallowed all these epithets and said nothing. He stopped printing the story, however, although the last instalment had been marked—"to be continued." The nickname stuck to me. I used it as a pen-name. My comrades called me by it and even at home they got into the habit of calling me "Copper-beard."

CHAPTER XVIII

The Election and a Few Other Funny Things

The movement against the high cost of living grew and in many places developed into an actual revolt.

It was curious to follow the antics of Mussolini during that period. After disturbances occured in Genoa he wrote in the *Popolo d'Italia:* "These sharks of profiteers should all be shot." In Dalmine the fascists occupied the Gregoriani's works and again Mussolini made a speech against those enriched by the war:

"Democracy and Economy! That should be our slogan! We shall demand a Constituent Assembly —and to the question: 'A monarchy or a republic?' we shall reply 'A republic!'"

Mussolini drifted with the current and was not even averse to leading the rebellion. After hearing Turati's speech he wrote:

"It is only on very rare occasions that the Italian parliament has had the satisfaction of listening to a program of government as serious and well thought-out as the speech of Filippo Turati." At that time he was trying to join the more cautious group of socialists. After the congress of Livorno he wrote:

"In 1892 the Italian Socialist Party freed itself, in Genoa, from the anarchists. Now it has purged itself of Communists." He was still trying to pamper the Party.

Our organization grew as the workers' movement spread. The weekly paper *Lotte Nuove* issued a special supplement devoted to our news items. The hatred of the local bourgeoisie for us grew apace with our success. Now they were making every effort to get us out of the hall of the former club. In September the lease of the hall expired and then we could, by law, be thrown out. We searched vainly for a new place. Our enemies evidently thought: "Now, when these damned socialists have no place for their meetings, they will be obliged to scatter." They did their utmost to prevent us finding a hall. The situation became serious. The commissioner of the police was particularly active against us and tried by all the means in his power to annoy us.

Once I sent him notice of a meeting and a procession. Twenty four hours later a policeman came to my shop and asked me to go with him to the police station.

The commissioner, d'Avanzo, whom I met at a later date in prison on a charge of misappropriation of public funds, was not remarkable for his intellect but liked exactitude. He handed me a paper and said.

"Read it and then sign it." I sat down and read the following:

THE COMMISSARIAT OF PUBLIC SAFETY OF FOSSANO.

RE:

Meetings and processions.
Signor . . . .
(occupation) barber, of Via Roma, Fossano.

The Commissioner of the Fossano Police has received from the secretary of the Labor Bureau and Socialist Section notice of a meeting and procession and,

approves

the order of the procession and program of the meeting, and

orders

a detachment of His Majesty's carabinieri to keep order,

and warns

the above-named secretary that if, during the meeting and procession, the "Workers' Hymn" should be sung, that the refrain should be sung as written by Fillippo Turati—that is:

"If we cannot live by work,
We shall die in battle,"

and not:

"Down with popes and kings,
Long live honest labor . . ."

and cautions

signor . . . . that failure to comply with this order will be followed by the closing of the meeting and procession and the arrest of those found singing the forbidden refrain as well as yours.

(Signed) *D'Avanzo.*

Commissioner of the Police.
Fossano.

I signed this literary gem with a smile. The commissioner, who was a great admirer of d'Annunzio and loved a rich florid sentence, asked me:

"What does that sardonic smile faintly discernible through the thicket of hair covering your physiognomy mean? You must not forget that I represent the law. . . ."

"Oh, don't worry, signor commissioner," I replied. "I never forget the law. It wás of poor Turati that I was thinking."

But d'Annunzio's admirer did not catch the irony. I asked for a copy of this interesting document, in which the commissioner of the police was protecting Turati's copyright. The commissioner was right, by the way. The workers were seldom heard singing the "Workers' Hymn" but seemed to prefer the "International," and when they did sing the former, they always altered the refrain. I told my comrades of the commissioner's warning. Poor d'Avanzo had to listen to endless "encores" of the "Workers' Hymn" (improved version) all day and to see his own literary production in our paper, into the bargain! He had no luck! No luck with his embezzlement, either. He did not choose the right moment. The fascists had not yet come into power when he began to thieve. When we met in the Turin jail he called himself the victim of a "judicial error."

All these myrmidons of the bourgeoisie and hangmen of the working-class, still go on thieving to swell their meagre salaries. They are ready to do anything for promotion or reward. They are insolent to those below them and servile to their superiors. They showed their rascality during the disturbed post war period when they were headed by Nitti,. then Home Secretary.

How often I have seen them pale and cringing before the Workers' Commission when the movement was in its prime. Once d'Avanzo said to me:

"I suppose the socialist government will be having a police force, too?"

This was when the workers had seized the shops. D'Avanzo was already thinking of the possibilities that the future might hold for him.

"Of course," I replied, "A police force will be necessary,but it will have to be a more intelligent one than Nitti's."

"You think there are no sensible police to be found in Italy? That they are all faithful to either Nitti or Giolitti? Well I can tell you we all work simply because we must make a living somehow."

How many things of this sort I heard during those days full of unrest and pregnant with possibilities.

One day the captain of the carabinieri came into my shop and announced in a husky, unsteady voice:

"It can't go on like this any longer! Who am I to take orders from? There are no orders at all from the prefecture; I don't know what to do. . . . And how many times the law has been broken these days! Everyone does just what he likes. . . . It would be better if there was downright revolution surely: it can't go on like that. . . ."

And went out.

The elections of the Chamber of Deputies were approaching.

Cuneo had 12 representatives in the Chamber —all democrats or rather, Giolittians.

A stiff fight was coming. The population consisted mainly of farmers who were dominated by the clergy. At the outbreak of the war Giolitti favoured neutrality, and the peasants, who hated the war, knew it. Giolitti was able to make a good deal of capital out of it.

In those troublous days I spent more time riding round on my bicycle on business connected with the Federation than in my shop shaving and hair-cutting.

The things I had to do during these election journeys when I was busy, touring the country! Once I had to unveil a memorial tablet in Accelio, for those fallen in the war. Every town, every village in Italy had its monument to Italy's glory then. Accelio had already one tablet in the chief street, but as one of the former active service men expresed it, it was a tablet for the "gentlemen."

"It was put up by the rich men, who stayed behind," he explained. "The priest, the prefect and the manufacturers unveiled it, and what they've put on it: 'our country' and rubbish like that. Ours will be unveiled by plain folks. At first we wanted to have it unveiled the same time as the 'gentlemen's' tablet but then we decided to put it off—so as not to start a row. They might have insulted our dead."

It was a fine tablet: there was not one patriotic phrase. We unveiled it to the sonorous notes of the "International," and only "plain folks" were present.

From there I made a slow ascent on a donkey to a mountain village. The peaks were covered with snow. A hundred men who had been at the front awaited me there. What a view there was from that spot and what fine fellows these Alpine soldiers were! I was astonished to find our newspaper there! The soldiers met me like an old friend.

"I know your name well," said one of the soldiers. "We get *Lotte Nuove* here. Of course, there was not much to read in it on account of the censorship, but we understood what was the matter. It's a dog's life!" And he gave a deep sigh of sympathy.

"Will there be speakers from the other parties, too?" I asked.

"No, I'm sure there won't. Even the Giolittians seem doubtful about coming."

How many questions they asked me after I finished my speech! And what naive ones sometimes! Here, in the mountains only faint echoes of our struggle were heard, but how hungrily they were listened to!

Most of the questions concerned the Russian Revolution. I spoke until late at night. I put up in a tiny house built in the rocks. The walls were decorated with anti-religious caricatures cut out of *Asino*.

Next morning I saddled my ass again and started off down the mountain. Wherever there was an opportunity along the road, at market-places, or squares, if I saw anyone making a speech, I got down off my ass and spoke. Several times I had to speak against priests; the other speakers were Giolittians and as may be supposed, "gentlemen."

When I got down into the valley I found a telegram from the Federation, saying that I was being awaited in one of the neighboring villages. A rickety cart, to which a capricious mule was harnessed (it kicked up its heels against the cart at every hundred yards), was kindly placed at my disposal. As I entered the village I was met by a gay procession of mountaineers in holiday garb, with banners. We shook hands warmly, hats were tossed in the air, cries of welcome resounded.

The banners caught my attention. They were all more or less red, but the inscriptions! "The Brotherhood of St. Anne." "First Prize at the Races." "The Second Swimming Competition Prize. . . ." I could not make it out.

Where was I?

"Don't take any notice of the inscriptions," said one of the peasants. "The color's the thing. We took just what we could get, because we couldn't have the holiday without red banners."

The band played the "Worker's Hymn," and everybody joined in. Neither the captain of the carabinieri nor Turati would, alas, have recognized it! The meeting was held in the chief square. The mayor himself, who liked to be regarded as a liberal, offered us the balcony of the town hall as a platform.

After the speech the inevitable banquet followed. The two carabinieri sent to preserve order also took part in the festivities. In the evening they were incited to have a drink and, nothing loth, they danced gaily, hats on one side, at the village club.

When at last I returned to Cuneo from this election tour my comrades were greatly astonished to find that I bore no traces of bruises: such was the reactionary reputation of that province.

The election resulted in the socialists obtaining 156 seats out of 508 in the Chamber of Deputies. It was a great victory. Our district sent up four socialists instead of three Giolittians and one Catholic. I was also nominated, to the great indignation of many of my customers, who were very disturbed by the idea that their barber could get into the Chamber. I was defeated, however, and not for the last time.

The socialist deputies were beaten on their arrival in Rome by the fascisti, who vented in this way their patriotic disappointment at the unsuccessful elections. The Italian Socialist Party declared a 24 hour strike as a protest. When my mother heard of these events she cried:

"What a mercy you weren't elected!"

But after I was beaten in spite of not being a deputy, the poor thing said nothing at all.

CHAPTER XIX

Before the Conflict

A new paper came out devoted to socialist revolutionary thought—the *Ordine Nuovo (The New Order)*. Naturally its home was in Turin.

The huge "Fiat" motorworks were responsible for a considerable mass of the proletariat here, consolidated by the strikes and the struggles of the past few years. The flower of the Italian proletariat, always in the vanguard of the revolutionary movement, could not be satisfied for very long with the leadership of the old social-democracy.

The masses had outgrown their leaders, they had new demands, they were looking for other methods of struggle and demanded a new paper. *Ordine Nuovo* was launched in 1920. Its editors, Gramsci, Terracini, Toliati and Tasca lived in the closest touch with the working masses.

After a little hesitation, the new workers' organ clearly formulated the demand for the factory and the works' committees. The existing "workers' committees" offered an excellent basis for these, but needed, of course, thorough reorganization.

The whole of the reformist trade union bureaucracy, together with the petty-bourgeois cooperative and parliamentary socialists rose naturally against this tendency. But the workers grouped themselves around their organ and stood persistently by the new methods of struggle.

This period was particularly rich in strikes and revolts: throughout the country hundreds of thousands of workers expressed their dissatisfaction and readiness for a more serious kind of struggle. Not only the workers struck, but also the farm laborers, office workers and teachers. The socialist deputies sang the "Red Flag" in Parliament.

On April 6, a general strike of paper-mill workers was declared. The only mill that went on working was one in the province of Cuneo. The owner, a German, was so terrified of his workers being "corrupted" that he fed them and provided sleeping accommodation for them in the mill. The mill worked the full 24 hours in three shifts. We were unable to penetrate to the factory, but by posting pickets at the gate, we managed to agitate among those of the workers who happened to come out. Most of them did not return to work. In spite of uninterrupted work, production was reduced by 50 per cent.

We were soon arrested.

The general strike in Turin was declared on April 14. The Turin edition of *Avanti!* published several numbers with a propagandist cover showing armed workers guarding a factory. At the same time the Socialist Party, which had called a National Council in Turin, decided to transfer it to Milan "on account of the general strike in Turin." The leaders were retreating before the outcoming wave of revolution. The Agitation Committee now stood at the head of the movement. And it was in this atmosphere of red-hot strife that the National Council of Milan was held.

To get to the council at Milan I had to leave Fossano at night and ride on my bicycle all the way to Turin, that is, more than 63 kilometers. From Turin I went with some other comrades to Milan by motor-car, because the trains were not going.

Milan was crowded with fascists and police. In the Arcade a fascist officer batoned Serrati on the head, but he came to the meeting all the same. The meetings were stormy. The Turin delegates wanted the extension of the movement begun by them. Turati, d'Aragona and a score of other "important" socialists were against this. They accused the Turin delegates of attaching too much importance to the local movement. These people were blind, they could not see what was going on in Italy under their very eyes. After hot discussion the National Council declined the proposals of the Turin comrades. This made an extremely bad impression on the Turin workers, who were already insulted by the decision to hold the meeting in Milan. They regarded the behavior of the National Council as cowardly desertion of the workers' cause. The agitational committee issued its last bulletin. The movement faded out, betrayed—not for the first time—by the leaders of the Socialist Party!

"As I entered the village I was met by a gay procession..."

We left Milan by motor-car: trains were not yet running. The drivers of the cars were also on strike, but an exception was made for the Party. I was thrown together with the delegate from the French Socialist Party, Comrade Loriot. After we passed Pavia, we had to cross a district where the strike of farm-laborers had lasted for more than 50 days.

As we entered one of the villages our car was stopped by a group of strikers.

"Aha, the signori are taking a nice ride in the country, are they?" said one of them, who wore a red armlet. His sneering tone seemed to hold a threat.

"We are your comrades"—I began.

"Oh, they're all comrades now! Got frightened—so it's comrade, yes?"—he broke in with a still more sinister sneer.

The other men surrounded our car, Loriot, who did not understand Italian, looked bewildered.

"Get out! Your car is confiscated" the man with the red armlet ordered us.

"But, comrade," I protested," you should look at our documents first of all." I held out my Party ticket and delegate's ticket of admission to the National Council.

As soon as they saw these papers the threatening scowl cleared away. The men shook hands warmly with us and asked us to excuse them. They invited us to speak.

"We've been on strike more than 50 days already. There's no one from the center to guide us. We've been waiting every morning, right up till today, for the secretary of the Federation of Agricultural Workers—and it's all no use. Nobody has come! We've a meeting today as it happens. The workers are sick of it all and their spirits are beginning to fall. The fields are empty. . . . It's terrible to look at them. . . . After all we love this land even though it has taken all the strength out of us."

"And the masters? They're looking after themselves: they called out the carabinieri and the soldiers. But the last word isn't said yet. We didn't fight for nothing, we'll fight on a bit longer yet! Will you make a speech at the meeting? Let the Frenchman speak as well!"

The village square was crowded with farm laborers.

When the man with the red armlet presented us to this silent mass of sun-scorched folk, worn out with waiting for help that did not come—there was a storm of applause, followed by the singing of the "International." Loriot wiped away the tears rolling down his cheeks. It wrung my heart and I could not bring myself to tell them that the Party had refused to come to their assistance.

Throughout the whole province, right up to Asti, where the strike zone ended, we were stopped as we approached each village. We were met like enemies, but as soon as the people learned that we were their comrades, they welcomed us and asked us to speak. Loriot was shaken. He exclaimed:

"But this is revolution! We should act without the slightest delay!"

There could be no mistake about that!

At midnight we were held up for the usual examination at the customs' house on the border of two provinces. Such interior customs still survive in Italy from the days before it became united.

We were surrounded suddenly by police and carabinieri, headed by the captain himself arrayed in a tricolor scarf. The attention of this picturesque band was concentrated on my French companion: I was an old acquaintance.

"We have learned that you came away secretly from Milan!"

"Secretly?" I could not help laughing. "We have a huge permit signed by the commissioner Gasti himself."

"Hold your tongue, if you please!" shouted the commissioner, and turning to Loriot, he demanded:

"Your name and nationality?"

Loriot, who did not understand a word of Italian turned to me:

"What does he want?'

"He is asking you. . . ."

"Silence!" the commisioner interrupted again, "I'm not a fool, I know what you're up to there, conspiring!"

I was silent. The commissioner did not know any French, and the police still less.

Then began the funniest dialogue I ever heard. The commissioner asked questions and Loriot would invariably reply: "I don't understand."

The commissioner lifted up his voice: he began to shout. He evidently thought Loriot would understand him better like that. At last, tired out, the commissioner turned to me:

"This gentleman is Russian, is he not?"

"Well—when he left Milan he was a Frenchman.—What do you think, could he have changed on the way into a Russian?. . . ."

"None of your jokes! I'm telling you, he is a Russian. Maybe you don't know it, but I do."

"Then why are you asking me? He must have some sort of documents with him, surely?"

"We know the sort of documents you would have," was the sarcastic rejoinder.

At last an interpreter was found, and things cleared up. The commissioner could not bring himself to believe that Loriot was not a "bolshevist agent." They thought it safer to escort him to the frontier.

The lease of our hall duly expired and we were thrown out of the "Family Club." We had a few benches, some books, half-a-dozen banners and an unlimited faith in the victory of socialism. But for all that we could not get a lease of even a couple of rooms. At last, a comrade of ours, a coal-man, offered us his tool-shed. Here we developed our work fully. Soon we had our own weekly paper, the organ of our socialist section *Lavoro (Labor)*. At the municipal elections the socialists came up for the first time with a clear-cut class program and seven of them got into the town council. The bourgeoisie made desperate efforts to secure a majority, but it was an insignificant one.

CHAPTER XX

The Seizing of the Factories

On August 20, 1920, the great advance of the workers began in all the big factories of Italy. By September 3, the red flag was waving over the Turin metallurgical works. All over Italy the workers were seizing the factories. The peasants also hoisted the red banner and occupied the land.

The seizing of the Turin factories came about as a consequence of the owners' threats to close them down. The first few days workers lost their heads and did not know what to do, especially since the majority of the engineers and office-workers had left. But this bewilderment did not last very long. Factory-workers' committees were organized and these put themselves at the head of the factories. The chairman of "Fiat," the biggest works in Turin, was a metalworker, Giovanni Parodi. At a later period he spent several years in Russia. At present he is in Italy, in the Portolongne prison, serving a sentence of 21 years' hard labor. He was a fine type of revolutionary worker. The works' committees saw, first of all, that work was resumed and that production and the factories were preserved. Then there was the problem of organizing the defence of the factories.

The owners were frightened and indignant that the government had not resisted the seizing of the factories. The wily old fox, Giolitti, was biding his time. He probably relied on any help that the General Confederation of Labor might be able to give him. . . .

And he was not mistaken: later on, we found out that d'Aaragona was right when he boasted that he would not allow revolution in Italy.

Giolitti, the counterfeiter of the "Banco di Roma" notes, who was ruling Italy, thought that perhaps violent resistance might lead to the deepening of the crisis and even to revolution.

There is a story told in this connection. A delegation of indignant manufacturers came from Turin to Bardonecchia, where Giolitti was in the habit of spending his holidays. They asked him what he thought of doing about the occuption of the factories.

"Let them do it, and then we'll see."

"But the workers must be prevented from occupying the works. They should be thrown out by force, it's the duty of the government to do this —with the help of machine-guns, if necessary!"

"All right," the president of the Council of Ministers replied quietly. "Give me the addresses of your factories and we'll start bombarding them."

The owners understood. In our part of the country only one factory had been seized— the machine-works at Savigliano, where my father had worked at one time. The rest of the factories were too small. The occupation usually took place when one of those factories that had been occupied first, required for its work certain materials produced by another one. Then the latter factory would have to be seized also. This was done very quietly without any excesses or disturbances, chiefly on account of the fact that neither the police nor the troops intervened. Every owner was waiting hourly for the occupation of his factory. The motto was: "Save what you can!" but machinery could not be sent abroad as money could.

There was an iron-foundry in Fossano. The owner was a *cavalier* (gentleman) and an adherent of Giolitti's. He resigned himself to the worst and waited for the attack from day to day.

One morning the workers' commission asked to be received. The owner received them at once. The time had gone by when workers could be sent to the front if they made any protests.

When the workers entered his office, the owner, a man who had made several millions out of the war, stood there, pale as death, among his clerks.

He addressed the workers in a trembling voice:

"It'll be better like this. I am ready to work as an employee under the guidance of the works' council. . . ." He stammered.

The workers were astonished. They had come to the owner to talk over certain questions of piece-work. The owner, fearing that they were going to seize the factory, offered it to them straight away!

The Federation of Metal-Workers was then in the hands of the reformists, who wanted to suppress the movement. Therefore they only occupied those that they could not do without. . . .

During this period many meetings were held in Savigliano. More than one thousand two hundred workers were occupied in the work-shops. They were in excellent spirits and worked enthusiastically. The majority of the office-workers and engineers remained at work.

Once, an engineer who happened to be waiting for a meeting that was to be held in the central yard of the factory, said to me:

"Output keeps at the usual level and even shows a tendency to rise. I have never seen better behaved workers and of course you must remember that they have more work to do now than formerly," —(the engineer was hinting at the preparations for the defence of the factory which were going on, and sentry-duty). "I regard it as my duty to stay at work."

The factory was very strictly guarded. The first time I went there, a stern voice called out of the gloomy yard:

"Who goes there! Halt!" I stopped.

"Who goes there! Where are you going? Show your pass!" And before I had time to speak the worker-sentry turned his electric torch on me. . . . He recognized me at once.

"Why didn't you ask for an escort? See what you risked getting!" And he showed me a rather unusual weapon: a sharpened steel blade, half-a-yard long, fastened on to an ordinary stick. He could pierce anyone through with this wedge, like a fowl on a skewer. The second time I went the sentries had rifles and a good stock of cartridges.

The workers organized themselves very speedily and sensibly. Their minds were made up. They believed in their success and got ready for it. But—the Party was absent. Behind the scenes feverish preparations were going on for the suppression of the proletariat's victorious movement. The industrialists were also very active. Their representatives came to Milan to discuss the situation in Turin. Then they worked out a whole series of proposals, making certain concessions to the workers. The government, for its own part, promised solemnly to maintain workers' control in the factories. Then d'Aragona, Colombino and the rest of their friends thrust themselves forward and began to praise the promises of the owners and the government.

The flame was most difficult to extinguish in the province of Turin, where the Left-Wing of the Socialist Party had put itself at the head of the movement and where the Turin branch of *Avanti!* and *Ordine Nuovo* had managed to popularize both the movement and the idea of workers' councils in the factory. But doubts, hesitation, and the weariness that comes from vain expectations had done their work. The movement died down. Turin held out the longest. Here, in the office of *Avanti!* the position in the factories was the only subject of discussion. The return of the factories to the owners was accomplished here as well. Giolitti had not been mistaken in his faith in the reformists. It is said that when a certain manufacturer saw d'Aragona, he cried out to his friend:

"Do you see this man! He is the man who saved Italy!"

Giolitti immediately published a draft of a law, introducing workers' control into the factories.

While this law was being discussed, the owners got their factories back and the reactionary elements organized and strengthened themselves. In spite of the government's promises, so much praised by the reformists, many of the workers who had been most active during the occupation were arrested.

The manufacturers, having learned their lesson thoroughly, swiftly prepared an attack on the working-class. They loosened their purse-strings and organized bands of well-paid and well-armed fascists. That was how the wave of reaction swelled and rose. On the crest of this wave the chief of the Black Shirts, Benito Mussolini, was swept into power.

The reaction broke with all its force on the Labor Bureau, the Socialist press, the cooperative movement, the revolutionaries. Everyday there were burnings, pogroms, murders. . . . Thousands of courageous workers and peasants who had taken part in the seizure of the factories and the land were now thrown into the prisons of Italy to await their sentences. The office of *Avanti!* was raided and destroyed. The Labor Bureau in Turin was burnt down. In the meantine the General Confederation of Labor was discussing the draft of the law introducing workers' control in the factories. They spoke of this bone thrown out by Giolitti as the greatest victory of the proletariat!

Now, after so many years it is possible to appraise the real value of this "great victory," which was even then regarded by the Italian bolsheviks —as the reformists called the Left Wing—as the greatest defeat!

CHAPTER XXI

The Three Congresses of Livorno

Three congresses were held in Livorno in 1921. These were the XVII Congress of the Italian Socialist Party, the I. Congress (Constituent) of the Italian Communist Party and the Congress of the General Confederation of Labor.

After the occupation of the factories by the workers and the subsequent defeat of this movement, the gulf between the Left, the Center and the Right of the Italian Socialist Party grew still wider. The seizure of the factories was used both by the bourgeoisie and the reformists as a pretext for an outcry about the "bolshevik danger." The reformists asserted that the occupation demonstrated that the bolsheviks were incapable of controlling industry. There was a hot discussion on this point, taken part in by Lenin, who criticized Serrati's point of view. The reformists held that a revolution was impossible in Italy. Even a clear-headed person like Serrati, denied in his argument with Lenin, that the mutiny of the troops in Ancona, the seizure of the factories and the land, the disturbances in the towns caused by the high cost of living, the Turin insurrection—were symptoms of a revolution which the reformists had been unable to turn to their own ends, and had, therefore betrayed.

Lenin did not wish to compromise with Italian Centrism led by Serrati, and refused to write for the journal *Communism* published by the Italian Socialist Party.

At the Congress of the General Confederation of Labor the reformists won, of course. In spite of the fact that the Confederation joined the Profintern, the reformists continued to work hand-in-hand with the Amsterdam International.

As a matter of fact, there were very few people in Italy capable of carrying out the necessary work of preparation for the Congress of the Party. The Reformists called their preliminary conference in Reggio Emilia; the Communists — as the Left Wing was called already — in Imola, and the Maximalists in Florence. The three resolutions proposed by the three fractions, at the Congress, were named after these towns.

The struggle became acute in my province. We firmly believed in our success. At the preceding district conference of the Socialist Federation (in 1919), during the elections of delegates to the National Council of the Party, a communist had been chosen instead of the candidate nominated by the Right Wing.

The atmosphere at Livorno on the eve of the Congress, was red-hot. There were street-fights, with fascists. The debates in the Goldoni Theatre, where the Congress was held, were no less bitter. Comrade Kabakchiev, who spoke on behalf of the Communist International, was interrupted several times in the course of his speech. The reformists found no better arguments to use than to hinder him from speaking and making fun of his appearance.

As is well-known, the Maximalists headed by Serrati obtained the majority, but the leading figure at the Congress was really Turati, as subsequent events showed.

At certain moments the delegates grew so bellicose that the Congress turned into a Bedlam. Then each of the fractions sang its hymn. We sang the "International," the Maximalists — the "Red Banner," and the Reformists — the "Workers' Hymn." We are a musical people and this discordant singing sometimes helped to relieve the overcharged atmosphere.

After the vote was taken, we communists marshalled our ranks, left the hall and went across to the San Marco Theatre, where we opened the I Congress of the Italian Communist Party, a section of the Third International. It seemed at that moment as if the spirit had left the Socialist Party and it remained a lifeless thing.

Empty seats... A dead silence among those who stayed behind. I was one of the last to leave the hall. I caught sight of Serrati in the corner. He was as pale as death. He stared after us with an expression that I cannot even attempt to describe... And I remembered the words of Anselmo Marabini at the conclusion of his speech:

"You are a real revolutionary, Comrade Serrati, and you will come back to us yet!"

And Marabini's prophecy came true: Serrati did come back to us.

After the Livorno Congress a difficult period of simultaneous struggle on two fronts followed: against the increasing reaction and against the Socialists, from whom we had cut ourselves off. At that time the District Conference of the Italian Communist Party elected me Secretary of the Federation of Cuneo. Only four of our seven weekly papers remained to us after the split in the Party. It seemed better to unite them into one serious district organ. They were *Lavoro, Riscossa, Sole dell' Avvenire* and *La Falce.* We substituted for them four editions of *Riscossa (Insurrection)* — the organ of the Communist Federation of Cuneo. It was the first step! We had never before been able to attain this unity in the Socialist Federation, since several comrades, lawyers, did not want to give up their titles of editors, and so the seven papers of the Italian Socialist Party were not always in accord.

I was instructed to carry on the four papers remaining to us and prepare for the reorganization. At the District Conference of the Labor Bureau the Communists got a majority. We were going full speed ahead!

A few days after this victory I received a letter from the Executive Committee of the Communist Party, offering me the post of secretary of the

District Labor Bureau. I replied that I was already secretary of the Federation and busy in the barber shop as well. Then I was offered a choice between the Party and the barber's shop.

I had not the slightest hesitation, of course. I left the barber's trade for ever and became a professional revolutionary. That was in March 1921. The conditions of work demanded that I should leave Fossano and go to Cuneo, the chief town of the district. How glad the peaceful inhabitants of Fossano would have been had it happened a few years earlier! But now communism had got a firm hold in Fossano. There was the Labor Bureau, the communist fraction in the town council and strong communist nuclei in the factories.

The fascists did the Bureau the honor of trying to besiege it as an opening to their militaristic activities in the province. They did not repeat their attempts, however, until after the "Victorious March" on Rome, when the defenders of the Labor Bureau were in prison. The soldiers who had been instructed to defend the Bureau, and had been left without any commanders or control, not only did not desert their posts, but defended the Labor Bureau in good earnest. They were all recruits from Tuscany, who had seen the fascists pogroms in their own villages. The fascists, who always retreated before the slightest resistance, went away and resolved to postpone their attack until a more opportune moment. They then vented their wrath on the peaceful inhabitants of the town, insulted, beat and annoyed them. Having thus amused themselves to satiety they departed as they had come, on motor-lorries. When they got to the outskirts of the town, they were met with a volley of shots. The leader of the band called out "Fascisti! to the rescue!" but nobody answered the appeal, and so, urging on the drivers and bearing their wounded with them, they disappeared into the night.

Next morning all the better-known communists were arrested. I was away at the time on business at the Labor Bureau. As soon as I learned of what had happened, I hurried back. On my arrival I went immediately to the Commissioner of the Police to find out how things stood exactly. The Commissioner received me. A lieutenant of the carabinieri was there also, he had been examining prisoners.

"Since we have no lawyers of our own here, perhaps you will be good enough to let me know why my comrades have been arrested," I said.

The lieutenant replied with a sneer:

"And you actually have the boldness and the impertinence to come here and ask why the communists were arrested? You know very well that they shot at the fascists motor-lorries!"

"This is not a question of boldness or impertinence," I answered drily, "but of the law and its violation."

"You are the chief offender," the lieutenant flared out, "and you ought to be arrested along with them!"

"Then why don't you arrest me?" I asked.

"The government doesn't want to assist you to a place in the Chamber of Deputies by arresting you."

"That doesn't concern me. I came here to defend my comrades. Somebody else attacked the fascists. Why are the communists in prison? In any case, you must tell me what they are accused of."

"The arrested communists are charged with having fired at motor-lorries in which fascists were going for a ride. Ten men were wounded, one—very badly. There are indications that this was done by communists."

One thing was clear, then—that they had been arrested simply for being communists. There was no evidence against them. The police searched the dwellings of not only the arrested but also of their parents, friends and acquaintances. No arms were found, however. Still, shots had been fired; the wounded were lying in the hospital.

Our comrades were set free after the period of preliminary confinement had expired, since no evidence was forthcoming. The fascists did not renew their "joy-rides" in our town, since, as the lieutenant put it, although no arms had been found there, the shots had been rather neat ones.

I never lived more than two weeks at a time in Cuneo, as I was constantly journeying from one end of the province to another. Trade union and political meetings, and conferences with comrades who had been elected to the local town councils took up all my time. I used to get the Party paper done, whenever I made a big stop in some place or other. I always carried the necessary instruments for editorial production with me, pens, paper, scissors and glue.

Reaction became more and more intense. Hundreds of fugitives flying from the police and the fascists from Tuscany, Lomellina, and Emilia, passed through Cuneo on their way to the mountains of Tenda, on the French frontier .They turned to us for help. At first they came straight to the Labor Bureau, as had always been the custom, but later it became necessary to arrange these meetings in a more secluded place, so as to avoid shadowing by the police.

Once when I made an appointment at a particular place a young fellow who looked like a worker came up to me.

"Good morning! Are you the secretary of the Labor Bureau?" he said, turning to me.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"A comrade. The secretary of the Labor Bureau in Pavia sent me to you, so as to. . . ."

"Where are your documents?" I demanded. I did not like the fellow at all.

"It's like this, you see," he explained. "They didn't give me any documents: the secretary wasn't in the office at the moment and I was running away for fear of arrest. Will you help me to get across the frontier?"

"All right," I said, "Come to the Piazza d'Armi at 9 o'clock tonight."

The fellow went off satisfied. One of our comrades set out on his track. I had not been mistaken. The rascal ran straight off to the police, without ever suspecting that he was being followed.

In the evening he turned up promptly at the appointed time and got a good thrashing instead of the expected evidence.

A few days later I was called up before the judge.

"There is a very serious charge against you," he announced, giving me a penetrating glance from behind his spectacles. "You are accused of aiding secret emigration."

I waited in silence for what would come next.

"Have you anything to say to this?"

"Nothing."

"You have sent a great many workers across the frontier, we have evidence of it."

"How did I send them? I don't understand you!"

"You sent them, all the same. We have intercepted your letters to workers intending to cross the frontier. These workers are wanted by the police."

'What did you find in my letters?"

"Instructions, where and how to find work."

"As secretary of the Bureau, I am bound to give such information."

"I quite agree, but why do you send them all to Tenda for that purpose?" asked the judge sarcastically.

"Well, can you tell me of any work to be got in any other part of the province? In Tenda there is a central power station, a quarry, work on the railway-line being constructed from Cuneo to Nice," I went on, knowing that the judge would have nothing to say, since there was no other work to be got in the province. It was true that my letters had been found on some of the arrested workers whom I had recommended to the Miners' Union in Tenda. This judge tried to construe it as meaning. "Send them across the frontier to France." Then he brought one of the arrested men face to face with me but nothing came of that, either. In spite of his great desire to put me in jail, he was obliged to let me go, on account of lack of evidence.

CHAPTER XXII

On the Eve of the Fascist Terror

Ordine Nuovo (New Order), from being a theoretical of communism, soon became the militant organ of the Communist Party. We were in the very heat of the struggle. Gramsci with his short, pithy articles had won a wide circle of worker-readers. These articles drove back the enemy like volleys of grape-shot.

The paper gave up a good deal of space to the fascist danger, and foresaw the attack on Turin. The bourgeoisie was hungry for revenge for the fright we had given them and was ready to meet the fascists with open arms. The workers prepared to defend themselves.

Every free night I had I went to Turin. I usually left at about nine o'clock and arrived at the office of *Ordine Nuovo* about midnight. I left it again at about four in the morning so as to be at my post again by eight. Those sleepless nights spent with Gramsci in the newspaper office were recreation for me.

To get to the office one had to pass through two barriers: the first of police, at the entry to the yard, and the second, of Young Red Guards, within the yard itself. It was not so easy to get through the yard either, as it had been carefully prepared against fascist visitors. In some places trenches had been dug, in others barbed wire ran along in different directions.

The police let anyone pass through freely. They were only there for ornamental purposes, worthy representatives of their imbecile government. Further on it was more difficult. The Red Guard was composed of communist workers. Stern faces, alert eyes. They were cautious with strangers, attentive and friendly with their own. In those days only old comrades ventured to penetrate into the office. A fascist invasion was expected hourly.

It is well-known that during fascist raids the police usually disappear and leave the places entrusted to their care in the hands of fate. The carabinieri on sentry duty also disappear. And these things may always be taken as signs of imminent danger.

If you got through the yard and surmounted all the obstacles, accompanied, of course, by a Red Guard, you came at last to the editorial offices. Work went on at full speed all night. All the comrades were at their posts. Here was Amoretti (now in prison) a born journalist, who took care of the news items. Here was the caustic Togliatti, Pastore, and Leonetti, (now refugees). And here was Gramsci, or rather a mountain of papers over which a bushy head could be seen. Whenever he heard a step, he would raise his head and you could see a nose and a pair of lively, kind, clever eyes.

Today he is in prison, in hot, stifling Puglia, serving a sentence of 20 years' hard labor. He was taken at his post, at the very moment when he was writting an article on the new emergency laws. He fell a victim to them even before they were introduced. The public prosecutor of the Extraordinary Fascist Court during the trial of the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party, spoke of Gramsci in the following terms:

"The figure of Antonio Gramsci stands out clearly. It was he who led the Party with a firm hand in 1926. He is the soul of the entire movement, it is he who indicated the line to be followed by the Party. During the seizure of the factories he stood at the head of the workers. He is the real leader of the Party."

The conference had begun. The delegates made detailed, businesslike speeches, without a word too much in them. Gramsci asked them questions, answered theirs, gave explanations. He was no orator, but every word had its value. The workers felt that he was their leader and understood him perfectly.

The reaction swallowed up *Ordine Nuovo*. Reaction reigned supreme. But the working-class, which saw clearly, even then, the tasks facing it, and was able to find the way to carry them out, cannot but win. And its leader, who is at the moment merely "number so-and-so" in prison, will be returned to them in due course.

The Congress of the General Confederation of Labor proposed to join the Profintern, but d'Aragona and the reformists toiled earnestly to prevent this happening.

We communist secretaries were always coming into conflict with the leaders of the Confederation, who would have been heartily glad to get rid of us. The Confederation as well as the Government wanted to put their *protégés* in all the Labor Bureaus. They had no quarrel with the reaction, but with the communists, yes, of course!

Did not Buozzi, then secretary of the Turin Federation of Metal-workers, take advantage of the reaction and the murder of the secretary of the Turin section, Comrade Ferrero, by the fascists, in order to get the section into his own hands? The leading part in this section had formerly belonged to communists.

But in spite of the reaction, agitation work did not cease in my province. The fascists did all they could to hinder it. . . .

They attacked me in the train once as I was going to a meeting of weavers out on strike. One of them, without uttering a word, hit me over the head with a club. I fell down insensible. When I came to myself I was in a room unfamiliar to me. There was a crowd of strange people around me. I felt a terrible pain in my head, in my right leg, and shoulders. . . . I only remember the first blows, but evidently the brave "Black Shirts" had gone on beating while I lay in a faint. Somebody's voice broke through my thoughts. It was the captain of the carabinieri:

"You got off lightly, I can assure you!"

I was not quite convinced of it, but when important people like captains tell one these things . . .

"I can assure you," he went on, as if he had read my thoughts. "If there had been fewer of them you'd have come off much worse, but as it was they fought among themselves."

"Where am I?"

"Don't worry, you're with respectable folks," answered another unfamiliar voice.

I found out later on, that when I fainted I was carried off at the first stop to the house of a baker, whose shop was near the station. I turned to the captain.

"So you regard this as getting off lightly?"

"Yes,—comparatively speaking, of course. The doctor will be here soon. And in the meantime you can report the incident to the authorities."

"By the way, you were present at this scene, I think?"

"Yes," he replied, stammering a little, "but I was in another compartment."

"Then, it follows that you could have detained one of those who attacked me and so saved yourself the trouble of making a report."

The captain was silent for a moment and then announced:

"Still, we'll make a report"—and took up paper and pencil.

"Don't trouble, signor captain, I don't care for humbug of this sort. We know well enough that you have orders not to hinder the fascists at their work. And now I've had enough of this."

The captain said nothing. The doctor arrived.

Happily, nothing was broken except my head. But the natives of Piedmont have heads as hard as the Alpine rocks and they heal quickly. My leg pained for a much longer time.

CHAPTER XXIII

The IV Congress of the Comintern
My Meeting with Lenin
Fascism in Power

As soon as I came out of prison I got a letter from the Executive Committee of the Party, telling me that I had been elected one of the delegates to the IV Congress of the Comintern and the II —of the Profintern.

The Party decided that the delegates should endeavour to get legal passports to go abroad. I went to the prefecture of the police. The commissioner was pleasantly surprised.

"So you want to go abroad? I should think that would be quite a good thing, really. Do you intend to stay there?"

"Yes, of course!" I replied.

He beamed at me.

"One less of these," he evidently thought.

"Will it take a long time to get a passport?"

"No, no! come in about three days' time."

In three days' time I called round and strange to say—was handed a foreign passport! It was obvious that the commissioner was in a hurry to get me off. He was extremely polite, and wished me a pleasant journey.

"And your colleagues won't try to play any tricks with me at the frontier?" I asked.

"Oh, how could you think of such a thing!"

For the few days that remained until my departure for Russia I lived in a state of feverish anxiety. I was still afraid that something might happen to prevent me. One morning a policeman attached to the Labor Bureau, came to me and said:

"The commissioner wants to speak to you immediately."

My heart seemed to stop beating.

"That's my trip knocked on the head!"

It appeared to be as follows: among the "crimes" committed by me as a journalist, was that of *lésé-majesté* (insulting the king). This was what I was called up for now.

It had happened at the end of August, 1922. The "Stefani," the government telegraph agency, had announced in the most florid language a few days previously that—"Our well-beloved monarch was present yesterday at the fire which took place in the hut of a poor mountaineer. *Instead of worrying about his own personal safety,* His Majesty actually tried to help the unfortuate victims."

The entire Italian press had sentimentalized about this as if it was a tremendously important event. I made some inquiries and wrote a short paragraph for our paper. I remarked that the king had not poured even one bucket of water on the fire, and that even if he had, he was well rewarded for anything like over-time work, since his pay was 60,000,000 lire per annum. The firemen, who really risk their lives, receive much less than the king, and when they are killed at work, as often happens, "Stefani" does not think it worthwhile even to mention their names. The article was signed "Copper-beard."

It appeared now that the king had been offended by this. The commissioner advised me to admit that I was the author. I denied it.

"We know perfectly well that you are "Copper-beard," the commissioner said.

"You don't know anything of the kind!" I protested, frightened for the first time: after all, Russia and the Congress and Lenin were at stake!"

"You haven't the courage to admit it!" the commissioner taunted me.

"Oh, I know that trick. 'Don't lose your self-respect and things like that.' You won't catch me with that, signor commissioner." I had already got myself well in hand. "You'd better tell me, if you have read the incriminating article, does it really correspond to the truth? Although I'm not the author, I'm quite ready to be confronted with the offended person!"

"I forbid you to speak in such a tone about His Majesy!" exclaimed the commissioner, and let me go with that.

I could hardly restrain myself from turning somersaults in the street.

In three days' time I went away with three of four comrades.

We crossed Europe as if in a fog and at last, on the eleventh day of our journey, came one cold October morning to the frontier of the Land of the Soviets! We embraced the first Red sentry we saw like a brother. At Sebej we ate our first Russian *borshch,* and shivered at the first sting of the approaching Russian winter. What was the cold to us! We had stepped on to the glorious soil of the victorious October Revolution. We turned our faces towards Moscow, the Red fortress, to which the hopes and yearnings of the toilers of the whole world, and the hatred and indignation of their oppressors, are directed.

Lenin! There was no name in the world more popular than this. In Italy it was known in the remotest villages, in the big cities, in barracks, in fishing settlements, on distant islands and mountain huts lost in the Alpine snows. Grown-up people, youths, women, old men and little children all knew the name of their great comrade, I had met with it all over the country, on the walls of factories and prisons, at the bases of monuments, on the vaults of the Roman catacombs.

Thousands and thousands of the proletarian children of Italy bear this name. How many hundredweights of metal had been used for making badges with his profile on them!

And now I was to see him, to speak to him. . . .

Moscow streets were crowded with processions of workers. A forest of banners, greetings, music. Exciting welcomes in the factories, the clubs, the barracks! We were bewildered, shaken!

It was a holiday. Endless processions before the Grand-stand in the Red Square. The human wave flowed past for hours before its leaders, and greeted the foreign guests. Who of us in the thin overcoats made for the mild climate of Rome, Genoa or Naples, felt the cold! Our hearts beat fast, our cheeks burned, our eyes shone!

Then the solemn opening of the congress of the Comintern in the Kremlin, to the sounds of the "International," sung in 50 different tongues. . . .

We waited impatiently for the day when Lenin was to speak: to see him, to hear him, to shake his hand, and tell him of the feelings that burned in us.

And I met him. . . . It was in one of those countless corridors of the Kremlin. There was so much I wanted to say to him, and I forgot it all, and could only say:

"Good day, Comrade Lenin!"

"Good day, comrade!" he held out his hand. "Are you French?" We had spoken in French. "No, I'm an Italian," I said in Italian.

"I speak a little Italian," he went on in that tongue. A crowd of delegates surrounded us.

Later on I went with the other Italian delegates to see Lenin. One of us, a Neapolitan worker, was supposed to make a speech of greeting from the workers of his factory. When he saw Lenin, he got so exited that he could not speak a word. He just gripped Lenin's hand and cried. Lenin was extremely embarrassed.

When Lenin mounted the platform, the hall shook with applause. All the delegates rose and applauded. Then we sang the "International."

I remember his eyes. He had a peculiarly attentive, sharp glance.

I saw him once more in the Kremlin, after a meeting. He spoke in German, slowly, plainly. And I did not know German and waited impatiently for the interpreter to translate for us.

The IV Congress of the Comintern had a particular importance for our Communist Party. It brought to light Bordiga's differences of opinion with the majority of the Italian delegates. The Italian question was discussed very fully at the commission. I remember the long night meetings, the struggle, the doubts and at last—the voting, when Bordiga, who represented the ultra left tendency in our Party, proved to be in the minority. This took place in the throne room of the Kremlin. That evening I was chairman. It was no easy thing to keep order at such important meeting, especially with Italians present. It was then that our Party, only just freed from the ultra-left elements, was beginning the complicated and difficult work of new guidance, of the thorough inculcation of Comintern principles into the Party.

Nearly seven years have passed since then. Now our Party, born out of the struggle, has grown and is tempered in the battle with fascism. It has lost many fighters from its ranks, but new ones have taken their places, and the Party has remained faithful at its post. It is the only party in Italy that has withstood the storm and continues the struggle with the fascists. It owes much of its strength and endurance to the guidance of the Comintern.

Lenin took an active part in the discussion of the Italian problem.

While we were in Moscow, during a congress meeting, in fact, we got news of the fascist advance on Rome in special trains provided by the railway directors. The information was vague and contradictory. I received a copy of our *Riscossa,* duplicated: our printing works had been destroyed by the fascists.

The details of the *coup d'état*—the gruesome details of the murder of Ferrero, Berruti and many other fighters for the working-class, of the destruction wrought, the unheard-of outrages on the proletariat—all this we learned later in Berlin.

We were obliged to return to Italy by illegal means.

Only one of us refused to return. He is outside the Party now. The delegates returned over the snowy passes of the Alps, through the icy blasts of December. Only two women comrades and myself returned openly. The mountain passes were impossible for me. The police and the fascists threw themselves upon us and our luggage at the frontier. We were stripped and searched, searched as never before. It lasted several hours. The police confiscated a quantity of small, unimportant things, that afterwards figured in the trial as "material evidence." Then we were set free.

All the time pictures of Russia kept rising before my eyes, of all that I had left behind and that seemed so very far away now—Revolutionary Russia, the congress meetings, Lenin, the factories of Moscow and Leningrad, meetings with the Russian workers.

The frontier police sent us to Milan. The Milan police sent me on to Turin, but in Turin they would not allow me to remain and sent me on to Cuneo, the place where I had last lived. The same story was repeated in Cuneo; the local police refused to let me stay.

"But I live here!"

"It would have been a lot better for you if you had not come back," said the commissioner frankly. It was the same commissioner who had given me my foreign passport a few months ago in the hope that I would not return. "Well, and what are you going to do here? The Labor Bureau is now occupied by the fascists and I am really doing you a service by sending you away, because if the fascists get to know you're here, you'll have a bad time of it."

"I do not doubt that," I said, "but I think it would be difficult for you to find me a place to live in. Even the town where I was born refuses to take me in."

"I'll send you on to Fossano."

I started out again escorted by two gendarmes. In Fossano I was searched again and notes for 7,500,000 Rbls. (it was in 1922) that I had brought with me as souvenirs of Russia for workers, were seized.

It would be difficult to imagine the delight of the police commissioner and the fascists at the the sight of such a sum. I demanded a receipt for the money and a detailed list of the numbers and series.

"So that's the Russian gold," the commissioner thought, counting the notes with envy. Then he let me go, but warned me not to speak to anyone and not to leave the house. They were obviously waiting for instructions about me.

The fascists called an urgent conference to decide what to do with me. Two of them, armed with rifles, guarded my house all night and would not allow any but those living in it to pass. The conference lasted all night and was stormy to the point of hand to hand fights. As I learned later on, three methods of dealing with me were suggested at the conference. On section of the fascists wanted to ignore my arrival and simply keep me under observation. The second, more militant, section, suggested the castor oil treatment, and expulsion. The third section, which got the upper hand, voted for simply expelling me from the province.

Meanwhile the news of my arrival flew like lightning through the whole town: "Copper-beard has come back from Russia!"

My comrades were extremely anxious to hear the accounts of one who had been to Russia, who had seen and heard Lenin. But my door was guarded by fascist sentries.

It was January. Whenever I looked out of the window I could see the Black Shirts, strolling up and down the frozen street.

There was not another soul. About ten o'clock in the evening as I was warming myself by the fire and talking to my people, a knock came at the door.

"That'll be arrest!" I thought as I went to open it.

But it was one of my comrades, who embraced me warmly.

"How did you get in?" I asked in astonishment.

"The others will be here presently," was all he would say.

And sure enough, one after another, silent and becalming, they all gathered round my hearth. They had come across the roofs of the neighbouring houses into our yard and then through the window.

We sat talking until three in the morning. They listened attentively, putting an occasioned question. I told them about the Congress and the resolutions taken, about Lenin—they would have listened and asked questions without end about him—of the factories, children's homes, cooperatives, and clubs I had seen.

They hung on every word, breathless. What enthusiasm and faith in what had been done and was going to be done by the working-class! What a profound and touching tenderness for Lenin!

We took leave of each other when the sky was beginning to pale: my comrades had to go to work. They went out, one by one, as silently, and unnoticeably as they had come, while. . . . down below, before the tightly closed door, two fascists, blue with cold stood guard.

As soon as it was light the fascists came and handed me the resolution of expulsion. Expulsion meant that I was forbidden to live in the town or the province. Along with the fascists came the commissioner of the police and a squad of carabinieri. I was taken to the commissariat, where my confiscated "Russian gold" was returned to me. The commissioner looked dissatisfied: when he confiscated these millions he firmly believed in their value, I suppose, and hoped they would bring him promotion and gratitude.

Just before I went away I had an interesting encounter. In the street I happened to meet General Cappello, who was staying with his relatives in Fossano. He recognized me and greeted me and then remarked—"The persecution does honor to the persecuted." At that time the general, who was an army commander during the war, did not foresee that he would one day be a prisoner. The fascist court sentenced him to 30 years hard labor on a charge of complicity in Zaniboni's attempt to assassinate Mussolini, an attempt that was organized, as is well-known, by the police. At present General Cappello, a Mason and anti-fascist, is in the prison of San Stefano, where the sick Terracini also lies. It is one of the most terrible prisons of Italy. It was in this place that Passanante and Bresci, the two anarchists who made an attempt at the life of the King of Italy, went out of their minds. The famous robber of Calabria, Musolino, went mad here, too. (This name should not be confused with that of the present ruler of Italy).

CHAPTER XXIV

Exile and Prison

The Fossano police were instructed by the fascists to carry out their orders concerning my expulsion.

The fascists and carabinieri came for me at the appointed time. I resolved to comply with the order for two reasons. First a refusal would have led to some violent scene that I wished to spare my mother and sister. They had been already badly frightened by the first invasion of the fascists, who had turned the house upside down and burnt all my books. Secondly, I wanted to avoid arrest, so as to have at least a little time for the organization of work in our Party, which was now regarded as illegal.

The fascists ordered me to go. There was a difficult moment of parting with my mother. My little six year old niece was there, too, and she suddenly threw herself at the fascists, crying:

"You're all bad, wicked people!" and broke into sobs. Even the Black Shirt bandits were a little embarrassed.

I saw my comrades at the station, but they were not allowed to come near me. Still they remained there until the train went out, and waved their hats a long time in farewell.

I afterwards learned that after the train left, many of them were beaten and arrested merely for coming to see me off.

I was escorted by two police and two fascists as far as Turin. There they took me to the commissariat of the police. I began to think that the order for expulsion had been changed on the way into an order for arrest, but it turned out otherwise. I was brought before the commissioner, a Giolittian, whom I had known in Cuneo.

"What's all this?" he asked one of the police.

"We've brought this fellow—" the policeman pointed at me. "He's been expelled from Cuneo and the province."

The commissioner jumped up. "Leave the room at once!" he said to the fascists. Then, turning to the police, he asked: "Who gave you these orders?"

"Signor commissioner of Fossano, the Cavalier d'Avanzo—by word of mouth," the policeman added hastily.

"And you obey orders of that sort? The Italian police obeys the orders of bandit rabble! What a disgrace! The commissioner of Fossano was shy of giving you a written order. This is a disgrace! "And as for you," he said turning to me, "you can go. I am not yet reduced to obeying the oruers of fascists. There are still laws in existence!"

I went out. My situation was not a particularly enviable one. I had no work, only 80 lire in my pocket, and all connections with my comrades were broken off. There was no use going back to Fossano. My comrades were arrested, the newspaper offices destroyed, the Labor Bureau burned down and ruined. I decided to stay in Turin.

I fixed myself up temporarily with a distant relative who worked in a small café. He used to leave home at five in the morning and return after midnight. I would stay at home and sit wrapped up in the bedclothes, because there was no stove in the house and the winter was a very severe one. I wrote articles on Russia for *Lavoratore (The Worker)*, the only paper remaining to us.

A few days passed. Once I read of the arrest of Bordiga and Azzario. Then Grieco, and Berti were arrested. More arrests followed. One evening the wife of the concierge said to me:

"Two gentlemen came and asked for you." Then looking round, she added in a whisper:—"Two policemen!"

It was clear enough. I would have to change my abode.

I wandered about the town until I accidently met an old acquaintance, whom I had not seen for a long time. He invited me to come and stay at his place:

"You'll be absolutely safe with me," he assured me.

I agreed. He took me to one of the suburbs of Turin. The house looked rather suspicious, but I had no choice.

"What are you doing now?" I asked him when we sat down at the table.

"I manage. . . . You can't live honestly nowadays. Don't be surprised. I'll be frank with you: I buy and sell things of. . . . doubtful origin."

So I had fallen from the frying-pan into the fire! I could be arrested here, not on a political charge, but on a criminal one!

All night the house lived a secret but busy life: people came, went, brought or took away things. In the morning it quietened down: work was finished. The more honest occupants of the house were pickpockets and prostitutes. The official records of the rest were much richer. I do not remember what pretext I made for going, but I left my hospitable host the next day.

I was lucky enough to find work in a little barber's shop in the suburbs. The staff consisted of my employer and myself. My new master was a nice fellow, with a wife and four children. I lived and ate in his house. Since the shop was situated not far from the river Po, our customers were mostly boatmen, gardeners, and sand-carters. All silent people without much curiosity. Here I was able to write in peace for *Lavoratore.*

The arrests continued. The people were terrorized. I had already worked there a week, when one Sunday evening as we were preparing to close, a new customer came in. Before I could make him a sign, he threw himself upon me and cried:

"Hello, how are you getting on? I heard you'd been in Moscow! Did you see Lenin? Did you know Bordiga was arrested?" and so on—a regular volley of questions and exclamations. He was one of the few surviving comrades. After he had been shaved and was preparing to go out, he said he would come back another time and that he would be sure to keep it a secret.

When he had gone we closed the shop and went upstairs. The traditional dish of macaroni was steming on the table. My employer seemed worried. I played about with the children, who had become fond of me. We chatted a little.

My employer's wife gave us coffee and left the room. Then he turned to me and said:

"I could not help hearing what your friend said to you. I know your name—I've often read your articles in *Ordine Nuove*. But I did not know you personally and never suspected that one of our best-known comrades. . . ."

I listened, guessing what would be the end of that speech.

". . . I sympathize with the movement. I have always given what I could for subscriptions and even carried on propaganda when I could. . ." He rose, fumbled in the table-drawer and showed me some cuttings from our paper, in which his name was mentioned as having sent such-and-such a sum. . . .

"It's hard for me to have to say this to you. But I can't do otherwise. I have a family, and if the fascists find out that you're working here they will destroy everything on me—You understand me?"

"I understand perfectly," I replied.

"I'll pay you for two weeks in advance instead of one. . . ." It was evident that the man found it really unpleasant to have to throw me out.

And so there I was out of work and without a roof over my head once more.

I could not go to a hotel for two reasons: one, that I could not afford it, and the other, that I would have been arrested at once. I lived for a few days at the house of a worker. It was a fine rest for me. In the evenings, when the whole family, the father, mother and five sons—all workers—gathered round the fire, I would tell them about my trip to Russia.

How far away those days seem to me now!

One morning I was arrested and taken to San Carlo.

I was brought before General Zaniboni, the first fascist police-commissioner in Turin.

"Where have you been until now?" he asked.

"In Turin."

"Where were you living?"

"I must refuse to answer that question."

"Very well. Take him to the "Nuove,"[1] ordered the general.

"Why am I arrested?" I asked.

"As if you didn't know! What impudence to ask!"

"I have the legal right to know the reason." I persisted.

"Take him away!" ordered the general angrily, and I was pushed out of the office.

A few hours later I began my journey through Turin in the prison van. This car had to make a round of all the district police-commissariats, in order to pick up the arrested and take them to the prison. We went off at ten in the morning and only arrived at the prison towards three o'clock in the afternoon.

Inside, the van was partitioned into a number of solitary cells, in which, however, two prisoners were placed at the same time. In the cell opposite to me there were two women: one a prostiute, evidently Dutch, and a street fortune-teller.

After the usual formalities in the office and a careful search, during which they took away my braces, my shoe-laces and tie,—they even wanted to take my stick, without which I could not walk at all—I was sent to my new dwelling, cell No. 13.

A ray of sunlight came through the bars and the first sight of the cell did not make such a very unpleasant impression. It was built for one person, but I found two persons in it already.

From the way that I went up to the corner and set my things down, one of the prisoners guessed at once that I was a frequent visitor to prisons and remarked, smiling:

"It's easy to see that you're no new hand at this."

He was sitting and eating something on the only seat, a rough bench fastened to the wall. The other prisoner was stretched out on a straw mattress A bowl with prison broth lay beside him but he neither ate nor slept.

"Yes," I replied. "I'm no new hand."

"Are you an old lag?" he asked with his mouth full.

"No," I said, " political prisoner."

The prisoner lying on the mattress gazed at me attentively, while the other wore an expression of mingled admiration and pity.

[1] The chief prison of Turin, "Carceri Nuove."

"And I had seen him . . ."

"Well, you're a funny lot, you political prisoners. What satisfaction do you get out of prison, I wonder."

Seeing that I was looking at the man in the mattress he went on. "That lousy beggar is as deaf as a post. You can say what you like, don't be afraid."

My companion was evidently given to making confidences.

"I can tell you anything. You socialists are not the short to blab. This time I was unlucky, got caught red-handed. I may as well tell you that I'm a specialist. I work on monuments." And seeing that I did not understand, he explained—"I'm a specialist at stealing monuments. It does nobody any harm. Who is any the worse off because the bronze plate from Cavour's monument disappears, or there's something missing from Victor Emanuel the Second—he was called the father of his country because he had a whole lot of mistresses and illegal children—or if there are a couple of chains missing from some other memorial? And it means bread for me, because bronze is dear. And to tell the truth, isn't it better that these useless chains should go to some factory, some mill, something useful for people?"

My companion was evidently quite pleased with his own powers of argument. He winked at me and "borrowed" a cigar. Then he went on:

"Yes, I was unlucky that time! I'd just collected a sackful of chains, fine ones, not a rusty link among them. When I heard steps. . . . I turned round—*Dio fauss*[1]*!* The twins[2] were coming! I tried to bolt—but that was no good! Still, I managed to fool the judge, at the inquiry—but don't you say a word to a soul! Understand?"

Then glancing at our neigbor, he lowered his voice: "I gave a false name. It's a real name, but not mine. It's the name of my best friend, such a good lad, a worker I . . . I . . . 'borrowed' his papers. You never know, have to be ready for anything.

"Well and now, I was caught red-handed and got summary punishment. . . . If I'd been tried under my own name it would have been worse, because I'm an old offender, see!"

He winked at me again, and rubbed his hands with satisfaction.

A key grated in the lock. Two attendants and the chief jailer came in. They looked around the cell and tested the bars of the grating.

"Anyone new here?" asked the jailer?

"I am." I said.

"A communist?"

"Yes."

"I'll show you communism!"

He rolled his eyes and went out.

In the morning the "specialist" was taken away for trial. He went out quite pleased with himself and said by way of farewell:

"I'll come back soon, get my bits of rags and then—liberty! Get the addresses of your people ready for me, I'll go and see them, and tell them about you. Why, of course, we must help one another!"

The endless prison day dragged on as always, the daily inspection, the cleaning, the broth, the walk—always the same, like a bad dream, often seen.

I walked up and down, and smoked. In the evening the "specialist" came back. He seemed to be in a rage. He threw himself on the mattress without speaking to anyone and then jumped up and began to stride furiously up and down. He never even glanced at us.

"What's happened?" I asked. "Have you been found out, or what?"

"That's what you get for trusting friends!" he burst out, spinning round and fixing his eyes on me, "trust them, can you? That blackguard, that crook, that swine, I told you about yesterday—I took his documents—I thought he was a decent sort of fellow, and it turns out he's a regular criminal wanted by the police. I got more on his account than I would have done on my own!"

He was sincerely upset. He went over to his mattress and lay down gloomily to sleep.

Silence. The dead, soundless silence of a prison, broken only by the measured tread of the guards and the cry:

"Who goes there!"

—And yet *I had been in Russia.* And I had seen him.

Translated from Italian
by Anthony Wixley

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[1] *Dio fauss!* God, the liar! (form of curse peculiar to Turin).
[2] Carabinieri, who always go about in pairs.

E. Gabrilovich

1930

Translation from Russian

I arrived in Asulino on the evening of January 3, 1930. There was a snowstorm. My carriage was at the very end of the train. I stumbled about among the railway sleepers for some time before I found the platform. At last I came upon the brown railway station.

From Asulino I had to make my way to Sargar. This is on a branch line, and I was to take another train from Asulino. It appeared that this train had already gone. The next I would have to wait until three o'clock in the following afternoon. I went to the station master to ask for his help. In my hand I held the mandate issued by the Collective Farm Union of the Middle Volga Region marked — "Urgent! Sowing Campaign!" The station master heard me and then started shouting. He thumped the table and asked who was going to look after the trains if he had to be thinking about late passengers. I kept a helpless silence. Then the station master took courage and yelled out: "They just go gadding about, these idlers!" He threw my mandate on the floor, stamped on it and picked it up again. Then we both grew silent. After a few minutes he ordered the guard of a goods train that was going to Sargar, to take me with him.

Having written down the numbers of the cars and received the money for expenses, the guard went out with me on the platform. The storm roared and whistled. Snow was falling like a wall. It was impossible to make out anything.

I made out the train with difficulty. The guard made me sit on the narrow brake-platform of one of the cars. The conductor on duty was already sitting there, wrapped in his furcoat. The whistle screeched and we moved off. The wind caught me at once. Every minute my clothes would become inflated and then would shrink into myself again. My hands were numb. The boots I had bought at the "Tourist" store in Moscow for mountain climbing were covered with ice. I wanted to sleep. I thought I was freezing and began to shake the conductor. At last he opened his furcoat and peered out all steaming like a cook beside a samovar. But he said nothing.

I thought a while and then started to do a clog-dance in my tripled-soled boots, made for climbing snowy mountains. The yellow light of the conductor's lamp played round me; the conductor, warm as toast, opened his collar a crack and watched me.

Suddenly the train stopped. The conductor got down, grumbling. I ran to the station. It was a little house with two windows, and stood as if pressed down by snowdrifts to the earth. A stove stood in a dark corner. I ran to it. When I had warmed myself a little, I could see that there was also a telephone, a clock, a time-table, a signalling apparatus and an official on duty, in a red cap. It was Sargar, the centre of the "Dawn" Collective Farm of the Asulino district.

That was January, 1930.

The "Dawn" Collective Farm was in a bad state. Not one worker out of the 25,000 mobilized to help the Collective Farms had arrived yet. The farm was being managed by lads who knew very little about the economic and class policy of the collective farm movement. The chairman was Boyev, the former chairman of a railway cooperative store, a telegraph employee.

The managing board was bad. Neither agronomists nor bookkeepers nor clerks could be supplied by the district union: there were not enough for the head-office itself. The people sent by the central organizations on collective farm work in January, 1930—that is, before the resolution on the mobilization of specialists was adopted by the Central Committee—were absolutely no good. Many organizations picked out people they wanted to get rid of and sent them to the collective farms. That was how Morzin, Khleskin and Stupov happened to be in the "Dawn."

I lived together with this strange trio in the collective farm hostel. It was not a very large one. There were neither chairs nor tables. Khleskin had adorned the wall near his bed with photographs and picture post-cards. There were the usual subjects: Lia di Putti, Fogel, John the Terrible killing his son, I. P. Pavlov, hairy Eisenstein and Jisneva. Under the veterinary surgeon's bed lay a huge enema. High boots loomed under the bookkeeper's bed.

The walls had been painted with oil colors. Many things had evidently hung at one time in this room. The things were no longer there, but the marks were still on the walls. When we awoke we could see where a clock, a chest of drawers and curtains had been. One mark we could never make out. It was like a long strip, greasy in the centre. The shade of three balls hung towards the ground. Many rays spread upwards. We used to argue about it, puzzled.

There were four of us: Morzin, the bookkeeper Khleskin, the agronomist, Stupov, the veterinary surgeon and myself. Three of us—the bookkeeper, the vet and the agronomist—were elderly people sent on collective farm work by the committees of their banks and offices. They brought their rheumatism with them. One brought his inflammation of the kidneys with him. The room was full of medicines. We all slept a great deal.

Morzin had been a bookkeeper in a bank for 30 years. He was engaged in compiling the balance-sheet of the collective farm. He had to enter the deeds signed by the commision for collectivization in the books. There was an incredible number of deeds. They had travelled in sledges, and spent nights in barns. They had gone mouldy. In many of them the damp and ink had run into one another. Morzin would read them through a magnifying glass. If he could not make them out he would run from table to table, asking for help. We would read: "Received from Citizen Nelkin as part of his share I gray Lo., 2 c., sowing machine." Nothing more could be made out. Blots and circles of damp.

Khleskin, the agronomist, had been sent by the Agronomical Research Institute. He could make any kind of plan, and prove anything, but he had long since forgotten the most elementary things about the growing period, the conditions for sowing, and the germination period of various plants. When he was drawing up the plan for the spring sowing campaign, he ran from one brigade leader to another, asking how many people were needed on each machine, and how many hours a horse could work.

The oldest of all was the veterinary surgeon, Stupov. He had been sent by the "patron" society. He was 65 and had inflammation of the kidneys. He groaned with the pain in his back as he looked over the horses and cows. He would swear, as he gave a horse an enema, that he would write a complaint to the Health Department about people who forced sick men to work. He had not practiced for 25 years, and of all diseases he knew only one really well: kidney disease. This he knew in and out. He knew all the powders, mixtures and liniments for it. He knew the kinds of porridge to be eaten by people affected by kidney disease, the best way to lie, what kinds of hot water bottles to use. And he liked to tell one all he knew in this field.

Morzin, Khleskin, Stupov and myself lived together on good terms and we all had something to be ashamed of.

Morzin was lazy and ashamed of his laziness. He used to come to his work in the office at eleven o'clock in the morning. He would greet all his colleagues, take off his coat and hat, sit down on his chair (which had a cushion on it), and sharpen a pencil. He felt too lazy to write. Laziness overpowered him. He was busily searching as he glanced about, for an excuse to do nothing, for an effort in which work and laziness would be combined, which would be at once constructive and idle. He would go over to the peasants sitting by the stove in the waiting-room, and start talking to them. He would slap the newspaper with his hand, drag out sheets of paper covered with graphs, shake his head, smoke, drink off glasses of water. Laziness overcame him. He swore that there were motor-buses and telephones and big stores in the towns. He asserted that there would soon be underground railways. He did not know what to say from sheer laziness.

At last the peasants would go away. Morzin saw before him the empty waiting-room, the dirty stove, cigarette butts and litter.

He would go back to his place at the table. Here he would begin to examine his assistant Petrovkin, He asked where the new-born heifer and the lost merino-sheep should be entered. Petrovkin made rapid, but often incorrect replies.

Towards the end of the day Morzin found it still harder. He wriggled on his chair from laziness. When be came home he sat down on his cot and ate. During the Russo-Japanese War he had been near Mukden.

Khleskin, the agronomist, was ashamed of his love for sweets. During his long years of work in the Institute he had got used to sucking toffee and munching chocolate. He was absorbed in his sweets and ashamed of them. He hid them from us. He ate them seldom, of nights, and threw the papers from them under our beds. Sometimes Morzin woke up in the night, creaked, yawned, grunted. Khleskin would freeze, holding a cracked sweet under his tongue. He would listen, immovable. He was ashamed.

Doctor Stupov was ashamed of not being able to bear the sound of snoring.

Every night a new visitor would come to sleep in our room—a district representative or the chairman of some village soviet. Each of them could heardly drag a leg for weariness. They hardly undressed at all, but fell on to the cots and snored. We would chat a little and then go to bed ourselves. Doctor Stupov would undress, and lie down on his side, trying to sleep. He snuffled, whistled through his nose, even snored a little. But he could not sleep. Our snores, which were really deafening, gave him no rest. As soon as we had all fallen asleep, the doctor got up. He banged his tin mug on the table. The snores ceased abruptly. Sighs and mutterings could be heard. Then gurglings. Then snores again. The doctor turned over on his back and gazed at the ceiling. The night passed. Dogs barked. A clock crowed. The doctor did not sleep. Sometimes he raised himself and knocked the mug on the table. Then again sleep would not come. Rats rustled about. The clock chimed. Cows lowed. The doctor could not sleep. The east glowed. Chimneys smoked. Daybreak was near. Towards morning the snoring grew quieter. At last the doctor dozed off.

I was the youngest. I had been sent to the Collective Farm "Dawn" by the Central Grain Trust. As soon as it was known that I was a journalist, people came from all parts to see me. There were peasants, delegates, cooperative organizers, directors, bookkeepers, agronomists. They told me all their woes. They knew only three newspapers: *Pravda, Izvestia,* and the *Volga Commune.* If their stories were published elsewhere, they thought it of no importance. They only recognized what had been printed in *Pravda, Izvestia,* or the *Volga Commune.* Anything else was simply accidental and insignificant. They asked me to publish what they told me in *Pravda* but I did not. I did not work either for *Pravda* or *Izvestia* and I was ashamed to say so.

2

On the evening of January 15 an old Tartar came to our hostel. He carried a sack on his back. There was a great bruise under his eye. His nose was broken. He went over to the wash-basin and had a wash. At that time of the day we always sat on the vet's flat bed and had tea. The samovar hissed and gurgled at our feet. The cups stood under our beds: because we were afraid to knock them off the beds themselves. When he had finished washing himself, the Tartar sat down on the bed and asked for tea. We drank a good many cups together. Then the old man lay down on the doctor's bed and told us his story.

His name was Safatdin Kasymov. He lived in the village of Novy Verig with his wife, two sons and five grandsons. In 1927, when he was 49, he had begun to learn the Russian alphabet. His sons who were about 30 forbade him to study Russian, so he had to go to school secretly. They caught him, though. But the passion for declensions, for gabbling something, the overpowering curiosity to know what was written on the shop-signs, on the posters, on labels—was too much for him. He began to run to the school again, making up various excuses for his absences from home. His sons caught him again and beat him with stools. Four days he lay in bed. His kidneys had been upset in the beating. He gave up going to school and began to learn to read a spelling-book in the cow-house. In two years' time he had learned to read. In 1929 collectivization began. Novy Verig was full of "kulaks," the worse village in the district in this respect. Only 20 farmers signed up at the collectivization meeting. There was a general atmosphere of timidity and lack of confidence. Safatdin Kasymov made a speech appealing to the people to join the collective farm.

When he got home, his sons stripped him, and gave him a hundred strokes of a boat-rope, saying prayers all the time. Then they threw him out in the snow, where he lay till morning. When he came to himself next day he went and signed up in the collective farm. His wife heard of this and stopped serving him dinner. His sons drove him out to live in the byre.

Kasymov was appointed manager of the poultry section of the collective farm. He took up the work with enthusiasm. He invented some surprising methods of raising hens. By separating the sick fowl from the healthy ones, he reduced disease to a quarter of its former proportions. Then the plague disappeared altogether. Everything went well in the poultry-breeding line. Things were much worse at Kasymov's own home.

One day when he came home Safatdin found the mullah there. The sons bound Safatdin. The mullah read spells over him. Then the sons asked Kasymov: would he leave the collective farm or not? His answer was "no." They began to beat him. The mullah went on reading spells. In half-an-hours's time he was again asked: would he leave the collective farm or not? Kasymov again refused. Then they began to throw clay bricks at him. He fell. The mullah went on screeching. The cock crowed. The evil spirits should have been cast out of him by this time. At midnight Kasymov was asked if he would leave the collective farm. He again refused. Then they hit him in the face with a heavy stool and threw him out in the snow. He dragged himself 15 kilometers and got to the hostel in the morning. That was the whole story.

When we had heard him to the end, we rushed off for the chief of the militia. Next day Kasymov's sons and the mullah were arrested.

Kasymov was appointed manager of the stables. He was extraordinarilly active and resourceful. There was no forage and the horses were starving. Many of them had to be strapped up to the rafters to keep them from falling down. Kasymov stripped the straw from the thatched roofs of the threshing-barns. He mashed up these roofs with a rusty chaff-cutter that he found, devil knows where. Then he boiled huge iron cauldrons of water, poured the water over the chopped straw, and sprinkled in a little salt. The horses ate the mess with great relish. He had saved the horses. He slept in the stable. He never left the horses for a moment. He managed to feed them without forage, without money, without help. His fame went far and wide. Agronomists for miles around came to see his stables and his forage mixtures.

The chairman of the collective farm, Boyev, sent for Kasymov, thanked him and appointed him head of the plough-repair shop. As a matter of fact this shop was non-existent. There was nothing but a roof, a jagged hammer, and a furnace as broken as an old drum. Kasymov mended the furnace and then took up the hammer. He began to knock, to bend, to hammer. He had neither coal nor iron. From early morning he went about old barns searching for sheets and rods of iron. Towards midday he went off to the station with a sack. The engine drivers gave him coal. In the evening he got to work. He mended half a plough in a night. But this was clearly too little. He wrote to the Party nucleus and they sent five Young Communists to help him. Kasymov got hold of some iron and taught the lads how to work, and what to sing to speed the work.

Everything went on well. By March 5, the repair-shop was turning out two ploughs a day. Kasymov worked and worked and would have finished the mending of all the ploughs brought to the repair-shop, but Boyev, who was impatient, thanked him again and made him the head of the saddle-and-harness shop.

Here again there was nothing. Just an old bath-house in which the wooden frame-work of future horse-collars hung. There was neither felt nor leather. Kasymov wandered about the village, searching for nails, for felt, for leather. He found them. In the most surprising places, too—in pits, on the stove, under beds. They had lain there for years, and had become part of the objects they had covered, or been hung on, or had been hammered into. Their owners ceased to see them as separate objects that might be taken apart, shaken out, given away. They had become parts of other things, just as bricks become a stove, earth—a pit, and matresses and iron springs become beds. Kasymov disentangled them and began to mend the collars. Then he made whips, saddle-straps and harnesses.

Those were troublous times. Mistakes, excesses, lack of good management, and the propaganda made by the kulaks were disturbing the peasants. Peasants tramped from all parts of the collective farm to find out what the chairman, Boyev, was doing, how he intended to organize the sowing, what he had to say about the lack of forage. The peasants brought applications and requests from their villages. There were inquiries about the approach of sowing, about the absence of money, the need of repairs, about sickness, old age, youth and divorce. The pilgrims came from the most remote villages.

They tramped night and morning and usually arrived towards evening with papers in their sacks. But this did not satisfy the peasants who sent them. They were afraid that the papers might not reach their destination, that the messengers might get drunk or sick or break their legs, so they sent other messengers after them.

with copies of the papers. These arrived the next evening. But the peasants were anxious. They sent a third lot of messengers, just to be quite sure the applications would arrive!

Great numbers of people came. Tartars, Mordavians, Chuvashes, Russians. They all gabbled in different tongues. They all rushed into the frame house of the management. The door of the directors' room was usually shut. This door was pushed, pawed, and rapped at every morning by the peasants. At midday the door opened. The chairman appeared. He was young, fair-haired, wore a cap with a shiny peak and a blue shirt. The peasants of five nationalities gazed at him open-mouthed. It was Boyev, whose name was famous in all parts.

Boyev would come out of his office and climb on to a huge writing-desk, in order to see the folk and make a speech. It was hard to get up on the desk. Boyev would slip and someone would hoist him up. When he got up at last, Boyev took off his cap and wiped the sweat from his face. There was silence and then he started speaking. He demanded immediate, 100 per cent collectivization, the collecting of harnesses, of the entire subscriptions and he promised to increase the cultivated area by 40 per cent.

When he had said all this, Boyev got down, stretching his legs, from the desk. Then there was a storm of cries. "How are we to do the sowing?" "We're going to complain." "What if I want to join and my wife doesn't?" "What shall we do with the cow?" "It's all lies!" "Give me back my horse!" "There are 15 old men in our village!" "What shall we do with the children?" "All bragging, and boasting." "Why aren't there any tractors?"

Boyev made his way to the door. The peasants surrounded him, They thrust long lists into his hand. They shouted at him in five tongues—"There are no tractors—the wife doesn't want to go into the collective farm—Where shall we send the children?" The chairman used his hips and his elbows to get through. In the end he would get stuck hopelessly, Khleskin, Morzin and the bookkeepers ran to his assistance. He was dragged in by the shoulders, the jacket, the shirt. He got away into the office.

The peasants remained. They pushed and slapped at the door through which the chairman had disappeared. They stood about, smoked, chatted. In the evening they started home again.

It was on the 12th of March that we read Stalin's article "Dizziness from Success." On the 14th the order from the Central Committee arrived. It explained the real policy of the Party with regard to the collective farm question and condemned the excesses committed in its name. Boyev and the whole board of directors of "Dawn" were dismissed. The leaders of the Party nucleus were suspended. Nikanorov, one of the 25,000 workers mobilized to assist the collective farms, two representatives of poor peasants and one *seredniak*, that is, a peasant who is neither poverty-striken nor a kulak, were elected to the new board. Zagorov, a worker from the Asulino engine-house, was promoted to the post of secretary of the Party nucleus. Safatdan Kasymov the ex-manager of the machine repair-shop, ex-director of the saddle-and-harness department, and late keeper of the stables was elected chairman of the collective farm by the unanimous vote of the active members.

3

Kasymov took up his duties at the time of a general flight from the collective farms. From early morning the director's office had been full of people; peasants, women, blind men, old men, epileptics, aged crones, young lasses, school boys. Everybody waved applications and letters. At its first meeting, held on March 14, the new Board of Directors resolved that individual members should go to different parts of the district for mass explanatory work. Kasymov had to go to the southern part of the collective farm. I went with him.

We drove from village to village. As soon as we arrived at a place Kasymov would call a meeting in the local "people's house." These "people's houses" were smoky and dirty. Their walls spoke of the struggles of that great spring. Here were cigarette-butts that had lain since December, bits of posters pasted up in November. These great shanties afforded shelter, and a table to work at and a lamp to all those who were figthing for the first bolshevist sowing. These houses were often dirty. The rotting remains of some performance given there in December, hung on their platforms. The merciless winter winds of the Volga fields friendly and unfriendly, had shaken them.

Crowds came to the conferences. As soon as Kasymov got up on the platform hundreds of questions were fired at him from all sides. There was a whirlwind, a storm, a simoon—of questions. One would need to be an agronomist, engineer, a veterinary surgeon, economist, meteorologist and lawyer combined in one to answer all the questions. And Kasymov, the old Tartar, was none of these. He was not even a speaker. When he made a speech, he got muddled after the first three words. Interruptions from the audience put him out altogether. He closed his eyes. He seemed to have fallen asleep. The audience shouted and roared. Some jumped up from their places, and pulled him by his Tartar's gown, swore at him. Kasymov was silent. Little by little the room quietened down. The audience became aware that the man, silent and with closed eyes, was evidently waiting for a chance to speak. Silence came of itself. Then Kasymov shook himself and called one of the men sitting nearby up to the platform. Kasymov began to hold a loud conversation with this man. He asked his christian name and called him by it. It was at this point that the meeting proper began. Kasymov, who could get no further than the three first words of a speech, possesssed a wonderful gift for carrying on a conversation. He could see a man before him, see his head and beard wagging. He could see and understand the man's doubts, as he could see a house, a wood, or a meadow, and replies that one would have to be an economist, an engineer, or an agronomist to give, fell from his lips of themselves. It was the most penetrating form of agitation I have ever heard. The collective farm was knocked down, was hurried, was surprised. The collective farm lost things, doubted, yawned and looked about it. The meeting held its breath as it listened to that astonishing dialogue.

The cover of Upton Sinclair's "Money Writes" after confiscation

Mounting - John Hartfield

Five Fingers Has the Hand
Give Your Votes for the Communist Fiv
And Hold the Foe in a Five-Fold Grip
(Election Poster of the German Communist Party)

The meeting went on for five or six hours. Kasymov picked out one man after another to talk to. In the end he produced a change of mood among the peasants. At seven o'clock they rose from their places collective farmers. They thanked the speaker and swore to form a collective farm and not to leave it any more.

At four o'clock in the morning Kasymov closed the meeting. At eight we went on our way.

Three weeks went by like this. Sometimes of nights Kasymov asked me to read the newspaper to him. I would read him the headlines and slogans and try to interpret them for him. The slogans frightened him: at the steely directness of the slogan he paled: had he made some mistakes, he wondered? He was so afraid that I was afraid for him. He would read the headlines again and again, muttering "I'm no speechmaker." For several hours he would be not quite himself. He would pace up and down, thinking, slip-slapping his galoshes and gesticulating. He muttered to himself.

In a few hours' time he got used to the idea of the slogan just as he had got accustomed to the beard, the buttons and coat of his companion in conversation. Now it was the slogan that lost things and doubted, and got sick, hurried and was knocked down. That was enough. Now the slogan could be seen, had become his.

In the course of those three weeks the gradual crystallization of the collective farm was brought about. The unsteady element had been shaken off. Real associations arose. On March 27 forage and grain arrived, that had been lent to "Dawn" by the prosperous collective farms. Money arrived too. An agronomical brigade from the District Collective Farm Union also arrived. Khleskin, Morzin and Stupov were sent away. In five days the brigade worked out the simplest plan for spring-sowing. The board of directors and the Party nucleus began the work of organization of labor.

What had the peasant seen at "Dawn" during the first ten weeks of the spring of 1930? He had seen his own tremendous idleness, had seen Boyev, climbing upon the desk. He had heard the words "brigades," "sowing area," "tasks." He could hear something about everything, in fact, but he could not see it. The collective farm was talked about, fought about, and argued about day and night, but it could not be seen in the flesh.

The collective farm, explained by hundreds of agitators, remained elusive to sight, smell, touch and taste. It was something spiritual and solemn like a saintly legend: you might fight for it, but you could not touch it.

Grain, forage, plans, labor norms, and credits settled the business. For the first time in 10 weeks the collective farmer could see a brigade, a collective farm field, and collective farm sowing methods clearly and definitely.

The brigades, the disappearance of private hedges and the work of sowing — which up to now had been exclamations, convincing but unearthly —suddenly smelt of tobacco smoke, wore high boots, scratched themselves, became a crowd. One could see the sand that had dried on the blade of the collective farm sowing machine, and the pimple on the cheek of the brigade worker. Taste, smell, sight and touch were once more called into play, this time inside the collective farm. That was the thing. The collective farm, the real one, was growing stronger every hour.

There was one weak spot, however. The implements needed manding. There were no blacksmiths, no workmen. It was already the first week in April and the collective farm sowing-machines and ploughs lay without bolts, plough shares, and blades—just as they had lain in Boyev's time. The directors went about Asulino searching for artisans. There were none. Every day Kasymov sent telegrams to Samara. There were not enough artisans there either! They did not come. A month remained until the sowing.

On April 5, the board of directors sent Kasymov to Samara to look into the matter personally.

4

He arrived in Samara at night. The train was late and was trying to make up for lost time. Kasymov had hardly time to drag his sack off the step when the station guard rang the bell. The other guard blew his whistle and the train was off.

The old man found himself on a deserted platform. The engine of a huge goods train hissed some way off. The engine-driver's assistant was running around the wheels, holding a wisp of smoking tow in his hand.

Kasymov got out to the square near the station. About 20 newcomers, like Kasymov were crowding round the cabdrivers. The latter were very few. Each of them could pick whatever passenger he wished.

The old man walked on. In a dark side street he found a cab. The driver was asleep on the box.

Kasymov roused the driver and asked him to take him to the hotel. The driver demanded two rubles and promised to take Kasymov to the "Alhambra" hotel in Leo Tolstoi street. Safatdin agreed and they started off.

The snow was clean and bright and the moon shone. By its light Kasymov could see Leo Tolstoi street. The houses were small and the sidewalks no more than two feet wide.

Soon Kasymav arrived at the "Alhambra" and rang the bell. A sleepy doorman with a coat thrown over his drawers opened the door.

The old man went upstairs. On the second floor, at a little window on which hung the rules of the establishment, sat the clerk on duty.

Safatdin shook him awake and explained the reason for his visit. The man rang the bell but no one came. Then they both went to the chamber-maid's room. It was white-washed, and furnished with a couch, a chest of drawers and two chairs, An old, wrinkled servant lay curled up in a ball on the bed. They woke her. She grunted and showed Kasymov to his room.

Safatdin undressed. His long travels had taught him the necessity of moving the bed away from the wall for fear of bugs. Then he lay down and put out the light. Almost immediately his chest and back and arms began to itch. There were no bugs, but fleas pestered him, so that he could not sleep. He tossed from side to side, thought and scratched himself. It was a dreary night in a strange town.

About 7 o'clock in the morning he got up and went to wash himself. He saw a towel, a washbasin and a tap that had to be turned to the right so that the water would run. Further on inside the room he saw an enamel hole with water in it, and above it a cistern, and a chain with a pear shaped end to it, hanging down. He looked and looked and could not make out what it was. It was a flush lavatory.

He got out of the hotel and went down a side-street. For the first time in his life he saw pavements, and lamp posts along them, stuck with bills. Then the sidestreet ended. He saw, for the first time in his life a boulevard, inscriptions over gates, gratings to let water through. He went up to a tram stop. Here he stood and looked at the women with baskets, the cab drivers, the crowd, windows, leather brief cases. He quailed. He feared that he was in this town for ever. He was alone. Perhaps all these things were invented for him alone. Everything looked so flimsy and unreal. He stood shaking his head. The tram came up. Kasymov would have liked to run away, to get to the hotel, to Sargar, to see the director's frame house again, and the saddle workshop! He took one step backward — and then got on the tram. For the first time in his life he saw a conductor's wallet. The roll of tickets, the short seats for sitting on and the traffic warnings pasted on the walls.

At last he got to the offices of the Regional Collective Farm Union. People of the most varied professions were scurrying about here. Brigades of agronomists, engineers, instructors, doctors, blacksmiths and clerks were formed here. It was as if a tremendous pulse could be felt throbbing intensely through the tables, cupboards, inkstands. With every hour more people from the villages came trooping in here. People came from all parts of the country, received instructions, boots, sheep-skin coats, pamphlets, and went out. The next day they were no longer to be seen. Some went away for two or three months, some for six months, and others for five years.

Kasymov was told here that 25 repair workers' brigades had been sent to the Asulino district. There were no more brigades at the disposal of the Union. Kasymov had better appeal directly to the workers about the brigades. The chairman advised Kasymov to get to the Party nucleus and the committee of the machine works here. They had already dispatched seventeen workers' brigades for the sowing.

Kasymov went to the machine works. The secretary of the Party nucleus listened attentively to the old man's broken talk, and said he would put the matter before the workers at the general meeting in the dinner hour next day. He asked Kasymov to make a speech at the meeting. Then Kasymov went back to the hotel.

He began to prepare his speech for the next day. He drew out of his sack sheets of paper covered with figures. The bookkeeper had given them to him just before he left. Kasymov read the figures over and over, whispering to himself "I'm no speechmaker."

It grew dusk. About 6 o'clock he rose and began to caper up and down the room. He whispered, fidgeted, gesticulated. He learnt it paragraph by paragraph. He tramped and tramped, hitching up his trousers, now and again shuffling his goloshes. And muttering all the time.

By 10 in the morning, when he had got it off by heart, he went out. Again he saw the theater posters, the boulevards, the inscriptions, the gratings for the rainwater to run down. He walked, rode and ran stumbling sometimes. He arrived at the works at 11 o'clock, an hour before the meeting. They told him to wait in the committee-room. He sat there a long time. He could remember the beginning and the end of the speech very well. He sat without moving, repeating the middle of the speech to himself — scraps of the middle, exclamations from it.

At half past 12 he was called in to the club. A huge hall full of people. He was invited to come up to the platform. He began his speech. The beginning of it he managed quite well. He spoke clearly though he was embarassed. But the middle of the speech tripped him up. He made a mess of it. He went back over the old ground. He shouted out scraps of the middle trying to make them seem like the real middle of the speech, and to get on to the end. The end would not come, somehow. Then he got lost and began again to try and recompose the ruined middle of the speech. He began to pick out new words and exclamations. He got further from the original speech every second. He got his words mixed up at last with gestures, and coughs in such a complicated way that it was impossible to disentangle them. His words might be either the middle, the beginning or the end of the speech. Here on the platform Kasymov could not imagine without shuddering what they might be. He talked on and on, trying hard not to stop coughing, gesticulating and speaking. He went on talking and talking and thinking to himself:

"It's all up with me now, I'm no speechmaker."

But is was not all up with him! In this room they were all his own kind. It was not necessary to call them by their names or tug at their jackets, or buttons. They understood: the old man had got winded, got into a sweat, got all tied up. They understood that though what the old fellow was saying was unimportant, he had come on a business of moment. So they sat and talked among themselves, waiting for the moment when the old man would break down completely and leave the speech alone.

When Kasymov had mumbled away the half hour allowed him, the secretary of the Party nucleus came out on the platform and said:

"Comrades, the old man's got in a sort of a mess with his speech. But I know what he wants."

And he proceeded to describe the position on the "Dawn" farm.

"We've got to pick out still another brigade, comrades," he concluded.

He pointed out that the works had already sent out 18 repair brigades and that they would have to make tremendous efforts so as not to let their own industrial and financial plan fall through.

"And still, comrades," he said, "we've got to send out another brigade."

The meeting adopted a resolution to send still another brigade to "Dawn." It was to leave on April 16, when the works' industrial plan for the half month was completed.

The business was over; Kasymov left Samara.

The train boomed out of the station. Outside the windows wet gullies and slippery steppes rolled by. At rare intervals there were low one-storied railway stations. About 7 o'clock it began to rain and the wind arose.

The worker's brigade arrived on April, 17, and started work at once. It worked day and night, and repaired 5 ploughs, 10 harrows, and 3 sowers every 24 hours, and still the rapid thaw of the spring of 1930 was ahead of the rapid work of the brigade. On the 25th, work in the fields should have been begun. The sun was blazing, the soil drying up every hour, but the implements were not all ready. Only a few groups could go out. They worked languidly and with hesitation.

The general sowing began on the 30th, that is, with a delay of five days. The sun was scorching. It was necessary not only to fulfil the daily sowing task, but also to make up for the delay. The work did not go well. Some machinery got out of order in the fields. People yawned. The collective farm's sowing was threatened with failure. The individual farmer's sowing went no better. The Party collective, the board of directors, the workers' "Patron societies" and the workers' brigade sounded the alarm — a gap in the front!

On May 3 the repair brigades from the more prosperous collective farms arrived, as also the newspaper correspondents. So did the agronomists, the political workers, the Young Communist groups.

Travelling field smithies were organized: bellows, two sacks of coal, five hammers, a cart, a horse, an anvil. The repairing of farm implements on the spot started.

Meetings also began. Fifteen political instructors drove about to the villages, explaining the policy of the Soviet government with regard to the collective farms and individual farmers, explaining the reasons for and nature of the excesses made by people of the Boyev kind; associations of individual farmers arose. The Asulino Medical and Sanitary Brigade opened creches. Travelling kitchens were opened.

A travelling library was the next thing. A covered cart was dragged out of one of the sheds, put on wheels and used to carry books, magazines and newspapers round the villages. A travelling wall newspaper was launched. It was taken round by the Asulino brass band. Whenever the band arrived in a village it would strike up a march. As soon as a fair number of people had gathered round, the band would nail up the newspaper to the gates of the village soviet.

On May 4, five days after the alarm had been sounded, the amount of work done had increased by 40 per cent. This was not enough. The sun was baking. The soil got drier every hour. It was hard to doubt that the sowing would be a failure.

A new alarm was sounded: all hands to the assistance of the Sargar sowing campaign! Brigades of Young Communists were picked out: they worked in the fields. Propaganda vans went out into the fields, explaining the political nature of the sowing campaign, and agitating for increased speed in work. The Asulino Party brigades arrived. They worked in the fields after their day's work in the offices and works where they were employed. At night they left the ploughs and went back to Asulino, to start work again in the morning. Propaganda groups arrived singing couplets about speeding up the sowing, and giving performances of light sketches — also about speeding up the sowing. The singers of the Samara Opera House stood on the harrows and sang songs about hastening the sowing. Journalists sat about in the fields describing actual difficulties, actual disorders, and actual examples of opportunism. Shockbrigade groups were formed. Socialist competition began.

Individual output rose 30 per cent over the figures of the plan. And even that was not enough. The sowing was delayed by 11 days. The sun baked the earth and it was getting hard. A daily extra 10 per cent was demanded.

A new alarm.

Night work by the light of fires and lanterns. The collective farm shock-brigaders who had finished their own jobs went to work on the backward fields. The Party members and Young Communists of 18 Party nuclei were put on to this work.

Journalists, actors, doctors, students, and agronomists formed brigades. These brigades did auxiliary work, thus releasing people who could be employed on the main business, the actual sowing.

Sargar was well nigh unrecognizable. It vibrated. New people kept coming into it from all sides. A travelling printing works rattled. Motors shone. Wires of field telephones hung from trees. There were not enough lodgings for all. People slept on tables, on the floor, on harrows. But there were not enough harrows and tables. Once dirty and lazy, Sargar now groaned and boomed. A tremendous force, drawn from everywhere, swelled it out. It blew out like a ball, shuddering and twitching. It was awakened from its sleep, raised and carried in human hands.

On May 11, 90 per cent above the sowing plan were completed.

Next day Kasymov went to a meeting in Maximovka (to speed up and increase the plan). He spent the night in Novy Verig, the village where he was born. He slept on the table in the village soviet. In the night he heard the clatter of broken glass. He opened his eyes. The lamp was smoking. By its dim light he could see the portraits and placards on the walls. It was quite still. A breeze blew in through the broken window. Kasymov passed his hand over his cheek and saw drops of blood and the mark of a bullet on the table. He raised himself, astounded.

A shot rang out. Kasymov fell off the table. He was shot in the back. He crawled towards the door, trying to keep close to the floor, hoping that the lamp would go out at last. Now he had got to the door. To reach the bolt he would have to raise himself, but he was afraid to do so. He decided to wait for the alarm bell. There was not a sound. He raised his hand. All was still. He could not reach the bolt with his hand. He raised his shoulder. The blood flowed from the wound in his back. The lamp was still burning. As he lay on the floor, Kasymov could see a waste paper basket, a broken pen, and some black sand. He raised his head. Another shot rang out. Kasymov was killed.

Next day the murderer was caught. It was the son of the mullah who had been arrested in connection with the beating of Kasymov.

On May 14, the 15th day of the sowing, we buried Safatdin Kasymov in Novy Verig.

We carried red banners. The orchestra played Chopin's March. We walked with bent heads. The mournful music drew everybody out into the streets. Down the street we went, through the fields, to the graveyard. The collective farm workers of many villages stood here waiting. They bore red banners with the words "Death to the Kulaks!"—"Thousands will come to the relief of one!" Then the farewells began. I waited my turn. I moved slowly on. I saw the black fields, the ploughs, the tractors, the sowers, the daily plan that had been doubled in the course of work. I went up to Kasymov. I could see his wrinkled face, his lumpy forehead. I said goodbye to him and made way for the next man. Afterwards we lowered the coffin into the grave and closed it. The Mordovinian, Okolov, who was chief of the Sargar farm stepped up on the grave.

—"Comrades!" he began. "It's a great old man that lies here. He believed in a better life. Some scoundrels killed him. But what did they get out of that? Nothing. Only one old man died. But we are all alive. The sowers and the ploughs and the harrows remained. Goodbye, old chap. We'll remember you: you were not very big and you were thin. You always went about in your Tartar's gown. You were shy at the meetings. You got muddled sometimes and you would cough to pass off. But we swear to go the same road you went, the road the great Soviet Government and the great Communist Party are leading us along."

The band struck up. We went our ways.

It was dusty on the road. The sun was scorching. I sat down by the cooperative. There was not a cloud in the sky. The travelling newspaper office rolled by on a cart. There were clanging sounds from the kitchen: it was ten in the morning. A group of pioneers with waving banners passed by. The travelling library cart passed by. A flabby woman came out of the gate, glanced at the sky and began to pump water. The caretaker of the cooperative yawned. The repair brigade strode by with their tools. The agronomist passed on horseback. A wind blew. The river splashed. The birds sang.

Translated from Russian
by Anthony Wixley

Johannes R. Becher

Dr. Stoltzenberg's Rainbow Clouds

Translation from German

1

War on the table in front of you. War facing you, war beside you, war wherever you look.. You do not need to look round for long. You do not need to move from where you are sitting. Stay where you are. Take and read!

2

The journal on the table is the *Chemikerzeitung*, June 24th, 1931, Köthen, 35th Year.

On page 481 there is an article by Dr. H. Stoltzenberg of Hamburg, entitled "Rainbow clouds."

People have probably forgoten by now who Dr. H. Stoltzenberg is.

He is a historical character.

On May 21, 1928, the following appeared in the press: "In the grounds of Hermann Stoltzenberg's chemical factory in the Hofestrasse, the tap of a tank containing phosgene, the most deadly of all poison gases, worked loose. The gas streamed out and formed a cloud which was carried off by the North East wind in the direction of Wilhelmsburg,' over Hamburg harbor to the town of Harburg. During the afternoon and evening of Sunday over a hundred people fell ill (chiefly proletarians in the thickly populated working class district) and had to be taken to the hospital. The news that a cloud of poison gas was at large, caused the greatest consternation in the districts threatened, and many of the inhabitants stayed out on the streets for hours to avoid becoming victims of the gas which was filling the houses. Of those seriously affected, eight have already died. A more terrible toll of casualties was avoided thanks only to the wind changing to a South Easterly direction, the cloud of gas being turned away from the great town in the direction of the 'Luneberger heaths.'"

3

About this time I made Herr Dr. H. Stoltzenberg's acquaintance. Herr Dr. H. Stoltzenberg's office is in the Mönckebergstrasse. This is the fashionable street of Hamburg. You have first to wait in an anteroom. Your name and the object of your visit are taken down. After that you may enter. There are very few people working in the office, and they all seem to be related in some way to Herr. Dr. H. Stoltzenberg. The stout and buxom lady sitting at the desk is Frau Dr. H. Stoltzenberg. Her husband will be back in a minute. She is quite ready to give information. But she starts off by complaining. She complains about the campaign against them in the press, about the shameless way the news had been distorted, about how ungrateful people are: all her husband's services had been forgotten in a moment. The buxom lady is filled with righteous indignation. One can see at once that there is more than meets the eye, things that cannot very well be talked about. Herr Dr. H. Stoltzenberg has connections with the Reichswehr, and there is one detail that they have overlooked. A roll-top press with a card index. On the card index one can read quite clearly: MADRID! Madrid: what does that mean? What has a man like Herr Dr. H. Stoltzenberg to do with Spain? MADRID!

Then Dr. H. Stolzenberg comes in. Tall, gaunt, the old fashioned scholar type; might have been one of the men around Wilhelm I. The impression he makes is good and solid, inspiring confidence. And his blue eyes—you could not imagine him hurting a fly. And there he stands before me, a man without guile, a martyr, worn out by bitterness and disillusionment. Things that he should not mention have brought him to this... He is a pure scientist, he has always been a pure scientist... During the war he put his pure science—the discovery and manufacture of poison gases—at the disposal of the German war office. In Madrid (see card index) he has built a factory. All over the world he is building these factories. During the war against the Riffs his new gases were tried out. I take a good look at him. So that is what pure scientists look like: nothing remarkable about his appearance. Drab, obscure, unassuming. Perhaps at the moment he feels that his name is in everybody's mouth. He has become "famous." He would prefer a little less publicity, however. He likes to keep quietly in the background. Other names got credit for his services. But now. . . . now his name is being cried abroad, it is being cursed, people are weeping and lamenting over his name, they are spitting it from their mouths. Are these not grounds for breaking his silence, for coming out into the open: he knows secrets that would cause a stir. One sees in his face that he has to restrain himself. Even in his office he does not feel quite safe. Rage and hate penetrate even here. The walls are not thick enough, the latches of the doors are loose, the windows rattle. He looks at me searchingly. It would be very good if he had somebody else besides his wife whom he could take into his confidence. He knows too well that all who have worked with him so far would not hesitate to betray him. It has become unbearable. He must get right away. . . . But gradually his features, which for a moment have taken on a dreamy look, become set again. A man who invents and manufactures poison gases must himself become a mask if his profession is not to let him down in any way, a magic mask which no one can see through. The mask narrates: "Such a disaster is truly deplorable, no one can have more sympathy with the victims than I—but such is the unavoidable price we must pay for every step in pure scientific research. One must not forget the great value of pure scientific research and the inestimable benefit it confers on mankind." I wonder whether this mask into which Dr. H. Stoltzenberg has again turned, regards the Riffs killed by his poison gas as part of this unavoidable price or as one of the benefits pure science confers on mankind.

My visit came to an end here. I quite forgot about Dr. H. Stoltzenberg. Nowadays, it is no easy matter to keep a single face before the mind's eye. At the trial of the saboteurs in Moscow I noticed that many of the accused wore masks of pure science. These masks were torn from their faces with terrible violence. Care-lined human features were very soon revealed as hundreds of thousands of working men and women marched by in the streets outside, demonstrating against this kind of pure science. As the trial progressed we could see the villainy that had hidden behind this mask of pure science.

And now to-day, with this journal before me on the table I meet Herr Dr. H. Stoltzenberg again. It is not with phosgene that he comes to us now. Instead he offers us his "Rainbow clouds."

Listen to what Herr Dr. H. Stoltzenberg of Hamburg has to offer us.

"In 1917 and 1918 various attempts were made to produce colored clouds by means of which the direction from which shots were coming could be ascertained, but the results proved very disappointing." These disappointing results naturally caused Herr Dr. Stoltzenberg much unrest and so: "Dr. H. Stoltzenberg's chemical factory worked out this method and fitted out a laboratory for its application. An important step forward was made when it was found possible to mix the partial combustion product, which produced the gas with the liberation of heat, directly with the dyestuffs. By this means an apparatus was constructed which presented the eye with quite unusually beautiful color effects, effects which could be made use of not only for military purposes, for signalling and direction finding, but also for festivities. The rainbow clouds must be given "as pleasant a smell as possible."

Nevertheless we are not going to let Herr Dr. H. Stoltzenberg do any of his rainbow cloud tricks for our benefit. But what does interest us is that here we see Herr Dr. H. Stoltzenberg not only as the famous man of pure science, but also as esthetically inclined. Thus we find him in the following article making a plea for more sightly gas masks such as his so-called butterfly mask.

"Up till now the aim always was to preserve the warlike appearance of gas masks, to cover the soldier's face with a mask that made him quite unrecognizable, and even to give him a terrifying aspect. We find disfigurement by painting the body, the donning of masks and special dresses, as part of the preparations for battle amongst all primitive peoples, and we find a strange parallel to this in the processions of Soviet women who march through the big towns of Russia in gas-masks during anti-bourgeois demonstrations." Now although that is not pure science, historically established. . . . "the German gas-masks also inspire women and children with a feeling of terror and those who wear them are embarrassed and have their thoughts directed into dismal channels." Clearly something must be done. Things cannot be allowed to go on like this any longer. Terror of war? This must be stopped. The future war must be made a picnic even for women and children. Here Herr Dr. H. Stoltzenberg rises to the occasion. Away with the frightful looking war masks! "In the Passivmaske the smallest child is quite at home, if he has ever worn carnival masks or seen others wearing them . . . the 'butterfly' mask has been designed. . . ." Quite true, here the smallest child feels at home. Gas warfare becomes a Hallowe'en party. We see how carefully he chooses his names, his imagery and associations, in order to show up the horrors that await us in as pleasant a light as possible. The aim of all this is to equip even women and children for the coming war, by decking them out with butterfly masks which fit better than the old masks, are lighter in weight, give a wider field of view, and can be manipulated with one hand, masks that come from the laboratory of a pure scientist with long experience behind him. Certainly with the "full view army mask," as Herr Dr. Stoltzenberg calls it a few lines further on, gas warfare must be the greatest fun.

6

During the war they put thousands of people into "rainbow areas." We were made acquainted with "blue areas," "yellow areas," "green areas." These areas were marked with blue crosses, yellow crosses, green crosses respectively—the "rainbow areas" were a combination of all these "crosses," they were gas pockets. Out of this skilfully crossed mixture no one ever came out alive. Here gas masks were no use, however many filters and gas traps they had. Here the living body was eaten away. It was smothered. Blood was sweated out of its pores, eyes were gouged out of their sockets. Madness was engendered. People clawed at their bodies until they reached their innards if once they came into these "rainbow areas."

What then do the "rainbow clouds" of Herr Dr. H. Stoltzenberg signify? Do they signify the end of war, disarmament. Are they banners of peace, blue, green, red palm leaves of peace floating mysteriously in the air. Or are these rainbow clouds that are rising up all round us not rather signals for. . . .

Rainbow clouds. "They must be given as pleasant a smell as possible." Even death is painted and perfumed in the laboratory of Herr Dr. H. Stoltzenberg, Hamburg. He knows what he owes to fashion. He keeps up with the times. The "pure scientists" are not dreamers divorced from the realities of life. No one can lay that to their charge.

Rainbow clouds. Signals that war is not dead. Life signs of war, vestige of what is past, breath of the future. . . .

Rainbow clouds. A mystery is before us. Wonder and enchantment are in the air. A fountain glittering in multicolored splendor. A shower of wondrous odors. Rainbows flashing across the scene. Perhaps this man of pure science will even succeed in adding a hidden music to the mystery of the clouds, or in letting a crowd of fairy figures join in the colored throng.

Rainbow clouds. Mystery. A new mystery with which war is being surrounded. We must expose all the mysteries with which war is surrounded. We must dispel the rainbow clouds.

Translated from German by Neil Goold Verschoyle

Béla Illés

№ W. L. 16

Translation from Hungarian

"Fine luck," grumbled Balla, joining the rank with a sigh. "Here they are with their *Bolshevism* again. 'Stead of eating or having a good sleep—stay around and listen to the *Bolshevism*."

The red-haired Balla was right. The report over, *fenrich*[1] Revfy kept us all behind. Leaning against a dry olive tree he lit a cigarette and nodded to sergeant Castle. Castle immediately produced a copy of *Bolshevism* out of his pocket.

Bolshevism was a booklet of about eight pages forwarded to us from Budapest. Its full title was *The True Face of Bolshevism*. Castle—the soldiers had nicknamed him the "coppernosed"—filled his lungs with air and yelled:

"Ears up."

Reading aloud did not belong to the numerous qualities of the coppernosed. And as he disliked when his mistakes of grammar and pronunciation were made fun of, he began to mumble so fast and inarticulately that although the "true face of bolshevism" was disclosed for at least the sixth time we were not the wiser for it.

The *fenrich* read for five minutes and threw away his cigarette, pulled down his cap and furiously scratched his baldspot shining with sweat. Without turning Castle caught this movement, but misinterpreted it— he decided that the *fenrich* had suddenly conceived an interest in the true face of bolshevism.

"Well, let him learn something too, the bloody guy," thought the sergeant and his reading became louder and more distinct.

". . . In Kiev a priest and his wife were hanged together for refusing to spit at a crucifix. In Saratov a family of six were turned out of their house and left in the street for. . . ."

As soon as the *fenrich* had calmed down and replaced the cap on his head, Castle tore along again as if running for dear life. It took him no more than fifteen minutes to be through with *Bolshevism*.

"There," he added in conclusion, "that's what they're doing over there, the bloody brutes!"

The copper nose shone brightly on his genial looking foolish face.

"Move on!" commanded the *fenrich* and again took off his cap.

The sun was scorching unbearably though the hottest hours were still to come.

[1] *Fenrich* is an officer of the Austrian army, approximately corresponding in grade to the British sub-lieutenant.

"They say there are damn fine women in Venice," said Balla.

"For us, fellows, every jane's a beauty," Touri nodded his pearshaped head, gnawing the mouthpiece of a cooled clay-pipe.

"Only to thing of it—in two or three days we'll be in Venice," said Islinek.

"Some'll be and some wont," replied Touri and took a long pull from his empty pipe.

It grew dark.

"Here are the rockets," said Balla looking into the black Italian sky.

"No, these are shooting stars," Islinek corrected him, serious as usual. Four years of war had not schooled Islinek to drinking or swearing; he even shook his head disapprovingly when we occasionally succeeded in requisitioning some victuals.

"Sta-a-ars?" drawled Balla, "Well, I say, boys, there'll be other stars shooting to-night. Poor old god! His firework ain't no more than child's play. Good only for green-horns but not for soldiers."

Near our ambulance train No. W. L. XVI stood a veterinary train, which spread a horrible stench around. Big green flies swarmed over it and we had to lock our windows carefully lest they pay us a visit after their stay with the horses. After dinner we went to sleep in the stuffy cars, and in the evening, worn out after the heat, we climbed upon the car-roofs to get a puff of cool air. Our train was stationed at the outskirts of a little tumble-down Italian village which was still inhabited by some women and children. In the evenings a score or two of miserable looking women with little saucepans in their hands hung around the train. They begged the leavings of our food.

"Well, it wouldn't do us any harm, either, to get some decent grub," declared Balla.

But the coppernosed sergeant—no doubt the Italian women called him golden-hearted—always found some way of helping the poor hungry wretches. To-day, for instance, he ordered the cook to give them the water in which our dishes had been washed after supper. Those with little babies were to receive the "present" first. Though our own supper never abounded in fat, still by some miraculous chance there were several greasy drops floating on the surface of this swill. Our cook, the fat Gubchen, added to the present a piece of margarine. There seemed to be no end to the wordy thanks of these black, worn-out Italian women.

The fireworks began after midnight. Thousands of rockets—red, green, lilac, milky-white flew up into the sky. Somewhere in the distance heavy guns roared. At first separate sounds could be discerned, then everything became confused and merged into one continuous stunning din. From time to time the shooting stars made fanciful scratches upon the dark violet sky. Shells, bursted incessantly in the black valley beyond the Piave. God's old-fashioned fireworks would really seem child's play, compared to the grandiose spectacle organized by the Austro-Hungarian artillery.

And there, beyond the Piave, the Italian army lay silent and invisible.

"I say, mate," Balla asked Touri, lying flat at my side on the car-roof, "there aint no such things over there in your village, are there?"

"Well, we don't want 'em either, that kind of tricks, at home" said Touri.

Towards morning the Austro-Hungarian troops finished the building of pontoon bridges and crossed the Piave. We were about five kilometers from the river. Soldiers were passing us singing loudly.

The Italian army was silent as before.

Two days later those who had survived returned to this shore. But there were no more songs.

The bridge had disappeared and now the Italian cannons were making tornado fire.

Not only the bridge had vanished. The very waters of the Piave became invisible. The bridges were destroyed by the fire and pulled down the swollen river. And the water was hidden under the corpses of the Austro-Hungarian soldiers. Corpses were swimming all over the river. They were flowing instead of water, stopping at times and then continuing their inevitable way. The Piave was covered with a khaki carpet, woven of soldiers' dead bodies, a monstrously long olive-colored conveyer. . . .

According to some historians the number of Austro-Hungarian soldiers killed at the Piave amounts to two hundred thousand, others speak of a hundred and fifty thousand.

No. W. L. XVI was one of the best and smartest ambulance trains of the Hungarian Red Cross, equipped specially and exclusively for the officers. Officially it was called a sleeping-car ambulance train though in fact it consisted not of sleeping cars but of large spacious dining cars. There were twelve beds in each car. The whole train could accommodate 96 patients at a time. We received the wounded after their first dressing, to leave them one or two days later in some quieter district.

Our medical staff consisted of the chief doctor, a surgeon with the rank of *fenrich*, two trained nurses and thirty-two privates.

On the second day of the battle at the Piave, our chief doctor fell ill. He had influenza with a very high temperature. The *fenrich* had to take over the command. It was he who received the order: to transport 2100 wounded soldiers to Hungary.

Only when we began to drag them over to the cars did we realize that they had not been dressed. The embarkment finished, we looked as if we'd washed in a bath of blood.

Fenrich Revfy sent for me. His white linen jacket was covered with blood stains. His face seemed green.

"Got everybody settled?"

"Yes, sir. On the floor, one upon another."

"Is it possible to pass through the cars?"

Instead of a regular answer I shrugged my shoulders.

"Castle is sick," said the *fenrich*, "Couldn't stand the heat. You go through the train and tell them to close all the windows, or these damned flies. . ."

And he waved his hand in desperation.

We were four, working together in car No.7: Balla, Touri, Islinek and I.

"Smells more like the plague than blood," said Balla.

Touri nodded in silence.

Balla stripped himself naked and we soon followed his example.

The train started, but we did not hear the rattle of its wheels.

We did not hear the rattle because it was drowned in moans, in wails, in the cries of the wounded colliding one with another, lying one upon another in blood, in pus, in excretions. . . .

We set off at 2 p.m.

About six in the evening we heard the cook call out through the windows, already opened:

"Supper!"

To avoid stepping on the wounded, Touri and I climbed out of the window. Through the same window we dragged the enormous kettle into the car.

In our car there lay no less than two hundred men. About ten tureens were put out for food. We four also took our tureens and spooned up good portions of the cummin soup, so lovingly cooked today by uncle Gulbchen.

Balla first took a mouthful of this rusty brown liquid, but the next moment he spat it out.

"Blood!" he said and shuddered as if indeed having tasted blood.

I also tried to eat but a horrible nausea immediately squeezed my throat. Without a word Touri and Islinek poured their portions back into the kettle.

Scores of lean, mournful women met our train at each station. They came with their little saucepans begging for the remnants of our food. *Fenrich* Revfy allowed all our supper to be distributed among them. The poor women blessed us in their deep-toned Italian voices.

In the morning *fenrich* Revfy ordered us to pick out all the dead and to disembark them at the next station.

"Seems to be off his head, the guy!" grumbled Balla, "Who the hell could know a dead from a live in that mess!"

"Those who're not crying—are dead," Touri resolved his doubts.

"I guess you've learned it when herding the pigs, aint you?"

"Exactly!"

With great difficulty we managed to draw a dozen of corpses from under the live men, and pulled them out through the window.

The grizzly chief-lieutenant, commandant of the station, flew into a rage.

"Where the devil shall I put all these corpses? I'm not an undertaker's firm, am I!"

"But we cannot leave them among the living and we have no special cars for the dead," argued Revfy.

"I can't help it!" stormed the commandant adjusting his spectacles on his nose. "This is the third transport of dead bodies I got today. How long do you suppose I shall put up with it? No, not for the world! Throw them back through the windows at once! Well, make haste, I tell you!. . ."

Finally after a lot of shouting he ordered a freight car to be coupled with our train, and there we piled all the corpses.

In the evening again we picked out the dead from the cars. But then we gave it up and never recommenced till Budapest.

We moved along with a horrible, unbearable slowness. We spent many hours standing still at the stations. Now there was no engine, now the supply of coal was exhausted.

There were other trains standing at our side, trains loaded with shells, and others which carried drafts to the Piave, entire companies consisting of old men and half children.

The soldiers were singing:

> Blow, golden trumpets, blow,
> Blessed nows you let us know
> That the war has come to an end,
> That the soldier will go to his land.

"There'll never be an end as long as you're but singing!" cried Balla.

At last, after a seven days' journey, we reached Budapest and detrained. As I was not present at the detraining, I never knew how many out of the two thousand had survived. I fell ill on the third day of our travel. In spite of my empty stomach I was continuously sick. The *fenrich* told me to go to the car we used as storeroom and to lie down on meal-sacks, Islinek lay near me, shaking with fever. *Fenrich* Revfy gave both of us a sleeping-draught.

When I recovered the train was already empty. The beds had been disinfected, the floor and walls washed with corrosive sublimate, and yet the car still smelt of blood.

"This smell is in your noses and not in the cars," said the new chief—our chief doctor had died with influenza—"You ought to be ashamed, you cowards! After four years of war! .."

"It's just for that, sir, I guess—because of these four years..."

In the evening we were given some rum with our supper. We could not eat, but we drank all the rum. After supper if there was no work we used to play cards. But this time nobody thought of playing. We preferred to sit and talk.

During the world war I spent sixteen months in the ambulance train. I have travelled from Constantinople to Denmark and from Switzerland to Riga. Few of the railwaymen knew the trains as I did. Perhaps they were better at engine management and railway rules but as to what was carried in those trains. . . .

I knew what was carried in trains full of loudly singing soldiers. I knew what was carried back in the ambulance trains.

And I also knew what came to us in trains bringing home the war prisoners from Russia. . . .

Some days after the battle at the Piave, our train was standing at the Budapest station. In car No. 7 four orderlies, after a portion of rum, instead of the usual card game were discussing the destiny of the world. All of them know the trains well and they also knew about different diseases.

"It wont be long now," said Islinek, who in pre-war time had been a teacher in a little Danube village, somewhere at the world's end. "The Russians have made peace already."

"They say land has been given to the peasants over there," said Touri, a hind from earl Shenborn's estate.

"Before the war there was a Russian fellow working in our electrical plant in Uipesth," said Balla, "His Hungarian was like anything, but we liked to listen to him and he liked to speak. He told us about Siberia, about the tsar and the Russian revolution—the one after the Japan war—you know. Well, we listened to all his stories and to be sure did not believe the half of them. Let the poor devil boast a bit if it pleases him, we said. He foretold revolution and we made fun of him. Well now it is his turn to make fun of us."

"I say, friends," Balla went on after a short silence, "I have been a member of a workers' organization about seven years. Have read some books and studied some things, have always subscribed to the *People's Voice.* I know about Marx and Engels, but to tell the truth I don't realize how the Russians did it."

"However they did it, they did it well," declared Touri. 'And we've got to follow their example!"

"Lenin!" said Islinek softly, more to himself than to the others.

Morning. Report. Orders read.

We stood in fine order before the ambulance train No. W. L. XVI—smart, adorned with red crosses, resplendent with cleanliness.

The new chief doctor was dressed up to the nines in honor of the metropolis.

The report over, the coppernosed sergeant produced *Bolshevism* from his pocket.. He read pattering and inarticulately, but when it seemed to him that the chief doctor was listening too, he raised his voice and loudly disclosed before the whole world the brutality of those bloody beasts—the bolsheviks. In Kiev a priest was hanged together with his wife for he refused to spit at a crucifix!!!

Translated by E. Kalashnikova

V. Stavsky

Friendship

Translation from Russian

The wide bluff all at once receded: the motor-launch rushed up the bay, throbbing from its own speed and the strain of the Diesel engine.

Stepan leaned over the rail and took a good look at the port and the low joyful mountains that surrounded the bay in a semi-circle and the houses running down to the wharf in a gay, stony froth.

The morning was clear and fresh. The edge of the breakwaters stood out with unusual sharpness, and so did the great grey steel pile of the British cruiser in the road-stead and the palisade of masts and rigging on the sailing boats.

A sea-gull shot through the deep blue above the launch—now it rose high, its white under-wings flashing in the sun, now it swooped like a shinning blade to the water.

There was so much space and much brightness all round that Stepan forgot about the coming search for the scout, Vassiliev, and of the dangers awaiting him in this town. On board, the usual searching of the passengers by the secret service men had already begun. Screwing up his grey eyes, that now looked blue, Stepan leaned on the rail, hunched his wide, strong shoulders and as always, stroked the back of his neck with his left hand, shifting the cap and ruffling his soft light hair.

The stern, pleasant baritone of the siren recalled him to his usual alertness and vigilance.

The launch had already approached the wharf, when the other scout, Vassiliev, holding his breath, crawled carefully, without catching on anything, under the railway-cars across the lines separating the port from the town.

The port was new to him. From the cruiser, which glittered with brass hand-rails and port-holes, came the cheerful ringing sounds of a brass-band, and gulls rose in a dazzling shrieking cloud.

"No schooners at the coasting wharf. Where can they be?" Vassiliev suddenly grew anxious.

He looked round the port and his face lighted up with a smile of relief. He saw the rigging of three big schooners against the background of the bluish, corrugated walls of the warehouses. The French destroyers, rocked at the end of the mole. On the schooners the thick darts of the crane moved, now dipping to the shore, now swinging aloft, and over the decks, one after another great cases were moved and dropped into the hold.

"That's the way. That's for the landing."

Vassiliev strolled along the trading wharf, his short plump body rocking on the slightly bowed legs.

"Now it's beginning."

Sailors and officers passed by. Someone or other stopped near the fisherwomen sitting on the edge of the wharf. Near the hydrant-shed a whole line of women formed quickly. They sat about on the up-turned buckets, there was the hum of voices and angry cries.

"The water-main's out of order," Vassiliev concluded, twisting the screw of his binoculars in his pocket. He could not make up his mind to look at the schooner. He halted near a grey old colonel, who was busily manipulating three fishing-rods. The little old man angrily turned a red, wrinkled face towards him and again fixed his gaze on the lines.

Vassiliev took a good look round to make sure that no one was watching him. Then he crouched down quickly behind the iron capstan, and pulling out his glasses, turned them on the warehouse.

On the forecastle of the schooners, machine-guns peeped from under their covers. The body of the boats sat deep in the water. Cases kept on dropping into the hold. Ten days ago the British steamship *Guildford* had brought these cases. With its great funnels puffing, the steamer had stood a long time in the roadstead. Vassiliev remembered clearly how, from the sink-holes between the decks great streams of waste water kept rushing out.

That same day the officers' battalion at Feodossiysk had been given new British uniforms, and a day later the second Kuban cavalry division, commanded by General Ulagai, had left the camp near Karassu-Bazaar and gone to Kertch.

"So that's that," Vassiliev sighed, making sure of the landing once more.

Jumping up impetuously, he left the port.

Vassiliev had been living in this town for a month already, watching the movements of troops and cargoes, trying to discover the intentions of the White Command.

A liaison man belonging to his own side should have come over the border a week before and received all the information gained. Vassiliev went daily to the appointed meeting-places, the thumb on his left hand wrapped in a rag and a black English pipe in his mouth. But his signals—sharp angles drawn in blue pencil on the yellow sides of the post-boxes, had not yet been closed up into triangles, and at the side the blue scrawl "Denikin" was left lonely without the answering "hurrah."

"What the hell are they doing, devils," said Vassiliev to himself. Suddenly it came into his head "I'll have to go myself."

He swore as he stepped out at a brisker pace, but within a feeling of relief grew, relief that the other man had not turned up and that he, Vassiliev, would be able to go back home. Yet he would never have admitted this feeling to himself.

"If he doesn't come tomorrow, I'll get out of here."

A man in British uniform that hung badly on his thin body, hurried after Vassiliev.

"He can't be alone. Got to track him down," thought the spy.

The scorching sun moved slowly over the town. The streets were swelteringly hot and stuffy, the asphalt gave softly under the heel.

It was hard for the spy to keep on the trail. Vassiliev went all round the town, and with every hour the spy's astonishment increased. At the transportation office of the Headquarters Vassiliev seemed to be regarded as their own man. He had a good dinner along with the Company and lapped up a full pan of soup. The spy was tormented with piercing heartburn, and glanced enviously at the other licking his spoon with relish.

Vassiliev laughed frequently. He knew that his smile which showed his even white teeth, attracted people.

"Oho—he's one!"

The spy's interest in Vassiliev grew.

Vassiliev was delayed in the office of the White Cross for time. The spy lost patience and went inside to look. He almost cried out in astonishment: Vassiliev was only just going away from the cashier's window and was putting his banknotes neatly away.

"What can this mean?" The spy went over to the window and asked the cashier in a whisper: "Are they giving out relief today?"

"No, only to this refugee from the Don — they gave him some money."

The spy ran after Vassiliev, who was already a good way off along the hot, dusty road. About 2 o'clock Vassiliev entered a coffee-house in Genoa Street, had a glass of milk and started off again. Breathless and weak from heat and endless walking, the spy followed him to the quarantine, that was scattered over the mountain commanding the port. The whole port could be seen from the quarantine garden; the spy was struck with Vassiliev's acuteness. "Yes — he's evidently no fool," he said to himself admiringly.

"He can't be alone here," he assured himself, never letting Vassiliev out of his sight for a moment.

Twilight was falling fast when Vassiliev left the garden.

He had not as yet felt that he was being followed, but as usual he went a round-about way through the alleys, insuring himself against possible danger — covering up his tracks to his lodgings — a tiny room in a Greek coffee-house on the quay.

At the third corner the spy lost him and tore his scanty grey hair in vexation.

"What an old fool I am, let him slip through my fingers!"

Then he remembered that there was really nowhere to hide in a small town.

Ever since Vassiliev had decided to leave the town tomorrow, he became calmer and more cheerful. After visiting the headquarters and the railway station, he went to the Café-Restaurant on Genoa Street. There he dined, after which he remained sitting until the evening over a glass of coffee in a corner shaded by thick palm leaves.

He lit his pipe and, sticking the forefinger of his left hand into a buttonhole on his jacket, so that the bandaged thumb could be seen, he walked quietly to the Aivasovsky Garden.

The newspaper-boys were already shouting in the streets. The news was the same as before in both papers, the Suvorin *Evening Times* and the official *Crimean Herald*—"All quiet at the front!" and "Search for spies in Sivash and Chongar!" In a shop-window a General Staff map of Osvaga was shown, on which the bit of cord indicating the position of the troops hung in the same place all the time. Vassiliev chuckled.

"We know all about it — nothing new at the front!" and he winked at the portrait of General Alexeiev. The portrait was hung with crepe, the grey, popping eyes of the general stared out stupidly; the course moustache, trimmed soldier fashion and the scanty hair, up standing like a hedgehog seemed to bristle with surprise.

> You can be Right or you can be Left —
> But you must save your long-suffering country.
>
> Gen. Alexeiev.

Vassiliev read these lines on the portrait and said venemously: "Oh, we're going to, yes, we are that," and wondered "a fellow with learning — and yet so stupid."

The streets were crowded with people, the restaurants and pubs hummed as usual. From the open doors poured the sour, rotten smell of wine, people and food.

Through a gap in the scented dark-green wall of cypresses that graced the little seaside garden he caught a glimpse of the sea.

It seemed as if someone had strewn brand-new sheets of roof-iron along it from the sky. Behind the garden, Genoa Street, where great light houses looked on the sea. Unbearably white in the daytime, they now bloomed in dim, elusive tones, as if a giant brush was passed over them, picking out colors with care.

"What colors, what colors" thought Vassiliev in a fever of admiration and then, enviously — " If I could match those. Then I could satisfy the boys" and he smiled broadly, as if he could already hear the approval of his mate-painters and decorators like himself.

He walked round the fountain and sat down on a bench, leaning his elbow wearily on his knee. Children were playning near the fountain. A dark, freckled ragamuffin jumped on the stone border of the basin and galloped round it with a triumphant shriek.

"He'll fall in, the little brat," thought Vassiliev, frightened. As the boy bent far over, he started forward himself involuntarily.

"Now he's interesed in children," thought the spy with irritation. He was hiding behind a round laurel bush in a side-path and held an open book before his face.

"Well, I'll get you today." The spy grinned to himself, showing his blackened teeth: beyond the gates of the garden his assistant was strolling about, a man he had with reluctance called on to help him.

When Vassiliev — who was following the movements of the child running along the fountain-edge — suddenly dived forward, bending almost to the knees,the spy bent over as well nearly dropping his book. Stepan, the liaison man from abroad, had no further doubts that this spy was tracking down the man he had come to see.

Before entering the square Stepan had opened his newspaper and walked along a side alley, as if reading.

Here he noticed the spy and following his gaze, found Vassiliev: the black English pipe hung carelessly, forgotten, from the corner of his mouth, the bandaged left hand lay across the back of the bench.

Stepan pulled the flower out of his buttonhole and, twirling it in his fingers, went over to the Aissor boot-cleaner sitting near the exit. The Aissor threw back his black matted head, glanced at Stepan, then bending forward, pulled his customer's foot on to the box and began smartly to wield his brushes.

As he leaned a little over the boot-cleaner, Stepan looked at the paths, radiating the entrace to the garden.

"If I don't keep a sharp look-out it'll be the end for me, too," he thought suddenly, and his strong, perspiring neck went purple from fear and indignation.

"Dirty dog!" he said to himself, referring to the spy, and looked carefully round, wondering how he could warn Vassiliev.

A small girl was playing with a gay little doll near the fountain. Then she threw the doll angrily down on the gravel, and wiping her hands on her frock, ran off round the fountain. Stepan hurriedly thrust a biggish note into the Aissor's hand and walked round. On the way he lit a cigarette and put his flower back in his buttonhole. He saw the doll and his comrade, felt the gaze of the Aissor and the man behind the laurels, and the path seemed a very long one to him.

Stooping to pick up the doll, he blurted out the password at Vassiliev. "You're followed. Behind the laurels. Tomorrow — ten — in the suburbs."

Vassiliev gave a short "Ah!" and gripped the bench with all his force. Stepan hurried after the child, pushed the doll into her arms, kissed her and at an excruciatingly slow pace left the garden.

Vassiliev leaned his arms on his knees. He felt the blood knocking in his swollen hands. All round the green trees and grass glimmered peacefully in the half-light. The nurses, their wide, flowered skirts sweeping the paths, led their charges home

The electric light flamed up in the lamps; the trees and green-sward looked blue now; a noisy crowd streamed through the garden. Everything was just as it had been yesterday and the day before yesterday. And Vassiliev thought hopefully: "What tracking could there be? There's nothing!"

The strollers trailed past. Vasiliev went towards the exit. The Aissor boot-cleaner looked at him with his great cow eyes, and felt with one hand for something behind him. Vassiliev started. "A spy," shot through his mind, and he could not tear his eyes away.

The Aissor seized his soft brushes and drummed on the box:

"Shine! Shine!"

"Ugh! you devil, you!" Vassiliev said under his breath. He raised his head with assurance, and felt how hot and full his heart was.

Before him lay Genoa Street. The sounds of the orchestra playing in the gardens called out an echo from the walls of the houses, so that it seemed as if there were two bands playing. The spy ran to the gate of the garden, waving his cap to his assistant. As Vassiliev was crossing the pavement he glanced back. He noticed a soldier without shoulder-straps, in full dark-green riding-breeches. The man detached himself at once from behind the palings of the garden. "That's it! Now hold on, hold on," thought Vassiliev anl flung himself into the darkening alley.

"I'll run round the block, then back to the garden and home" — he decided as he turned the corner. "It'll never occur to them to look for me there."

He laughed a gay, hard laugh, and as he came up to the British Official Mission, saluted the sentry impudently. The latter looked after him in amazement.

When he came to a turning, it suddenly came into Vassiliev's head that it was no good going to the garden after all, that it would be the likeliest place for the spy to search in.

The spy in pursuit had now lost sight of Vassiliev and regretted having dragged out the game too long and given his prey the chance to escape. Then he remembered how the children at the fountain had drawn Vassiliev's attention.

'He's a bit green still. Probably he'll go back to the garden just," and he shouted to his assistant as he ran: "Go to the garden, quick! He's there."

Just then the offices of the White Cross rose up before the spy, and the figure of Vassiliev folding away his notes. He could never have explained why, but he instantly made a decision. He called to mind the rolling gait and peculiar manner of holding the head a little on one side — and with absolute certainty turned a corner leading not to the garden, but straight on to Vassiliev's track. It happened of itself, ten long years of experience spoke.

At the next parallel lane the spy caught sight of Vassiliev by the spiky light of the street-lamp.

Vassiliev turned at the sound of someone trotting behind him. He was suddenly terrified.

"However did they find me?" A horrible chilly tremor ran down his spine; he rushed in the direction of the port. The stillness of eveninig was ripped by a shrill whistle.

"Am I done for, am I done for?" Vassiliev gabled in a whisper, straining ahead with starting eyes. Another whistle ahead — from Italian Street.

A crowd was tearing after him. The noise, the shouting and yelping grew. Vassiliev darted round a corner, ran under a low balcony and suddenly — without realizing what he was doing and why — threw himself over the rail, and lay flat on the floor of the balcony. The screaming, bellowing crowd ran by below.

Almost beside himself with delight at his good luck, Vassiliev jumped up and ran through the alleys to the port, to his refuge. He remembered his comrade warmly and with thankfulness. "That's a lad. Well, that was a lad."

The spy, breathless, lagging for behind the crowd that was already storming down Italian Street with its brightly-lighted shop windows, sat down in helpless fury on the pavement.

"Must have nine lives, devil take him," he spat out ferociously. "I can't understand it, can't under — stand — " "It's not a simple case of failure."

Vassiliev and Stepan met in the suburbs. Outside the town they marched along the narrow, tortuous path, past the hedges of prickly bushes which spread out their rusty leaves, small and wizened from the heat.

Vassiliev talked and talked. He boasted freely of the episode of the evening before, recalled every detail of his dexterous jump over the balcony. "You may not be so lucky with your acrobatics next time," softly and angrily remarked Stepan, his back turned.

Vassiliev felt ashamed and kept silence. Below, far away from the town, rose the blue wall of the sea. Beside it ran spotty winding paths; to the east the stony waves receded, layer upon layer, up to the Kertch Peninsula, shimmering in the distance and heat. Vassiliev was again overcome with a wave of shyness. He caught Stepan by the arm: "How you picked up that doll yesterday, though. That took some thinking about."

"Aw, come on." Stepan squeezed Vassiliev's hand that lay within his arm. Into this movement he put the friendliness and warmth that seemed to catch in his throat. He would like to have told this comrade that he had met just yesterday, that he would have backed him against a whole regiment of enemies, but he only swallowed nervously and said:

"Aw, come on."

They went a long way round the suburb of Sarigol, by the gardens scattered over the low hills, and decended to a valley through which a railway line ran. Along the shining steel rails passed three detachments of troops in transit to Vladislavovka. Soon the round hillocks hid the valley from the gaze of the two scouts.

"Now, brother, got to step out," said Stepan gloomily.

"That's clear," agreed his friend.

Stretches of sparse monotonous green. Thick, clinging dust covered their legs, and Vassiliev and Stepan walked and walked—from hillock to hillock—along the twisting road, over the shining white stones washed up by the spring floods. Conversation died down, like a fire without fuel.

The mountains, at the foot of which lay the little town, were already growing blue. Vassiliev and Stepan turned to rest in a gully, took off their shoes, put their socks out in the sun, and said down under a bush.

"I saw in the Kertch papers, that our people — on the other side — have cancelled money altogether," Stepan said thought fully, chewing a blade of grass.

"Cancelled money?" repeated Vassiliev" and I've been thinking all the time how fine it would be, when the Soviets come into power, to come to the Crimea and paint. These mountains — the sea there — I'm a painter and decorator by profesion, love drawing." Vassiliev's eyes glowed. "I'd paint such pictures, I would, and I'd hang them in the factories. A fellow would be working, working away, then he'd take a look at the picture and feel cheered up a bit."

Stepan laughed mistrustfully.

Vassiliev fired up: "What d'you mean? Of course it'll be like that. Quite a different life it'll be then. You said yourself it'd be without money."

Unexpectedly and hurriedly, like a steam rushing through a dam, Stepan spoke up.

"Devil only knows — I wonder myself. When you're on the road here — you curse yourself for going — you vow you've gone for the last time, then you go back home, rest a bit, and again it kind of draws you. It's all the same to you — sooner or later you'll be done for — and yet you go again."

"At Kastarnaya, my pal was caught by Drozdov's men — he had a lot of the new money on him, — and they hanged him on the gas lamp on the station, wound him up on the bracket until the handle cre-e-aked."

"What's up with you?" Vassiliev interrupted him softly. His comrade's agitation and weariness were catching and he wanted to get him out of this mood:" Wait, you'll see we'll outlive some of these young'uns. You'll be going over to Europe to work, maybe."

"To where?" Stepan opened his mild grey eyes in astonishment.

"To Europe, I'm telling you." Vassiliev laughed.

They got up and went on their road, nearer to each other in a new way.

At sunset they passed a Kamish farm. Vassiliev turned at a sound and saw suddenly, at the end of the street, a machine-gun galloping straight at them.

Catching Stepan by the shoulders he rushed into an empty yard and had barely time to close the gate when a lean grey wolf-hound leaped silently out and tore him on the buttock.

Vassiliev shrieked and kicked the dog in its bared teeth. Stepan, who was terrified of dogs since he had been badly bitten as a child, tried to pull out a stake from the plaited fence. The gun wagon passed noisily to the accompaniment of the hellish barking of all farm dogs.

The glittering should-straps of an officer blazed up for a moment like a mirror turned to the sun. The dust settled slowly down again. Vassiliev, holding his torn trouser leg, wet with blood, passed out of the gate. He was white with pain and excitement.

"Hurts like the devil, eh?" Stepan asked.

Vassiliev snarled angrily:

"Oh, go to the devil, you, sticking round me!"

They stopped in a hollow behind the farm. There were two rows of deep wounds with torn edges on Vassiliev's buttock, the blood curdled, and great drops of serum came out.

"Lord, what a fool, nothing else," Stepan swore, vexed at the delay and sorry for his comrade.

They spent the night on stone slabs on the top of a hillock. Vassiliev was feverish, his buttock swelled, the blood throbbed with a burning, piercing pain.

Stepan kept starting and crying out in his sleep.

"It'll fester," Vassiliev thought in despair. "Got stuck, old chap, an'all for nothing."

Somewhere in the grass a field-mouse rustled. From a long way off came a thin whistle of a bird, or a weasel. The rattle of the train could be heard from behind the hillock. Vassiliev strained his ears, trying to define by the rumble the contour of the railway-line. The rumble of the wheels was always less on the ascent, and before a descent came the whistle of the engine. Vassiliev counted eight trains.

"They're running so many trains, swine. Yes, of course, for the landing," whispered Vassiliev, more and more disturbed, and pitied himself — "Got stuck, old chap, all for nothing."

The Great Bear had turned her hunch around the cold immobile eye of the North Star, when Vassiliev dozed off a little, stroking his swollen buttock carefully. In the morning, his mouth tasted bitter, he felt sick and his head was heavy and did not feel like his own. He craved for drink, drink without end. "You're in a fine mess. It's a bad case with you," said Stepan in a worried tone. Then, looking at his sunken face and burning, inflamed eyes, thought in alarm: "If you don't look out, brother, you'll fade out altogether."

He ran to the roadside and plucked a bunch of sinewy,fleshy leaves of knot-grass.

"A-a-ah," shrieked Vassiliev and ground his teeth, as Stepan started carefully to undo the bandage. "Don't look! What are you staring at!"

The flesh around the wound had gone a queer yellow, and Stepan shivered suddenly: "What if the dog was mad?" then he brushed the suspicion aside: "It's all nonsense."

"What's nonsense?" asked Vassiliev softly. "It's me that's nonsense, Stepurka. A bad business, eh?"

"Well, what are you fussing about, what are you fussing about, anyhow? What d'you want, one in the eye?" shouted Stepan, bursting with fear and apprehension.

"Get up, I'm telling you!"

Leaninig on Stepan's shoulder, Vassiliev stood up, and almost fell again. His head spun from pain and weakness.

"Come on, now, come on." Stepan took him under the arms and led him. The wounded leg would not bend, and Vassiliev dragged it sideways, limping and trying with all his force not to howl, not to slip to the ground.

By midday they had gone three versts. The road turned left and through a gap in the hills the valley and the railway embankment could be seen. Near the crossing, saddled horses were standing.

"Cossacks! Have to go round by the other side." said Stepan anxiously.

"I'm not going anywhere," Vassiliev interrupted him with irritation, and tried to sit down, but Stepan caught him and in a thick, maddened voice, shouted hoarsly in his face:

"You watch out, you devil, you, else you'll get it from me!"

They went round by the stony gully, rent and torn up by streams. Stepan picked out the easiest way and the places to step and anxiously warned Vassiliev. The latter suddenly stumbled and then slipped to the ground. His teeth were clenched and his face distorted with pain.

"I ca-a-n't!"

Stepan hated him at that moment. "Devil take you, such a..." The whistle of an engine could be heard. Stepan shook himself, walked up to Vassiliev and lifted him in his arms.

"Let me go, let me go! What are you doing?"

"Shut up," said Stepan. Straining and purple, he began to climb sideways up the side of the gully.

"Heavy for you," whispered Vassiliev guiltily.

"Aw, shut up."

When he got up to a smooth place, Stepan put his comrade down. He himself was breathing heavily, and he wiped the sweat from his face with his palm.

"Here you'll be the same as on a boulevard."

Vassiliev put down his wounded leg and winced. The pain shot through his whole body and the perspiration stood out in great drops on his forehead.

He seemed to see double, the road seemed to be all the colors of the rainbow. He walked as if in a mist, urged forward and supported by Stepan's strong hand.

"Stop a minute, let me get my breath." He halted.

"Now, what next?"

Vassiliev looked around; the hills receded, one after the other like a rope, to Kertch. Far beyond, they melted into the blue of the Feodosya mountains.

"I can't get any further. I'll not get there," he said in a broken voice, and tried to look into Stepan's eyes. Then he crumpled up on the ground.

"What next will you think, I wonder." Stepan tried to comfort him, but he found himself listening all the oftener to the distant rumble of the wheels, and staring at the running crest of the waves.

"That doll!" Vassiliev said suddenly and pictured to himself the Aivasovsky Garden and the fountain.

"What doll?" Stepan started, and looked wildly at Vassiliev.

"I saved him because I had to," Stepan thought suddenly. "But now they're waiting for the reports over there... The train's going." He jumped up impetuously and moved off.

"Stepka!" Vassiliev cried.

Stepan walked on without turning, shaking his stooped, obstinate shoulders. Vassiliev struggled to his burning feet, ran a few yards and fell. His cap fell to one side, the wind ruffled his hair.

A cry of anguish and terror broke from him — "Come back!" Stepan's heart went sick, but he clenched his fists with all his might.

"Both of us to be done in? Got to take the report."

"Stepka-a-a."

"God, what a punishment! Why does he punish me so? I can't," whispered Stepan, and did not feel the tears running down his cheeks.

At the third hillock, he turned and could just make out a grey huddled heap. A sharp spasm caught his throat:

"But they'll be waiting there. How can I delay?"

Translated from Russian
by Anthony Wixley

Charles Ashleigh

The Semi-sympathizers

An Incident of "Illegality"

The District Organizer was dead beat; his nerves felt naked. With an average working day of from 16 to 18 hours, one has the right, I think, to feel a bit tired now and then.

As he walked along the peaceful smug street, bordered by shady gardens in which rose large and comfortable houses, he was musing. Ah, how complicated everything is, he thought, when the Party goes underground. There are so many things to keep in one's head — you must not write! So many appointments on street corners. Such difficulty in finding rooms big enough for meetings. It is fatiguing, I say: this special technique of illegality!

But still, on this particular evening, his day's work appeared to be well ended — almost. He had interviewed numerous Party officials, and had been present at four committees. On foot and by street-car he had covered miles of street — he was getting near the end of endurance. Yet there was one more task, and he summoned the last strength of his weary brain to tackle it. He had to find a meeting place for this very night. He had to find it soon enough so as to give him time to instruct the comrades how to get to it. And, of course, it must be a place where they could meet without attracting the attention of the police. He had about two hours to get this job done.

A representative of the Central Committee had, without warning, arrived, bringing new instructions. The next morning, he would have to be on his way. Within a couple of hours, the representative must be brought together with the most active comrades in the District. Everything depended on him, the District Organizer, to pull this off. His comrades expected him to fix it up. Could he fail them? Of course not! This meeting-place had to be found!

Suddenly he stopped. Here, amid the trees of an ample garden, stood a large handsome house. Through the widely-open windows flowed light, laughter, gay talk, the sound of a piano.

The Organizer stopped, sighing, comforted.

"At last; this will solve it! The house of that lawyer who is our very good friend, and who takes such a lively interest in our movement. A real sympathizer. Just what we need."

And, opening the front door — which was never locked in this Bohemian mansion — he entered.

In the great drawing-room, adorned with rare pieces and precious books, some thirty persons were gathered. And they were talking: they discussed vehemently art, philosophy, politics, the latest scandal, while a celebrated musician of the newest school played on the grand piano.

The host advanced, both hands extended in greeting. Behind his pince-nez, his eyes glistened with cordiality.

"How happy I am to see you! And how good of you to have remembered that we are always in to our friends on Thursdays! Some of the people here will amuse you no doubt! Don't laugh at them too much — they know nothing of our movement, you know!"

And, without allowing him time to answer, the lawyer led the Organizer towards a corner of the room.

"My dear," he said to his wife, "do you see whom we have with us?"

The young hostess ran with glad little steps, towards him.

"What a surprise! My dear friend! Come, I must introduce you to some of our friends. I am sure they will interest you."

And our poor tired Organizer, murmuring protest, was led to one of the thickest little groups.

At his approach, the conversation ceased. They all regarded him closely. Evidently he was looked upon here as some sort of rare phenomenon.

"Now," smiled the hostess, "meet Mr. Gabinski" — a stout solemn gentleman rose creakingly from a chair. "I'm sure you know Mr. Gabinski who has published such remarkable studies of the fourth dimension. And here, by his side, is Mademoiselle Francsin. Of course, you have heard of her — the famous long distance cyclist who has done so much for the emancipation of women! And here is our dear Flor Styx, a poet of genius— ah, yes, my dear Flor, don't blush! — and founder of the Flamboyant School of verse. My friends, I present to you Mr. Strauss! I warn you, he is a terrible Bolshevik! But then, everyone knows how I sympathize with them. He has been in prison for two years and a half! Imagine it! And we are supposed to be civilized! Ask him to tell you some prison reminiscences — you will adore it!"

The group registered rapt attention. Every eye was fixed upon the Organizer; and one maiden sighed ecstatically:

"Oh, how I envy you your martyrdom!"

Time dragged on. Only an hour and a half left! The delegate would soon arrive — there was no place to take him. The comrades were waiting to know where the meeting-place was. He agonized with impatience, yet forced himself to reply smilingly to these creatures.

"Reminiscences — oh, yes! I have plenty. But first I must beg you to allow me a few minutes — just the time to telephone. May I phone here, please?" he asked, turning to his hostess.

"But, of course, everything here is at your service." And she led him from the salon.

Once they were alone, the Organizer spoke breathlessly.

"Madame, I must talk with your husband at once. It is very important."

"So important? Why, my dear Strauss, how interesting! Well, we are both here to serve you. Tell me at once — is it something very awful?"

And while a maid went in search of her husband, she led him upstairs, vibrating with joyous agitation.

When the three of them were in the little study on the second floor, the Organizer explained his trouble.

"This meeting is absolutely necessary. It must take place within an hour and a half from now. All we ask is for the use of a room here. Not a very large room — we are only fifteen or sixteen people."

The lawyer hesitated, smiled embarrassedly.

"I really don't know..." he stammered, and threw an imploring look at his wife. But she, contrary to custom, remained silent.

"There's no risk whatever," eagerly pursued the Organizer, his nerves tense with desire to finish quickly. "Everyone knows you often have literary "At Homes" here. People come in and go out as they like. No one will be surprised to see our comrades arrive, for one half of your guests doesn't know the other. The comrades will come separately, in twos and threes. . . ," and patiently, at length, Strauss continued his explanation.

"I came to you because I was sure you would agree. You have always been so interested in our movement. And, among our sympathizers, I know none so understanding and so loyal." A few bouquets won't do any harm, reflected the Organizer, wiping his warm, wet brow.

"That is true," said the master of the house. "We are indeed most interested in the movement, and we will do everything possible to assist you, but..."

The lady sprang now to her husband's aid.

"My dear Strauss," she cried, "it really isn't fair for you to make a proposal like that! Just think— the Party is illegal! You never know where you are with an underground Party. Supposing there was a raid, or some arrests. What about our responsibilities? And we have our responsibilities too. I may say that we are inspirers, cherishers... Without false modesty I may claim that my husband and I are the inspirers of all this young talent which is grouped around us and our house. Have we, then, the right to comprise ourselves, I ask you? Is it loyal to ask us?"

"My wife is right," said the lawyer. "We have a duty to perform towards those who trust us — those young people downstairs... Besides, don't forget that I am a legal man. Have I the right to ruin my career? Would it not reduce my usefulness to the movement? Ah, my friend, just because I sympathize with your Party, really, it gives you no right to make such a demand upon me. After all, there is a difference between us... I have a certain position to consider... I do hope you will understand?"

Yes, the Organizer understood quite well. And, calm, he listened, amused, silent.

"Really," repeated the lawyer, "I would never have thought it of you!"

The Organizer rose, took his hat.

"I believe this is the first time we have ever asked you for something?"

"Yes — but — you must understand —"

"I understand perfectly. Good evening!"

ARTICLES AND CRITICISM

A. Kirpotin

Trotsky on Literature

Comrade Kirpotin's article discloses the basic methodological roots of Trotskyism. It was first published in *Sviosda (The Star)*, a Leningrad magazine. The editors of *International Literature* consider it necessary to reprint the article in this magazine in view of the importance of fighting counter-revolutionary Trotskyism and in particular its views on literature.

The literary theories advocated by Trotsky are not peculiar to him. They are the common property of the whole Second International. The general political line of the latter body amounts to rejection of the class struggle and the political subordination of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie. Its theoreticians, in complete harmony with this line, advise the workers to refrain from class struggle in the domain of culture and enjoin them to submit to the cultural overlordship of the capitalists. The culture bearers of the Second International have not even raised the question of creating a militant proletarian culture. They are concerned merely with the maximum "fusion" with bourgeois culture.

In his book *Socialism and Art* M. Vandervelde asks his readers "to have the courage to look poverty straight in the face" and adds that "most workers in our present day civilization are utterly incapable of artistic creation." Of course if the very capacity for "artistic appreciation" for most workers be denied then Vandervelde's demand for "sharing of the people in esthetic life" becomes the ideal. Vandervelde regards the proletariat's struggle for a culture of its own as a hopeless matter since all the creative forces are inevitably bound to fall under bourgeois influence "Their (*i .e.*, the artists' emancipation from bourgeois influence," wrote Vandervelde in the same book, "from all direct and indirect dependance upon the wealthy classes is possible only in a social system in which the rich are merged with the whole mass of toilers."

As pointed out in the resolution adopted by the Secretariat of the IURW on Comrade Stalin's letter to the editors of the journal *Proletarian Revolution*, a similar theory was developed by Kautsky already in the Nineteenth Century. He also advised the workers to content themselves with the role of consumers of bourgeois culture.

Trotsky's theory, notwithstanding all its outward leftness is at bottom a continuation and extension of the theories on culture advocated by Kautsky and Vandervelde.

In denying the very possibility of creating a proletarian culture, Trotsky entrusts the bourgeoisie with the work of culture; he pursues the policy of the whole Second Internationl which is to disarm the proletariat in its fight on the cultural front. This makes it all the more imperative that we disclose the methodological roots of Trotsky's "culture" theories.

The Editors.

Trotsky is a petty-bourgeois radical who mouths leftist phrases in order to disguise his common or garden social democratic opportunism. Trotsky is neither a Leninist nor a Marxist. He is an enemy of Marxism-Leninism. Trotsky ended up by finding a sanctuary outside of the Soviet Union, where he has become a front rank fighter for the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

Trotsky's ideas on literature are part and parcel of his political and methodological con ceptions.

Ostensibly also in the sphere of literature and art Trotsky makes a miserable attempt to pose as a "leftist." But in the domain of art his anti-Marxian views become quite quickly revealed. Trotsky deals with art from the standpoint of the imminent triumph of world communism. He harps on the militant character of the proletarian dictatorship and the destructive functions of the transition period. This treatment is merely sound and fury signifying nothing save an attempt to hide his true stand behind a cloud of revolutionary words.

The reader must be impressed by his irreconciliable "leftism," by his persistent spelling of the word "Revolution" with a capital "R"; for Trotsky's "Revolution" is a majestic yet abstract entity that is divorced from the conflicting intricacies of the class struggle and the multiform stages of transition. Marching in "leftist seven league boots" straightway into the new order, skipping over its pangs of travail, over the dialectical movement of the transition period, Trotsky indulges in alluring day-dreams about the acme of perfection to be attained by art and literature in the future socialist society.

All this is a mere sham. In reality, in the sphere of literature and art Trotsky's position is one of fully fledged opportunism and capitulation to the bourgeois ideological currents.

First of all, one may notice the following curious trait. Trotsky, who used to perorate on the proximity of the world revolution, urging that the transition period would be too short to permit of substantial achievements in art and literature, in reality puts off the triumph of the world revolution for twice and thrice the period of time considered necessary by Lenin. This was pointed out by Comrade Stalin in his address entitled "Once more about the social-democratic deviation in our Party." Lenin said: "Ten or twenty years of proper co-relationships with the peasantry, and victory on a world scale is assured (even if the proletarian revolutions that are growing become protracted); otherwise, 20 or 40 years in the throes of white-guard terror." Compare this with Trotsky's dictum: "At any rate the 20, 30, or 50 years of proletarian world revolution will go down in history as the most difficult climb from one system to another, but in no case as an independent epoch of proletarian culture.' (Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*,. p. 191[1]). We shall yet return to Trotsky's conception of the nature of the transition period (of the most onerous transition from one order of society to another), and in the meantime let us note the following. The man who used to consider it his mission to "re-equip" bolshevism with more revolutionary armor than Lenin's, who dealt with problems of proletarian culture under a mask of optimistic faith in the revolutionary future, in reality entertained pessimist views concerning the length of time required for the triumph of the revolution, contemplating with apprehension the maturing period of the revolution. "I must declare," said Stalin, "That neither Lenin nor the Party can be held responsible for this perspective invented by Trotsky, nor for the resultant deductions." Even Comrade Bukharin believed in the "revolutionary" character of the tempo of triumph of world communism as drawn by Trotsky. "Trotsky magnifies the tempo of the growth of the communist society, exaggerates the rapidity of the withering away of the proletarian dictatorship." ("Questions of Culture under Proletarian Dictatorship," p. 141). Yet, even in regard to the time set for the triumph of communism, we find that Trotsky possessed little faith in the revolution. This want of faith, *i. e.*, this opportunism and defeatism, was shown by Trotsky also in questions of literature and art.

Trotsky's views on literature are part and parcel of his general theory of the evolution of proletarian and socialist culture. Lenin saw the manifest beginnings of socialist culture of the proletariat already under capitalism: "In every national culture there are at least the embryonic elements of democratic and socialist culture; for in every nation there is a toiling and oppressed mass whose living conditions are bound to beget the democratic and socialist ideology." As against this, Trotsky denies the existence of the elements of culture in the proletariat until the triumph of the revolution. "The bourgeoisie came into power, fully armed with the culture of its time; the proletariat, on the other hand, comes into power, fully armed only with the acute need of mastering culture." *(Literature and Revolution*, p. 191). Under capitalism the working class builds up its organizations, develops its class-consciousness, consolidates its Party on the basis of its theory, strategy, and tactics, but, according to Trotsky, becomes ever more and more destitute in the matter of culture. Even the very theory of the proletariat, even Marxism is not considered by Trotsky as a product of proletarian culture. "But can one say that Marxism represents a product here of proletarian culture?" he profoundly enquires, and he replies: "the theory of the proletariat . . . was formed entirely on the basis of bourgeois culture both scientific and political though it declared a fight to the finish upon that culture. Under the pressure of capitalistic contradictions, the universaizing thought of the bourgeois democracy, of its boldest, most honest, and most far-sighted representatives, rises to the heights of a marvelous renunciation, armed with all the critical weapons of bourgeois science. Such is the origin of Marxism . . .

"The proletariat found its weapon in Marxism not at once, and not fully even to this day. Today this weapon serves political aims almost primarily and exclusively. The broad realistic application and the methodologic development of dialectic materialism are still entirely in the future. Only in a socialist society will Marxism cease to be a one sided weapon of political struggle and become a means of scientific creation, a most important element and instrument of spiritual culture" *(Literature and Revolution* p. 197).

Trotsky uses the name of Marx to conceal his hostility to Marxism-Leninism. Marxism, as the theory of the working class, is for him merely self-denial, and not a new stage in the evolution of human knowledge that owes its origin to the advent of the proletariat as an independent class force o nthe arena of history. Not the working class, through the instrumentality of its best leaders, Marx and Engels, was the soil which raised Marxism, for Marxism was "formed entirely on the basis of bourgeois culture both scientific and political." The proletariat had only "found" in Marxism its method. And what it did find in it was nothing particularly great. It found in it only a means for furthering its political aims. Under politics Trotsky understands "some technical capacity that is not a branch of the theory that is inseparably bound up with the practice of the class struggle." As to the development of Marxism, "as the method of scientific creation and the instrument of spiritual culture," this is left by Trotsky as a legacy to the classless society of the future. Trotsky, in his *Letters about Lenin*, makes the discovery that Lenin is only the practician of the workers' movement, whereas Marx was its theoretician. In fairness to Trotsky it ought to be said that even the founders of Marxism were really considered by him merely as one sided politicans.

But such a treatment of Marxism is distinctly bourgeois. Even when extolling Marxism, Trotsky shows that he not only fails to understand Marxism, but also that he is utterly opposed to it; for Trotsky by his explanations tries to reduce

[1] Page numbers refer to the American edition of *Literature and Revolution*.

Marxism to nothing. The counter-revolutionary fight of Trotsky against Marxism-Leninism is due to the fact that he really conceives Marxism in the light of his bourgeois theory of the proletariat.

Such being the high value attached by Trotsky to the "best that was created by the proletariat prior to its first enduring victory," to its theory, it is not to be wondered at that Trotsky denies all value to the development of proletarian literature under capitalism. For Trotsky the pre-revolutionary proletarian poetry is not a fruitful source holding great promise for the future. For him the proletarian poetry of that period is, at best, but a historical document.

"In the revolutionary period, and during the first period of the Revolution, the proletarian poets regarded versification not as an art which had its own laws, but as a means of complaining of one's sad fate, or of expressing one's revolutionary mood... Our proletariat has its political culture... but it has no artistic culture." *(Literature and Revolution* p. 203).

Such is the view of the proletarian position taken by an epicurean intellectual bred on the refined products of bourgeois literature and bourgeois art, who, being a radical, dreams about the vague and untold beauty of the art of the distant harmonious future, while in the meantime, as an aristocrat, he despises the real sprouts of that very future. The Russian proletariat had the beginnings of its own poetry, and consequently, of its own art culture, even before its victory. The working classes of Western Europe and America have already now their own poetry, their own literature, from which will date the geanology of the proletarian literature of the German, Hungarian, and other Soviet Republics. This Trotsky fails to understand, this he denies. On this question Trotsky sings in unison with the critics of the bourgeois camp who, for quite obvious reasons, deny the art value of the stern creations of proletarian art. A traitor in politics, Trotsky advocates "liquidatorship" also in the domain of literature and art. A liquidatory stand in regard to proletarian literature is bound to lead to complete surrender before bourgeois literature and bourgeois art.

Trotsky flatly denies the existence of proletarian literature in the epoch of capitalism. He denies its possibility (in spite of the facts which demonstrated its existence already then, in 1922—23 when he wrote his articles) also in the epoch of proletarian dictatorship, in the transition period. Trotsky goes to extremes in vulgarizing the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of the transition period. Miserable and ridiculous appear Trotsky's homilies on the character of the transition period in the light of the theoretical principles laid down by Marxism-Leninism, and in the light of the strenuous and bustling activity which has already brought us to the last stage of NEP and to the beginnings of socialism in the USSR.

Trotskyism, having sunk into the mire of counter-revolution, cannot but put up a fight against the Leninist theories of the transition period and of the Cultural Revolution. Thus Trotsky either denies the constructive problems of the transition period or else reduces them merely to the solution of the "elementary questions of food, raiment, fuel, and literacy," that is, of the primary necessities of existence. According to Trotsky, the proletarian dictatorship is confronted only by destructive problems and by the problems connected with the satisfaction of the most elementary needs to the most elementary extent. Consequently, there can be no talk of a new creative content either in culture or in literature under the proletarian dictatorship. "The years of the social revolution," says Trotsky, "will be years of fierce class struggle in which destruction will occupy more room than new construction. At any rate, the energy of the proletariat itself will be spent mainly in conquering power, in retaining and strengthening it and in applying it to the most urgent needs of existence and of further struggle... This seems to lead to the conclusion that there is no proletarian culture and that there never will be and, and in fact there is no reason to regret this. The proletariat acquires power for the purpose of doing away forever with class culture and to make way for human culture. We frequently seem to forget this." *(Literature and Revolution* p. 185).

"Revolution," continues Trotsky, "lays out the ground for a new society. But it does so with the methods of the old society, with the class struggle, with violence, destruction and annihilation. If the proletarian Revolution had not come, mankind would have been strangled by its own contradictions. The Revolution saved society and culture but by means of the most cruel surgery. All the active forces are concentrated in politics and in the revolutionary struggle, everything else is shoved back into the background and everything which is a hindrance is cruelly trampled under foot. In this process, of course, there is an ebb and flow; military Communism gives place to the NEP, which, in its turn, passes through various stages. But in its essence, the dictatorship of the proletariat is not an organization for the production of the culture of a new society, but a revolutionary and military system struggling for it." *(Literature and Revolution* p. 190).

According to Trotsky, the proletarian dictatorship is not the *epoch of the building of socialism and of the new society;* it is nothing but violence, extermination, and destruction. The creation of the new form of government, the remaking of the individual peasant agriculture — the ancient breeding ground of antagonistic social relationships, and the ancient source of conservatism and backwardness—into the most progressive socialist agriculture in the world, the reconstruction of industry upon new technical and social foundations—all of this did not, does not, and never will exist for Trotsky. He is a hero. He is a superman, a grand young Hegelian, Left Social Revolutionary personage that emerges only when one has to grapple with fabulous monsters, while during spells of respite from fighting, he is concerned about having his nails manicured, his shoes shined, and the buttons sewn on. Trotsky once wrote articles in this strain: the civil war is over, a respite has come, let us make use of it to shine our shoes and to sew on the buttons. And in his *Literature and Revolution* he writes:

"We are as before, merely soldiers in a campaign. We are bivouacking for a day. Our shirt has to be washed, our hair has to be cut and combed and, most important of all the rifle has to be cleaned and oiled. Our entire present-day economic and cultural work is nothing more than a bringing of ourselves into order between two battles and two campaigns." *(Ibid.* p. 191).

Quite so, we are having a respite. There are battles ahead. Military intervention is being planned against us. Attempts are made to wreck our work from within, by the aid of the Ramzins, Kondratievs, and Gromans. Yet, just because we have to win the cause of socialism fully and finally in the USSR and throughout the world, for this very reasson we cannot afford to make use of the respite only to get our hair dressed and our trousers pressed. The proletarian dictatorship, according to Lenin's doctrine, means alike the crushing of the exploiters, the leading of the peasants, and the building of socialism. For this very reason the working class, in the transition period, is confronted with constructive creative tasks of gigantic importance, in the social sphere, in the technical sphere, and also in the cultural sphere. According to Lenin's doctrine, the proletarian dictatorship is at the same time the period of the cultural revolution. All this is to Trotsky a book under seven seals.

On questions of culture, literature and art, Trotsky is a typical metaphysician, a mechanist who does not understand one whit of dialectics. For him there is only "aye, aye" or "nay, nay." Trotsky admits either bourgeois culture, literature, and art, or communist culture, literature, and art. He sees neither the struggle of class tendencies in culture, nor the critical assimilation of the heritage of bourgeois culture, nor the process of the creation of the culture, literature, and art of the classless society through the medium of proletarian culture, literature, and art, during the transition period. He imagines that the triumph of the revolution throughout the world will lead to the replacement of the old bourgeois culture, with its literature and art, by the new communist culture, with the new literature and art, without intermediate phases, without a class struggle in the domain of ideology, regardless of the dialectical forms of evolution.

"It is fundamentally incorrect," says Trotsky, "to contrast bourgeois culture and bourgeois art with proletarian culture and proletarian art. The latter will never exist, because the proletarian regime is temporary and transient." *(Literature and Revolution,* p. 14).

Or, as he puts it in another place: "The proletariat is forced to take power before it has appropriated the fundamental elements of bourgeois culture; it is forced to overthrow bourgeois society by revolutionary violence for the very reason that society does not allow it access to culture. The working class strives to transform the state apparatus into a powerful pump for quenching the cultural thirst of the masses. This is a task of immeasurable historic importance. But, if one is not to use words lightly, it is not as yet a creation of a special proletarian culture. 'Proletarian culture,' 'proletarian art,' etc., are in three cases out of ten used uncritically to designate the culture and the art of the coming communist society, in two cases out of ten to designate the fact that special groups of the proletariat are acquiring separate elements of pre-proletarian culture, and finally, in five cases out of ten, it represents a jumble of concepts and words out of which one can make neither head nor tail." *(Ibid.* p. 195).

Trotsky sees an impossible gulf between bourgeois culture and communist culture. Accordingly, there exists for him the same gulf between bourgeois literature and communist literature. What the proletariat creates in the domain of literature before the advent of communism, during the transition period, is just as necessary in its way, and just as insignificant, as the combing of one's hair during a halt in a campaign.

"Undoubtedly," says Trotsky "the work of the factory poets is much more organic, in the sense of its being connected with the life, environment and interests of the working masses. None the less, it is not proletarian literature, but it expresses in writing the molecular process of the cultural rise of the proletariat. We have already explained above that this is not one and the same thing. The letters of the workers, the local poets, the complainants, are carrying on a great cultural work, breaking up the ground and preparing it for future sowing. But a cultural and artistic harvest of full value will be, happily, socialist and not proletarian." *(Ibid.* p. 201).

The future, according to Trotsky, reposes in the lap of the future itself. According to his views, the future is not connected with the present, is not being born today, in the strenuous struggle and constructive work of the working class in the present stage. He draws a rigid line of demarcation between the future and the present. As a maximalist of the Social-Revolutionary school, Trotsky, while metaphysically concerned about the glorious future, in the meantime, like an aristocrat and a philistine, holds aloof from what he contemptuously describes as the molecular *(i. e.,* paltry and insignificant) ideological processes that are going on in the working class today. In questions of culture, literature, and art, he does not see any succession as between the work of today and the achievents of the future. He persistently repudiates the attempts "to tear out of the future that which can develop only inseparably from it..." For instance, in regard to architecture, Trotsky can only say that in the future there will be a new architecture, but its nature is a matter that does not concern him, and cannot concern him, for he considers the present period of transition merely as "crumb-picking" in the anticipation of the grand "militant" exploits.

"The new architecture," Trotsky opines, "will be made up of two halves; of new problems and of a new technical means of mastering both new and old material: The new problem will not be the building of a temple, or a castle or a private mansion, but rather a people's home, a hotel for the masses, a commons, a community house, or a school of gigantic dimensions. The materials and the method of using them will be determined by the economic condition of the country at the moment when architecture will have become ready to solve its problems. To tear architectural construction out of the future is only arbitrariness, clever and individual."

Trotsky in 1923 warned against the danger of uselessly tearing of architectural construction out of the future. In 1925 the 16th Congress of the Party launched the slogan of the country's industrialization. The great building program was started, to erect not temples, not castles, not villas, but people's houses, mass hotels, community houses, and schools. And we make haste to amend a slight omission in Trotsky's list: factories and mills, blast furnaces, electric power stations, socialist cities, state farms, railway stations, bridges, etc. The present began to move rapidly in the direction of the future, the future began to be materialized in the present, and the working class, during the "halt," has been called upon even today to deal with the problems of the architectural shaping of its gigantic construction. The great utopian Tchernishevsky had understood far better the dialectical connection between the present and the future than Trotsky, the "Marxist." He wrote about the future: "It is luminous, it is glorious. Say to everybody: behold the future, it is luminous and glorious. Love it, strive for it, work for it, bring it nearer to the present, transport from it into the present as much as is transportable." Therefore, Tchernishevsky's ideas about the future are free from the shade of philistine vulgarity that colors Trotsky's ideas about the communism of the future. Comrade Stalin has described as philistine and petty bourgeois, the conception of socialism which ignores the concrete content, the concrete ways of the birth of socialism, picturing it as the spontaneous advent of a "paradise on earth," of an era of universal content. (See his address on "Once again about the social-democratic deviation"). This remark hits Trotsky straight in the eye, for he imagines the transition period, with all its pangs of travail, not as a bridge into the future, but rather as a ditch between the romantically pictured revolution and the sweet but impotent and inactive dream about the communist future.

In reality, Trotsky's denial of proletarian literature and art (and of proletarian culture in general in the name of the glorious communist culture to come in the sweet by and by, leads him to the advocacy of abstinence from guiding the development of literature and art in the transition period. Of course, the forms of party leadership in regard to literature, drama, architecture, are different from those in the realm of politics, or even in such theoretical matters as political economy, philosophy, etc. Nevertheless, this leadership does and is bound to exist; for in the realm of literature and art, there exists the class struggle, the re-education of the fellow-travellers and allied elements, the necessity to aid the young proletarian literature and arts. Ideology is the arena of furious class combats, and the Party, which leads the class struggle of the proletariat, is bound to lead in the ideological struggle, including the realm of literature and the arts. Whereas, according to Trotsky, within the bounds of the formula of "pro-revolution" there should be perfect anarchical freedom for all tendencies, all groups, all currents, in the realm of art creation. Trotsky's abstract formula of "pro-revolution" is a sort of Noah's ark that should accommodate the most diversified ideological hues and shades. Indeed, how can the class struggle of the working class, and the leadership of this struggle, in the domain of literature and art be separated from the class struggle in the domain of economics and politics, even within the bounds of the conditions created by the October victory? It is a question which could not be answered even by Trotsky "himself," notwithstanding the fact that as regards understanding the nature of the artistic, as we shall presently see, he is at the mercy of the formalists.

Trotsky, denying the possibility of proletarian literature and art, and advocating abstinence from leadership in the realm of the literary movement, concludes quite logically that the working class must entrust artistic creation to the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intelligentsia.

"The proletariat also needs a continuity of creative tradition," Trotsky writes. "At the present time the proletariat realizes this continuity not directly, but indirectly, through the creative bourgeois intelligentsia . . ." *(Literature and Revolution*, p. 227).

"Just because," Trotsky pursues his argument elsewhere, "the revolution is a working class revolution it releases—to repeat what was said before —very little working class energy for art. During the French Revolution ,the greatest works which, directly or indirectly, reflected it, were created not by French artists, but by German, English and others. The French bourgeoisie which was directly concerned with making the Revolution, could not give up a sufficient quantity of its strength to recreate and to perpetuate its imprint. This is still more true of the proletariat, which though it has culture in politics, has little culture in art. The intelligentsia, aside from the advantages of its qualifications in form, has also the odious privilege of holding a passive political position, which is marked by a greater or lesser degree of hostility or friendliness towards the October Revolution. It is not surprizing, then, that this contemplative intellegentsia is able to give and does give a better artistic reproduction of the Revolution than the proletariat which has made the Revolution, though the recreations of the intelligentsia are somewhat off line." *(Ibid.* p. 217).

According to Trotsky, the proletariat has to follow the narrow groove of one-sided Marxism until the advent of the full-fledged socialist society. Is art creation a fitting pursuit for the proletariat? Let this be done by the "contemplative intelligentsia," the more so when one bears in mind that "the law of social gravitation (to the side of the ruling class) determines, after all, the creative line of the intelligentsia, and it is now acting in our favor" (Trotsky). By means of this talk about the intelligentsia in general, without any class differention (overestimating the role of the intelligentsia, considering it as an integral category standing somewhat apart from the other classes), he disguises his appeal for surrender to the bourgeoisie and its ideologians in the realm of literature and art. Proletarian literature is only the music of the future. Trotsky deliberately minimizes the potency of the hostility of the post-October bourgeois literature, while on the other hand, he magnifies the revolutionary character of the fellow-traveling literature, considering the latter without any differentiation. Blunting the edge of the hostile tendencies of bourgeois and kulak literature, underestimating the possibility of its development and the amount of response that it may find in the country, Trotsky calls on the proletariat, deprived of an art culture of its own, to follow blindly, like a school boy, the precepts of bourgeois literature and bourgeois art. Yet, even Trotsky admits that the study and assimilation of existing culture does not yet mean creation, but is only the postulate to creative work. Only after mastering questions of culture, literature, and art, can the proletariat produce its own works or art. But . . . then the proletariat will have already ceased to exist as such, as the communist society will then be already in existence.

To sum up, the following are the principles of literary and art policy recommended by Trotsky to the working class during the transition period: confide the entire craft to the absolute control of the bourgeois intelligentsia, which is supposed to gravitate entirely to the proletariat, and then take your seat in the school room under the tutelage of the bourgeois teacher and "get prepared for life," for art creation in which you will be entitled to engage only in the paradisaical bowers of the world commune.

The system of literary and art policy recommended by Trotsky is based upon a thoroughly eclectial conception of the very nature of art. It is known that the "originality" of Trotsky in politics has consisted in his attempt to combine what cannot be combined: the elements of menshevism with the elements of bolshevism. This led in reality to Trotsky's complete surrender to menshevism, both ideologically and organizationally. Trotsky is equally eclectic in the realm of art. Trotsky has read Marxian books, he considers himself a Marxist; but on art subjects, in view of the "lack of art culture" in the working class, he has read bourgeois books. Hence, in his "original" esthetical theory he has tried to combine his Marxist knowledge with his knowledge in the domain of bourgeois esthetics. In reality, this has led Trotsky into the embrace of bourgeois literary and art conceptions. The analysis of the artistic from the standpoint of its class nature, from the standpoint of its ideological meaning, and its appraisal from the standpoint of its formal merits, are not combined by Trotsky into a harmonious whole. This is due to the fact that Trotsky considers Marxism and the principles of art appraisal two different things, believing the method of Marxism to be inapplicable to the sphere of art. In fact, he states quite plainly: "The methods of Marxism are not the methods or art." Marxism, according to Trotsky, can only explain from what social *milieu* a work of art has originated, but it is powerless to explain anything about the specific nature of art. Marxism has to make room here for the specialist in literary or art criticism, and such specialists can be found only in bourgeois scientific circles.

"It is very true," says Trotsky "that one cannot always go by the principles of Marxism in deciding whether to reject or to accept a work of art. A work of art should, in the first place, be judged by its own law, that is, by the law of art. But Marxism alone can explain why and how a given tendency in art has originated in a given period of history; in other words, who it was who made a demand for such an artistic form and not for another, and why." *(Literature and Revolution* p. 178).

One of the currents of bourgeois literary criticism with which Trotsky thinks it eclectically possible to combine Marxism, is *formalism*, regardless of all his reservations and of all his sour-sweet critique of this school.

"Moreover," Trotsky explains, "a social standard not only does not exclude, but goes hand in hand with formal criticism, that is, with the standard of technical workmanship." *(Ibid.* p. 60).

Trotsky, despite his seemingly withering denunciation of formalism as a "high-brow miscarriage of idealism applied to art," nevertheless deems it necessary to observe that "the methods of formalism, confined within legitimate limits, may help to clarify the artistic and psychological peculiarities of form (its economy, its movement, its contrasts, its hyperbolism etc.). This, in turn, may open a path—one of the paths—to the artist's feeling for the world, and may facilitate the discovery of the relations of an individual artist, or of a whole artistic school, to the social environment." *(Ibid.* p. 164).

Trotsky finds formalism so attractive that he does not think it necessary to combat this current as an ideological enemy; all he is concerned about, is to *improve it and render it more perfect.*

"In so far as we are dealing," he says, "with a contemporary and living school which is still developing, there is an immediate significance in our transitional stage in probing it by means of a social probe and in clarifying its class roots, so that not only the reader, but the school itself could orientate itself, that is, know itself, purify and direct itself." *(Ibid.* p. 164).

It is curious to observe that Trotsky, obviously influenced by the concrete researches of the formalists, lowers the meaning of the very concept of form. He identifies form with the technique of art. We have already quoted Trotsky where he argues that the formal criterion is the *technical* criterion of craftsmanship. This was no random statement. According to Trotsky, the form is the essential element of the *technique of the poetical craft, its practical recipe.* Therefore, to study in the school of bourgeois art, as he advises the worker poets, is to study the *technique of bourgeois art.* Since Trotsky is inclined to identify the specific form of art with its technique, he lays particular stress on the study of this technique. At the same time the study of technique, as recommended by Trotsky, smacks of the study of bourgeois phrase-mongering. His exaggerated appraisal of the form, as of the technique of the literary art, turns into a plea for the studied mannerisms that are so pronounced in Trotsky's own writings. "But there is also the tomorrow." writes Trotsky in appraising the futurists "That tomorrow will demand a much more attentive and accurate attitude, a much more masterly and artistic one towards language, as the fundamental instrument of culture—not only towards the language of verse, but also of prose, and especially of prose. A word never covers a concept precisely in the whole concrete meaning with which it is taken in each given case. On the other hand, a word has sound and outline, not only to our ear and for an eye, but also for our logic and imagination. It is possible to make thought more precise through a careful selection of words, only if the latter are weighed from all sides, which means acoustically as well, and only if they are combined in the most thought-out manner" *(Ibid.* p. 144).

In Trotsky's literary practice, the word loses its concrete, material properties, its relation to the crude realities of nature and of the class struggle; it acquires excessive and showy elegance that becomes repulsively maudlin. Trotsky's sympathies for formalism are quite patent. Nevertheless, he claims the liberty to "combine" Marxism with other currents of bourgeois esthetics. Again and again he combines his "Marxism" with one or another brand of estheticism that represents a hodge-podge of fashionable radical esthetical notions of the pre-war period.

This eclectical combination of "Marxism" with bourgeois theories is possible only when Marxism is vulgarly distorted and misinterpreted. This common rule is borne out by the "Marxism" of Trotsky. Trotsky in his literary theories operates with a vulgarized "Marxism," with a mechanist carricature of Marxism. The mechanist character of Trotsky's "Marxism" was revealed already in his contrasting of bourgeois culture and literature with communist culture and literature. Equally mechanist is Trotsky's handling of the problem of art as a superstructure. Art, according to Trotsky, is only the product of the social basis, but it has no counter-effect on the social basis; in fact, it does not represent a front of the class struggle. Art is passive, it only indicates the maturity of culture. The appearance and development of art is an indication of the stability and maturity of the social *milieu* that produced it. Says Trotsky: "In this sense, the development of art is the supreme test of the vitality and significance of each epoch." (p. 9).

"The nightingale of poetry, like that bird of wisdom, the owl, is heard only after the sun is set. The day is a time for action, but at twilight feeling and reason come to take account of what has been accomplished." (p. 19).

From the standpoint of Marxism, which realizes the important counter-effects of art on the social basis and on the class struggle, if art and literature, or science, lags behind the life of the epoch, it is a defect which ought to be eliminated at all costs. "It is essential that the theoretical activity should not only keep pace with the practical, but should also run ahead of it, thus equipping our practicians in the struggle for the victory of socialism... A theory, if it is a real one, gives the practicians the power of orientation, clear perspective, confidence in the work, faith in the victory of our cause." These words of Comrade Stalin apply also, within certain limits, to literature. Proletarian literature, having become aware of its lagging behind the tasks of the reconstructive period, has justly taken up the question of liquidating this lagging behind. For Trotsky, the lagging behind of art, and of theory, from practical life is quite legitimate. It is the kind of "Marxism" that was already known to Proudhon, who also realized the casual dependence of poetry and science on the social *milieu*. But Marxism is not confined to the mere observation of this causal dependence. The mere observation of this elementary truth betokens but a passive approach to science and literature on the part of the exponent. Trotsky approaches questions of literature and art as a bourgeois estheticist who pays also some tribute to sociology. This passive esthetical approach to literature and art, as against an active revolutionary interest in these questions, betokens an epicurean, connoisseur appraisal of objects of art. Art, according to Trotsky, is a flower which blossoms forth even in the midst of military campaigns, as well as during a respite, on the basis of material abundance, as the ornamentation of a sumptuous dwelling, of a full dinner table, etc. Yet, socialist art will never degenerate into such useless tinsel, even if exquisite in form. The socialist human being will be a worker engaged in productive labor. Already this fact alone gives us the assurance that art will not only retain its commonly important social content, but that it will also perform commonly useful social functions in the abundant life of the secured existence of the socialist society.

The passivist, esthetical connoisseur approach to art questions renders Trotsky helpless in regard to a class analysis of the different art tendencies. He explains art in terms of revolution, urbanism, intelligentsia in general, etc., instead of seeing in them the manifestation of class relationships. Thus, Trotsky's inability to grasp the class nature of art phenomena causes him to wonder why, for instance, Pilnyak happens to be under the influence of Andrei Biely, and so forth.

To sum up: in the realm of art, Trotsky is no more a Marxist than in the realm of politics. His notion as to the impossibility of proletarian literature and art in the transition period is the result of his denial of the possibility of a victory for socialism in a single country. His denial of any art culture in the working class until the full advent of the communist society reveals his captivity to bourgeois esthetics. His esthetical conceptions are thoroughly eclectical. His understanding of Marxism does not reach beyond the level of progressive bourgeois socialism. Trotsky's Marxism in the realm of literature is the "Marxism" of the counter-revolutionary parties of the II International which are still adhering to Marxian phraseology in order to conceal their subjection to bourgeois politics and bourgeois ideology. Trotsky, in his literary excursions is also a mere agent of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, who supplies bourgeois science with arguments for its struggle against proletarian literature and proletarian art.

Sergei Dynamov

The English Labor Party and Questions of Culture

England is the classical country of reformism. This is due to the peculiarities of her economic development. In England an industrial monopoly was created at a much earlier date than in other countries. England emerged in the front ranks of the imperialist robbers. She acquired vast colonial territories that served as a reservoir for the pumping out of super profit, for the creation of a labor aristocracy, and of a trade-union bureaucracy. The epoch of imperialism lends particular prominence to English reformism. In the epoch of imperialism, the features of English social-opportunism become typical for all the capitalist countries; the phenomenon of one country becomes one of the whole world. The peculiarities of English opportunism remain; yet its general features are henceforth common to the opportunism of other countries. The epoch of imperialism — the epoch of monopoly capital, the epoch of dictatorship by banks, gigantic trusts, cartels, syndicates, the epoch of sharing out the world among the largest imperialist powers—affords unusually wide possibilities for the creation of a "labour aristocracy" and of a trade-union bureaucracy.

This peculiarity of English capitalism was noted by Engels in 1881 when he said that England's industrial monopoly constitutes the basis of her social system.

In the course of only 16 years — from 1884 till 1900 — England had acquired four million square kilometres of new colonial territories comprising a population of 57 million people. English capitalism realized quite well this connection between colonial might and the bribing of a section of the working class, *i. e.*, the creation of a "bourgeois proletariat," as this section of the working class in England was dubbed by Engels

Since that time English capitalism was shaken by a series of crises; other rising imperialist countries threatened her supremacy, especially Germany began rapidly to outrival England in the 20th century. The former privileged position of English capitalism was challenged; nevertheless, the disappearance of industrial monopoly by no means led to the disappearance of surplus profits as had been supposed by some theoreticians. "Super profit did not disappear; it remained." (Lenin. Vol. XIII).

English opportunism is the oldest in the Second International. The question of opportunism arose before the working class of the world towards the close of the last century, whereas before the English proletariat it had arisen at a considerably earlier date.

"The opportunists are those bourgeois enemies of the proletarian revolution who in time of peace carry on their bourgeois work stealthily, worming themselves into the labor parties, while in time of crisis they promptly reveal themselves as the supporters of the whole united bourgeoisie, from the conservative to the most radical and democratic, from the free-thinking to the religious and clerical." (Lenin: "What is to be Done?")

This exhaustive Leninist formula covers the basic traits of opportunism: hostility to the proletarian revolution; working for the bourgeoisie within the labor parties; hypocrisy which is the cloak for deliberate treachery that is revealed in a period of crisis. "Opportunism is Liberal-Labour politics" (Lenin). Lenin points out that the exclusive character of English opportunism in the epoch of imperialism "became a common phenomenon of all the big capitalist countries in Europe, to the extent that all these countries began to acquire colonial possessions on a large scale, and generally to the extent of the development and growth of the imperialist period of capitalism." In explaining the causes which led to the birth of opportunism, while devoting particular attention to the connection between the growth of opportunism and the development of imperialism, Lenin gave an exhaustive characterization of the ideological essence of opportunism. In an article entitled, "Situation and Tasks of the Socialist International" (November, 1914), concluding with an appeal for the formation of the Third International, Lenin writes:

> "The advocacy of class collaboration, the repudiation of the idea of socialist revolution, the adaptation to bourgois nationalism, the forgetfulness of the historically transient boundaries of nationality or fatherland, the turning of bourgeois legality into a fetish, the renunciation of the class point of view and of the class struggle, for fear of scaring off the broad 'broad masses of the population' (that is, the petty-bourgeoisie) —such are indubitably the ideological bases of opportunism.'

As for the bourgeoisie, it knows the real worth of the revolutionary phrase-mongering of opportunism. Professor Bardoux, a French politician connected with the League of Nations writes: "MacDonald's socialism, freshly hashed up *à l'anglaise*, turns into nationalist radicalism and into imperialist and religious parliamentarism." *(Ramsey MacDonald*, Jacques Bardoux, Paris, 1924). Even the bourgeois professor understands this aspect of MacDonald's laborist socialism, and realizes that it is really imperialist socialism. This aspect of laborism has found its expression in the whole practice and theory of laborism.

During the war social-opportunism became transformed into social-chauvinism. It matured to its limits, as the war revealed its bourgeois nature. As Lenin said, it turned into an alliance with the entire bourgeoisie against the proletarian revolution, into the defence of its "own country" *i. e.*, of its own bourgeoisie, against the bourgeoisie of other countries, and of the profits of its own capitalism against the competition of the foreign capitalists. Social-chauvinism, in the third period of the evolution of post-war capitalism, becomes transformed into social-fascism.

English reformism, in common with the whole of international reformism, has gone through a series of phases. One may speak now of the end of the "democratic era" in the evolution of English reformism.

English Laborites renounce now the policy of social legislation, especially the theory of the "living wage." They now associate the question of wages with the conditions prevailing in the different branches of industry; if there is a drop in a given industry, they believe that wages too should drop. They proclaim a theory of "strong government." The utterances of MacDonald, Snowden, etc. lead directly to fascism, the program of which is being developed by the Mosley group. Laborism is becoming incorporated in the English government system.

The present phase of English laborism is that of social-fascism. It exposes itself more and more as the ideological and practical preparation for a fascist dictatorship in England.

The practice of English and international laborism is inseparable from its theory. There is a unity of all the social-fascist "superstructures," there is a uniform line on all basic theoretical questions.

English opportunism rejects the principles of Marxism. The "Marx" of the Labor Party is the revisionist Bernstein the publication of whose books by the Independent Labor Party was warmly greeted by MacDonald. MacDonald "demonstrates" that Marx was simply a plagiarist, as the "very same" had been expounded by Adam Smith, Ricardo, Robert Owen, etc. *(The Socialist Movement* 1911-1924). Mac, the brave flunky, stubbornly asserts that his, Mac's, socialism is the real thing while Marxism is something terrible and appalling, something connected with class struggle and (horror of horrors) with revolution.

He says:

"Marx was a Jew and a disciple of Hegel. His intellect was of the massive order which conceives big systems... and which at the same time is capable of taking instant action on the passing incidents of the day... The German never thought of Utopian experiments... Moreover he had received from Hegel a conception of social evolution. He saw society as a whole... Institutions were historical products, not the benevolent, or malevolent, work of men's hands." (p. 207).

It is true: "He was not always consistent on this point, however, although it is this view which was embodied in his wider generalizations... Marx worked for immediate practical effects and he secured them. He sacrificed some of the intellectual accuracy of the Socialist case, but he made the Socialist movement." (p. 210).

Here you have Marx dressed up as a revisionist. But MacDonald is not contented with this, and he goes on, flippantly:

"I must emphasise what Marx actually did. He contributed nothing to Socialism as a theory except in the sense that a gardener selects, from a mass of herbage those plants which are to be used, cultivates them, improves their strain . . . This work is neither mean nor of a secondary value . . . He explained the mechanism of capitalism; he explained historical evolution." (p. 211). In a word, he did his job. But "the socialist movement will return to idealism, for, though sometimes an unrecognized power, idealism has always existed in Socialism" (p. 211).

MacDonald is simply enraged by the fact that Marx, even after his death, is moving millions of proletarians into the struggle for socialism, and with ill-concealed malice he writes:

"To day, Marx is known over as wide a world as Christ or Mohammed. He holds a position equal to any one of the few teachers who have founded religious movements. His writings, largely unread, are held as inspired, and upon differences of interpretation of what he has said or written, sects of the faithful are founded, and bitter internecine war is carried on. *(Socialism Critical and Constructive,* chapter "Organization and Idea," p. 48).

"But," says Mac reassuringly, "The validity of his economic theories is more than doubtful; his historical philosophy is in the same position." (p. 48).

Mac, the pigmy, cannot help curtesying before the genius of Marx, and he does him the "courtesy" of admitting that Marx was —

"the first to give the working classes a hope that, by adopting a certain policy, they would attain to freedom." (48).

Nevertheless, all these antics are performed by the capitalist flunkey merely in order to "overthrow" Marx, and he says:

"The economic criticism of Marx contained no new discoveries, ... if plagiarism consisted in saying what has been said by others, the unfounded accusation that Marx plagiarized on his English forerunners, would be true." (49).

Mac has thus "destroyed" Marx, although somehow this "event" has not been noted by history!

The Labor Party has grown up in the struggle against Marx. Louis Cazamian has quite properly noted this aspect of English laborism. Speaking about the origin of laborism, he says:

"Neither does the new party introduce into the political struggle that rigid discipline, or that unity, which is characteristic, for instance, of the German social-democracy. It remains, on the whole, alien to the class struggle; its members can comfortably attune their demands to their loyalty to the monarchist principle sanctified by the church, and to the interests of national defence." (Louis Cazamian, "Contemporary England").

Quite a wild mixture of all kinds of ideas—the principles of monarchism, the principles of democracy, the maudlin socialistic phraseology, and quite imperialist ideas! And all this hodgepodge is topped over by the philosophy of idealism which is taken by the laborites as the equivalent of socialism. Snowden, in his pamphlet, "20 objections to Socialism," flatly declares that the great mass of English socialists are connected with the church, and that there is nothing terrible in this. Snowden has a special pamphlet entitled "The Christ that is to be" in which he professes Christianity as the common law of "brotherly life." According to Snowden, Christ's teaching, expressed in his law of human brotherhood, is a natural law similar to those discovered by physics or chemistry. What distinguishes Christ from other world teachers is that his social teachings are more profound and comprehensive. In the course of history the Church fell a prey to cupidity and superstition and bolstered up the wealthy classes. This, claims Snowden, is self-evident for Socialists. But the true Christ can be accepted by believers and atheists alike. The laws he propounded are the laws of the future society embodied in acts of Parliament.

In all this theoretically barren mosaic there is a peculiar system of its own; it has its definite laws, its structure, and generally, it is by no means accidental. It is a system if only because it is linked and combined with the capitalist system, because it expresses these capitalist relations in a peculiar interpretation, because these forces of laborism constitute the agency of capitalism with the working class.

This circle of "theory" includes also questions of culture. On approaching the study of the question of the policy of the Labor Party in the sphere of culture, one is confronted with a number of peculiar difficulties. If we tried to do this in regard to Germany we would have at our disposal a great wealth of material. Pre-war social-democrats in Germany repeatedly discussed questions of culture, literature, and art. There is a whole number of press articles and pamphlets dealing with these questions. This is due to the fact that the best elements of the German social-democracy, at a certain stage, did voice the tendencies of the working class while waging a fight against capitalism along the entire front, including also the domain of culture. Such was not the case in England, where laborism was not out to destroy the framework of capitalist culture. Laborism did not fight against capitalism. Bourgeois culture was not considered by it as an enemy, as something to be wrecked, destroyed, overthrown. It did not aspire to establish its own system of culture in place of the capitalist culture,—oh no! the latter was the very breeding ground of reformism. Such being the attitude of laborism towards capitalist culture, there is naturally a scarcity of laborist pronouncements on cultural questions. English reformism has no use for such discussions. It is based on the repudiation of Marxism, on the repudiation of the theory of the proletariat, and on the worship of bourgeois culture. Even the German social-democracy in its prime contained defeatist leanings in the domain of culture. I have in mind Karl Kautsky's first book wherein he says that the business of the working class is to consume the culture provided by the bourgeoisie, that the proletariat cannot create its own culture, that it can only be a consumer in this respect. In fact, this position of the earlier Kautsky has been the position of the whole of English reformism.

While it is exceedingly difficult to ascertain the policy of the Labor Party in the domain of culture, it is even more difficult to ascertain the policy of laborism in regard to art and literature; for this question was not brought up at any conference of either the Labor Party, the Independent Labor Party, or the Trade Union Congress. There is not a single press article, not a single book or pamphlet, which deals with the Labor Party's policy in the domain of art and literature.

Nevertheless, we will try to deal with some of the questions relating to the policy of the English Labor Party in the domain of art and literature, relying on statements made by its "theoreticians" and in its press. We do not specially distinguish between the Labor Party and the ILP, because the latter forms part of the former, at times acting as its leading section, and at other times merging with the Labor Party on the whole.

The English trade unions, which are fully affiliated with the "Labor" Party, engage in cultural activity too. At the General Council there is an Educational Committee and a *Daily Herald* publishing committee. These questions are also taken up by the individual trade-unions. For instance, the Amalgamated Builders Society, established in 1831. In the Rules of this trade-union we find that "besides protecting the union rights and privileges of its members etc.," it is also one of its aims to raise the cultural level of its members and their general well-being. This Union finances the activity of the Central Labor College in London and takes active part in the administration of the College.

A characteristic feature of the English Labor Party is that it does not publish any serious theoretical literature. The publishing activity of the Labor Party is confined mainly to popular pamphlets.

The penny booklets published by the Labor Party and the ILP are of the lowest type of so-called popular writing which was sharply repudiated by Lenin on one occasion, when the *Iskra* was charged with not being "popularly" written. He said:

> "A popular newspaper! Each fact predigested, so that the readers could manage without any mental digestion. The trouble is that no such 'popular newspaper' really exists, for a newspaper has to deal with everything, whereas popular literature has perforce to deal with a limited range of subjects. . . . So far, all attempts at turning out such popular literature have proven futile."

It is precisely this kind of popular writing that constitutes practically the bulk of the literary output of the Labor Party. It is popular literature that does not serve as a stimulus to more serious reading. By giving superficial replies to the questions raised, such pamphlets do not stimulate discussion, but practically shelve the questions raised.

On art questions, some books were published by the Labor Party and the ILP. For instance, a volume of stories by Stacey Hyde, entitled *Shopmates*. The Scottish ILP publishes plays, verses, and stories by Joe Corrie whose last book was issued with a preface by MacDonald. Finally, there was published a book of poetry, entitled *Poems of Revolt*. (1924) All these books were written by reformists. The ILP and the Labor Party have a (relatively) large press. Since 1911 the *Daily Herald* appears, and it is characteristic that the capital shares of this newspaper have been bought up by capitalists, although since 1922 it is the official organ of the General Council of Trade Union and of the Labor Party.

Let us now turn to the activity of the English Labor Party in the realm of culture, art and literature. The basic platform of laborism on educational questions is the creation of a "free elementary, intermediate and higher school." This platform was adopted in 1902, and it implies a school that is "free" from politics. The laborites lay stress on their opposition to using the school as a means of class education. The laborite Greenwood, in *Labor Outlook* (London, 1923), writes that such a national school system should be set up as would serve the nation as a whole, without any class distinctions. He says, among other things:

"The educational ideal of the Labor Movement is the establishment of a national system of education based on the two elementary principles of complete social equality, and of differences of capacity and character. Labor conceives this national system of education as a single and continuous whole, planned from the nursery school to the University with the single object of making the most of the nation's most precious resources, the natural endowment and quality of its children." (p. 82).

This plea for a non-class education is the expression of the common platform of laborism, which denies class distinctions and the class struggle, for its function in this struggle is to strengthen capitalism against the revolution and preserve it intact.

MacDonald's writings are invariably directed against the Marxian doctrine of the class struggle. He never tires of urging, as against this so unpleasant side of Marxism, his own "democratism" which consists of bourgeois liberalism.

In *Socialism and Government* (v. I p. 33) he writes:

"Socialism could not be defined better then as that stage in social organization when the State organizes for society an adequate nutritive system; and democratic government is the signal that that change is taking place."

In *Syndicalism* he writes: "Socialism must be Parliamentary or nothing." (p. 8).

In the preface to his *Socialism, Critical and Constructive,* (1924) MacDonald outlines his own socialism which is the very opposite to the Marxian socialism. Capitalism has nothing to fear from this brand of socialism, especially in view of the fact that the Labor Party never intended to carry out its promises, being more concerned about promises than anything else. Let us hear what MacDonald has to say:

"The Socialist transforms by the well defined processes which a living social organization allows. He does not stop the life of society in order to try new experiments or to put a brand-new system into operation. The pledges he gives do not concern his achievements of the morrow, so much as the purpose which underlies and impregnates all his continuing action. He is an evolutionist *par excellence,* and even though he knows that the resistance of interests and log-like minds may defeat his methods at times, he remains an evolutionist because he is convinced that when revolutionary methods have done their work, the people whom reaction has victimized, by imposing a revolution upon them, will have to return to evolutionary transformation so soon as they have gained freedom. The revolutionary and materialistic frames of mind created by the war have been a serious menace to the socialist spirit of common service."

In his pamphlets bearing the curious titles of "Socialism for Women," "Socialism for Businessmen," and "Socialism for Beginners," MacDonald persistently denies the existence of a class struggle, and represents society as being made up of individuals.

The thesis about the "free" school, taken by itself, even apart from the fact in a bourgeois society there can be no freedom for the proletariat, so that there can be no "free" school, implies the advocacy of the bourgois school, the propaganda for a school to train the young workers in the spirit of capitalism. It is in this sense that we should consider the educational platform adopted by the ILP in 1902, to which are quite applicable the words of Lenin that the advocacy of a "free" school, of "keeping politics out of the school," is a lie and a sham. (Lenin in his speech at the 1st All-Russian Educational Conference). And 27 years later, in 1929, the English social-fascists came out with a platform of national education in connection with their victory in the General Election.

We know what became of this platform when the labourites took office and, at the bidding of the bourgeoisie, began to attack the living standard of the working class, lower wages, the unemployment relief, and so on. We know also what became of the promises made during the General Election of 1924. In the report on "Six Months of Labour Government" issued by the ILP the chapter on "Insurance and Education" turned out a blank space. All this is common knowledge. What is essential to point out is not only the discrepancy between word and action, but the fact that even in this most radical draft of the ILP educational program the basic position is the repudiation of class education, *i. e.,* a plea for the bourgeois school. For, we are told in this document that education means only cultivation of the mind and not the inculcation of certain views. Yes, even in this palpably demagogical program (and the social-fascists are quite clever jugglers in the art of gulling the working class), the real secret of the laborites' concern about popular education is given away: we are told by them quite plainly that by means of educational and other measures it is possible to divert the attention of the workers from questions of wages.

The social-fascist nature of the Labor Party's educational program is fully revealed in utterances made by one of its leading lights, the socialist minister Philip Snowden. The latter, like MacDonald, likes to indulge in dreams about the society of the future.

These day-dreams have their class background, and as we shall presently see, they lead also to the social-fascist notions on "esthetics." The real purpose is to denude socialism of its militant revolutionary content, to depict it as the cosy and harmonious millenium to arrive on earth peaceably and imperceptibly, as the result of slow and gradual evolution. The road to socialism, and the road of socialism, is the road of relentless struggle against capitalism and against its agency within the ranks of the proletariat. This is the reason for the "dreamings" of the MacDonalds and the Snowdens about a "socialism" that is quite undistinguishable from Liberalism. These dreamings are by no means harmless: *the social-fascist "utopia" is the mask of treachery and betrayal, a peculiar method of foisting the bourgeois ideology on the working class.*

Snowden deals with educational questions in a number of pamphlets. Let us begin with his pamphlet, "Educational Program of the Labor Government," which consists of articles written a year before the advent of the "Labor" government (1923). Snowden gives here an interpretation of the published educational program of the Labor Party. Snowden graciously promises that the "Labor" government will not forget about the problems of education, for on this depends the success of the new society. Nevertheless, Snowden deems it necessary to clear up a certain "misunderstanding," which, parenthetically, from the standpoint of Marxism, constitutes one of the basic principles of real socialism. This "misunderstanding" according to Snowden, is what Marx described as doing away with the contrast between mental and physical labor. Snowden in his program promises to strengthen this very contrast, making it the aim of education.

The process of fascization going on among the bourgeoisie has its repercussion also on its agency, social-fascism. In his book, *Labor and the New World,* Snowden expounds even more frankly Labor policy on educational questions:

"Nothing could be more disastrous than this attitude towards popular education on the part of the governing classes. The present industrial and social unrest is in a large measure a revolt against the exclusion of the masses from the best things in life and a resentment against the monopoly of culture, leisure and rational enjoyment by a minority who have obviously no special claims on the ground of social usefulness. To deliberately select expenditure upon education as the first effort at financial retrenchment is to provoke working class resentment. It is foolish, too, on the ground of national economy. An uneducated working class cannot be a physically or industrially efficient people. Pre-war experience of the success in international trade competition of countries like Germany, which had a better educated people, ought to have saved the British Government from committing the incredible folly of reducing the efficiency of our national education. The social and industrial problem in its final analysis is a question of education." (222)

Snowden's talk about capitalism entering into a new era, into the era of utilizing the latest scientific achievements, is connected with the general position of international social-fascism which maintains that capitalism has emerged victorious from the struggle against revolution and that a rationalized capitalism, relying upon the highest technical developments, still has a great historic future before it. This constitutes part of the theory of ultra-imperialism, of organized capitalism. Therefore, the whole of Snowden's talk about education for the working class has for its purpose to make the workers fit for capitalist rationalization of industry. Snowden speaks quite openly about the dangers of democracy and lays the theoretical foundation for the advent of a fascist dictatorship:

"...the nominal government of an ignorant democracy may be a greater danger to the State that even the despotism of an autocracy." *(Labor and the New World,* p. 224.)

Education, according to Snowden, is a new means for strengthening the ties between capital and labor, and for this he pleads as a matter advantageous to the capitalists themselves. Says Snowden:

"...it will always be necessary for a large proportion to be employed in industrial work. ... When every workman is trained to understand the science and mechanics of his trade or the scientific reason for every operation he performs, an intellectual interest will be given to his work." p. 230).

Snowden wants consequently to give the capitalists themselves control over education. The factory must employ a staff of highly trained teachers to superintend the workers' studies.

"This industrial training... must be organized upon a national plan with state supervision and state assistance, although the cooperation of the organised bodies of both the directors of industry and of the Trade Unions will be desirable and necessary . . . Industrial and technical training will aim rather at making the youth an all round mechanic or craftsman, one who is able to turn intelligently from one kind of work to another, rather than to train him as an expert in one narrow province." (p. 231).

This then is the upshot of Snowden's bombastic phraseology! The capitalists should turn their employees into better educated people, tying them closer to the industrial enterprises. Thus, *education is wholly and entirely linked to the capitalist machine as a whole. According to Snowden, the task of education is to train the workers into loyal servants of capitalism — a peculiar system of slave education for the working class under the guidance and control of the capitalists.*

The vague theory of the "free" school propounded by the ILP in 1902, the high-faluting election program of 1924, are fully exposed in the writings of Snowden. The development of opportunism into social-chauvinism, and of social-chauvinism into social-fascism, is fully revealed by the evolution of the cultural "program" of the Labor Party and of the ILP. Its last word is the turning of education into a link in the chain of capitalist rationalization.

Such being the case, there would seem to be no need whatever for any educational organization exclusively for the working class, since, according to the laborites, full educational facilities for the workers are given by the bourgeois state and the capitalists. Nevertheless, in practice, the laborites occasionally depart from these principles, although such "departures" only confirm the validity of the principles. The reference is to the system of workers' education set up by the Labor Party and the Trade Unions, to the so-called Labor Colleges. The practice of these labor colleges throws light on the policy of the Labor Party and the ILP in regard to education.

The first of these was the Ruskin College, established at Oxford in 1899 on money donated by two American capitalists.

The teaching of philosophy, political economy, and sociology was contemplated apart from any definite system of views, a preposterous idea that is conceivable only in the light of the general principles of laborism. Thus, the Ruskin College at Oxford was the realization of the theory of the "free shool" that holds aloof of the class struggle. The Rector of the college, Prof. Slater, as was to be expected, fully accepted this program of non-class tuition, and banished Marxism entirely from his curriculum. Thus, the first labor college was totally deprived of the militant philosophy of the working class. The banishing of philosophy "generally" took quite concretely the shape of banishing Marxism in particular. And this situation was calmly contemplated by the ILP, by the Labor Party and the Trade Unions. A revolt broke out within the walls of Ruskin College in 1909 against this musty type of "classic" educational establishment. This was, on one hand, a revolt against abstract teaching, against scholastics divorced from reality, a revolt in favour of adapting the labor colleges to the tasks of reformism, as this system of teaching did not afford facilities for the training of a well-informed body of efficient trade-union officials. On the other hand, it was also a revolt of a certain section of honest young proletarians who had enrolled in the Ruskin College. The upshot of the revolt was the formation of the Central Labor College in London, which, according to its founders—the South Wales Miners Federation and the National Union of Railwaymen — was to prepare trade unionists for participation in political and economic life by means of teaching them the science of society.

Outwardly, the position is clearly stated in the first manifesto of the college: education for the workers, in the interest of the workers. Nevertheless, it should be noted that from this very Central Labor College came the League of Guild Socialism, a variety of social-opportunism and social-fascism, that in the same college was formed the Plebs League which endeavoured to assimilate Marxism and to adapt it to separate branches of theory, notably, to psychology, logic, etc. but subsequently, after the ousting of the communists from the Labor Party, took up the cudgels against communism. In 1927 was formed the National Council of Labor Colleges. The latter body was radically inclined and played a definite positive role as long as it included English communists, who subsequently were expelled.

The fascization of laborism, its transformation into one of the factions of fascism, has resulted in a surrender of even the positive gains made by the working class in the struggle against its leadership, and the Central Labor College has become a school for the training of reactionary officials. At the present time there is a wide net work of these labor colleges throughout England. In 1924 there were 303 labor colleges and courses with a total 11,000 students. In 1926 they had already about 30,000 students.

Yet, this growth by no means implies that the working class of England is getting in these colleges a genuine proletarian education. No doubt, the students themselves endeavour in some way to obtain this class education. Thus, one of the students of a local labor college published a letter in 1927 in the Soviet journal "Red Student," in which he described the enthusiasm with which the worker-students are striving to obtain an education in the interest of the working class. But the proletarian students fall into opportunistic hands, for the labor colleges are schools for the training of new opportunistic forces. Even the National Council of Labor Colleges, a body that can by no means be suspected of revolutionary sentiment, was constrained to admit, in its report to the Hull Conference, that the subsidies given by the state and by the capitalists are really a bribe for the betrayal of the interests of the working class.

Thus, under this system of cooperation between reformism and the capitalist state, on the money furnished by the capitalist state, with its backing, and under its control, schools are formed for the training of theoreticians and practicians of social-fascism, of a "bourgeois working class." As against this system of labor colleges, the Communist Party advocates its own system of labor education.

This handling of the school question is part of the general cultural policy of laborism. Denying the class struggle, denying the proletarian revolution, acting as the agency of the bourgeoisie within the working class, laborism naturally does not hold the Marxian position on cultural questions. It teaches the proletariat to ape bourgeois culture. Combatting the militant philosophy of the proletariat, the laborites transform the cause of popular education into the cause of inculcating bourgois ideas into the minds of the workers, thus complying with the tasks set to opportunism by the bourgeoisie on the road of fascization.

"I am in the twentieth century and my head in the twenty first century. A man is not his full stature unless his feet are in one century and his head in the next." *(The Man of To-morrow* by Iconoclast).

What bombastic words! What majestic grandeur is conveyed by them! And who, do you think, is the hero, the "man of to-morrow" that is so worshipped by his humble biographer? *(The Man of Tomorrow,* by Iconoclast, London 1924). None other before Ramsey MacDonald! It is he who, while cringing before capitalism, imagines himself to be a titanic personality belonging to a future century. It is the old beast Mac, the greatest specialist in gulling the working class, the head of the Labor Party, its brains, its leader and theoretician. If treachery means greatness, there is no greater man than MacDonald. MacDonald is "great," for he declares Marx a plagiarist.

MacDonald's "socialism" is bereft of the class struggle, it is snug and comfortable, like Mister MacDonald himself who accompanies the king to church, dressed in clownish court attire. Do you want to know what "real," "genuine," hundred per cent socialism is? Turn to the pages of *Socialism, Critical and Constructive* by J. R. MacDonald. Therein you will learn that "socialism is not of class origin."

MacDonald obligingly extends his definitions of socialism, so that any liberal might fully accept his "socialism" that is bereft even of the faintest shadow of genuine socialism.

> "Socialism is the creed of those who, recognizing that the community exists for the improvement of the individual and for the maintenance of liberty, and that the control of the economic circumstances of life means the control of life itself seek to build up a social organization which will include in its activities the management of those economic instruments such as land and industrial capital that cannot be left safely in the hands of individuals... The land will therefore belong to the state in one or other if not several forms, and rent will be state income. The great factory industries will be controlled by associations of consumers which again will be identical within the state in some or other of its aspects . . . " *(Socialism and Government,* p. 119).

You see how "comfortable" MacDonald's "socialism" is, how complacent. MacDonald is so free of correct ideas about scientific socialism that he hurries to take out a patent on his own brand of "genuine socialism." One hears his haughty cock's crowing, announcing to the world this great discovery, that he, Mac, is marching forward, while the communists are going backwards, because they follow the teachings of Marx. MacDonald's litle book bearing the sympathic title of *Socialism for Businessmen* is just full of such cock's crowing self-praise. He writes:

> "People say that socialism has never been known in history. If it had been known, I would be against it. I am not going backwards; our Communist friends are going back. The reason why they believe in revolution is that they are still living in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries."

MacDonald, however, is no simpleton. He plays the hypocrite and indulges in bombastic phraseology about the workers' interests; he has to pose as the champion of the workers' interests; for this is the indispensable condition for the successful gulling of the workers. Lenin wrote in 1915, in an article entitled, "The Collapse of the Platonic International":

> "The 'social-nationalists' do not care to designate and confess themselves as social-nationalists. Nolens-volens, they bend all their efforts to devise a pseudonymic guise, to throw dust in the eyes of the workers, in order to cover up the traces of their collusion with opportunism, in order to conceal their treachery, *i. e.*, their actual going over to the side of the bourgeoisie, their alliance with the governments and the general staffs of the capitalist armies.'

The opportunists are brave in words, and traitors in deeds, says Lenin in an article entitled, 'Social-Chauvinist Sophistry" (May, 1915). These words are fully applicable to MacDonald, too, although even in words, this "man of to-morrow" was brave only in the past; for social-fascism is beginning to "stutter" more and more, revealing more and more clearly to the broad masses its intimate ties with capitalism.

Who is going to bring about this socialism of MacDonald? No, not the working class, but mankind in general.

The man who adheres to his class is of no use to socialism, so MacDonald believes. Essential is "man in general" (whatever his class allegiance, providing that he be properly educated). Therefore, MacDonald sees no gulf between the proletariat and the capitalists. Capitalists may be educated," and the "better" side of their nature aroused in them.

> "I don't like the phrase 'The destruction of Capitalism,' because I don't believe in the destruction of anything. I belive in the good Bible text, 'I did not come to destroy, I came to fulfil.' Capitalism is now ready for a new fulfilment, and that fulfilment is this new organization—Socialism."

"That is Socialism. It is an application of mutual aid to politics and economics. And the Socialist end is liberty, the liberty of which Kant thought when he proclaimed that every man should be regarded as an end in himself and not as a means to another man's end... Round this conception of the State and community, of mutual aid and of social evolution, may interests cluster. It is like a city towards which roads run from all points of the compass—a pilgrim's way for the devout, a trade route for the merchant, a bridle path for the philosopher; and so we have many aspects of Socialism." *(Socialist Movement*, p. XI).

"The method of Socialism under democracy can never be cataclysmic, because changed opinions and outlooks will have a steady and uninterrupted influence on administration and legislation... Old conditions will be harmlessly transformed."

"Revolution can never bring Socialism. Socialists do not attack individuals. When they criticise capitalism or commercialism they do not condemn capitalists or business men. On the contrary,—they consider that the capitalist is as much the victim of his system as the unemployed and that he has to conform to its evil pressure in the same way as the poverty stricken have to do so."

To sum up, the task is to bring about socialism "gently and imperceptibly, without disturbing one's sleep," as an old laxative patent medicine used to be advertised.

The transformation of social-fascism into one of the factions of fascism, its alliance with the whole apparatus of the bourgeois state, the advent of a labor government, the lessons of the strike of 1926 which demonstrated the power of the working masses, the growth of the revolutionary movement in the West, especially in England, the intensification of the world's economic crisis, which has hit England with particular force, the huge successes of socialist construction in USSR,—all this has divested MacDonald of the last vestiges of radical phraseology, and our "man of to-morrow" has openly and deliberately gone over to the side of the bourgeoisie, which is heading for fascism. The "secret" has been so flagrantly divulged that even Henderson was constrained to pose as being in opposition to the MacDonald government. Henderson's opposition is merely playing an assigned role in the effort to save social-fascism and MacDonald. Lenin, in an article entitled "German Opportunism and the War," (May—June, 1915) gave an exhaustive formula anent the limits of the game of "opposition" played by the social-fascists:

> "The liberal bourgeois (and their agents in the labor movement, *i. e.*, the opportunists), in order to influence the workers and the masses in general, are prepared to sign any pledges except revolutionary actions against their government; anything to avert "national defeat." In fact, speaking in mathematical terms, this quantity of ideology is just necessary and adequate to gull the masses; they cannot be offered any less, because it is impossible to get the masses to follow without promising them a just peace, without scaring them with the menace of invasion, without swearing fealty to internationalism; no need to talk to the masses about the larger issues, such as the grabbing of colonies, the annexation of foreign territories, the plundering of vanquished countries, the enforcing of advantageous trading treaties, etc., Such things will not be effected directly by the liberal bourgeoisie, but by the imperialist-militarist, military-governing clique after the war."

MacDonald's utterances and his literary creations (in Labor Party circles they take pride in the fact that Mac writes beautifully, that he is a literary artist, so to speak) are most closely united with his philosophic conceptions and political theories. The politician, artist, "philosopher," and publicist, are merged into one personality that proves unbearable even to some of the bourgeois scholars who wrote about MacDonald.

Demagogy is indispensable to social-opportunism; it cannot do without the mask of pro-labor phraseology; it simply has to stun the worker by high-sounding phrases, to make him believe that the social-opportunists, the social-chauvinists, and latterly, the social-fascists "represent" the interests of labor. Analysing the situation in Europe in the summer of 1915, Lenin pointed out that the purpose of the opportunist tactics is to divert the attention of the proletariat from the crisis, to sidetrack the workers from revolutionary action by a whole system of social demagogy and "revolutionary phrases." In an article entitled "The State of Affairs in the Russian Social Democracy" he writes:

> "Objectively, the situation in Europe is such that there is growing among the masses great disappointment, discontent, protest, indignation, revolutionary sentiment, which may at a certain stage of development turn quite quickly into action. Such is practically the situation today, and the choice has to be made: either to foster and help the growth and development of revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie and its government, or to check, stulpify, and lull the revolutionary sentiment. In order to attain the second aim, the liberal bourgeoisie and the opportunists will go to any length (as indeed they are bound to do, from the point of view of their own interests) indulging in leftist phraseology, promising disarmament, peace, no annexation, reforms of every kind, anything you like, only to prevent a rupture between the masses and their opportunistic leaders and their taking up more and more serious revolutionary actions...
>
> "Put no faith in any high-sounding programs, this is what we say to the masses. Rely upon your own revolutionary mass actions against your government and your bourgeoisie; endeavour to develop such actions: outside of the civil war for socialism there is no salvation from savagery, no possibility of progress in Europe."

We have already seen how MacDonald resorts to social demagogy in the sphere of politics, how fond he is of lamenting over the misery of the working masses, over chaotic conditions which exist under capitalism, his plea for "equality," and so forth. To the same methods he resorts in his utterances on cultural problems. In his book *The Socialist Movement* (1911—1924) he asserts that capitalism hinders the flourishing of art, which withers and fades away in the bourgeois society. Why so? Because, forsooth, this society, the same as Marxism, is materialistic, whereas art is idealistic by its very nature . . . Now you have it! Mac's "crusade" against capitalism is really one against Marxism. Marxism is to blame for the stifling of art by capitalism! At the same time Mac appeals to the bourgeois society to take up the organization of art and culture, to extend its sphere of influence on life.

Thus, according to Mac, the bourgeoisie can produce the idealistic art sponsored by MacDonald, under the benevolent wing of the capitalist state. Thus, while "assailing" capitalism Mac, in the same breath implores the capitalist state to take culture under its patronage.

In a letter to Gorky dated February 13, 1908, Lenin points out the connection between opportunism and the philosophy of Kant:

> "It is altogether wrong to deduct such dead philistinism from the materialism that was taught by Marx and Engels. All the philistine tendencies in social-democracy are most of all opposed to philosophic materialism and in favour of Kant, neo-Kantism, and critical philosophy. No, the philosophy laid down by Engels in "Anti-Düring" grants no admission to philistinism." (Lenin Collection, Vol. I).

Socialist art is that art which equips the working class for the class struggle, which supplies the weapons for the overthrowing of capitalism throughout the world. Socialist art, according to Mac, is a humble and modest thing devoid of militant and aggressive content. MacDonald is fond of talking at great length on art under socialism, dreaming about an art that is gentle and non-aggressive. The secret of this "gentility" is quite simple.

All his pet theories on art — art as beauty, art as idealism, etc. — perform a definite social function and reflect a definite class standpoint. Their sense is revealed when MacDonald writes on concrete art questions or when he indulges himself in literary art. Let us turn to the Preface he wrote to Joe Corrie's *The Road the Fiddler Went* (Glasgow 1930). According to McDonald, only that art is worthy of the name which does not excite or agitate. The aimy art is not to paint life but reveal beauty.

Joe Corrie deals in a number of his works with social contrast problems; yet this does not prevent him from being a reformist. Yet even this feeble protest raised by Corrie against the crude realities of the system arouses the apprehension of MacDonald, who fears that art has everything to lose by turning to the realities of life, who asserts that Corrie would be a better artist if he refrained from depicting the seemy side of life.

These theories of MacDonald are by no means accidental, being linked to the whole philosophy of opportunism and social-fascism. In fact, "idealistic art" is the art of varnishing the capitalist system, the art method of opportunism, the theory of masking reality in order to protect capitalism from the blows of proletarian revolution.

Another exponent of this pet art theory of Mac is James Walsh, M.P., a former miner and now a leading labor politician. He contributed a preface to a book of stories by Stacey Hyde that was published by the Labor Party *(Shopmates*, 1924), in which he outlines his views on art and esthetics; the working class must create a literature of its own, — he says, — "that is expressive of the everyday lives of these engaged in the industrial activities of the world." This is very daring! But what is the real meaning of this literature? To help each man and woman to be patient, answers Welsh:

"No doubt we are all very amateurish as yet in the handling of the tools of the craft; but there is no doubt as to the great mass of people; they have discovered a new world, in that education has given them power. The imagination is stimulated by the discovery of this new world, just as a great creative effort followed the discovery of the New World by Columbus. And the renaissance, the rebirth, is taking place to day — in pain and suffering after the crash of the Great War; and though as yet the pens of those who are writing are perhaps inclined to depict the somber side of life, it is a live, strong and vivid picture that they paint — a picture that is true, and one that carries conviction.

"There are ideals, too, to steady the impulse, ideals that inspire and guide. Therein lies the sure hope of the future. Men and women who have glimpsed beauty and are nauseated by the ugliness and the poverty of life as it is lived to day. There is a conscious reaching out for a fuller life which cannot be denied. The music of the laughter of happy children, the beauty of contented womanhood, the strength and security which honest manhood gives to the State, constitute the driving force. Those of us who have only glimpsed it can never hope to see it realized; but the trail is being blazed for the hosts who will come behind, and the music of that laughter will be the inspiration always of men like Mr. Hyde."

Such is the social-fascist program in the sphere of art: idealism in art, embellishment of real life. It must be borne in mind that the "idealism" of the social-fascists is really the idealization of the capitalist system, and therein lies the root of this plea for the idealistic method in art.

This plea for idealism is generally characteristic of international opportunism as a whole. It is a specious kind of "idealism" that is closely akin to the hypocritical piety of the unscrupulous business-man who uses the cloak of idealism to conceal his real, unattractive nature.

MacDonald as an artist may serve as a telling example of the class role of this social-fascist "idealism." For MacDonald remains true to his "theory" in his own writings. He is not averse to lyricism, he likes to describe the beauties of nature, grudging none of the faded colors on his palette.

The "idealism" of our hero is fully revealed in his *Awakening of India* (London 1910), the book which preceeded his postwar "esthetical" essays and which may serve as a practical illustration of his "esthetical" theories.

Before MacDonald's journey to India, a trip was made to India in 1907 by another exponent of English opportunism, the late Keir Hardie, whose book on India created a big stir. MacDonald went to India in the company of Mr. Nevinson on behalf of the "Labor Party," so that his book may be considered as a semi-official statement of the policy of the Labor Party on colonial questions generally and on India in particular. This fact should lend particular interest to the book in question.

In this book MacDonald tries to show fine literary style, slavishly imitating the manner and language of Oscar Wilde, choosing especially "elegant" similes, in order to display his "idealism."

Here are a few examples:

> "To the east a tawny band of light spans the horizon; overhead the pale, pure crescent of an old moon lies like a piece of delicate jewellery on dark blue velvet; behind to the west the stars are still shining." (62).
>
> "The waning moon lay on the black sky like a chaste piece of fine jewellery." (p. 17).
>
> "The railway stops far out from the confines of Udaipur as an unclean thing stops at the threshold of a temple . . . " (p. 27).

This "spirit of the East" rises again and again from the pages of his book. MacDonald is not averse to displaying this thin layer of mysticism and romantics; for he is a representative of the white race, a representative of Great Britain, and it behooves him to resort to this "mysticism" in order to conceal the real meaning of the phenomena observed. Here is another characteristic quotation:

> "We walk in the cool morning miles and miles, round and round the deck; we return in the evening to the same violent exercise. But the spell has hold of us. At night the moon throws on the water its silvery highway out into the infinite; the stars in the deep, transparent space of the heavens are beacon lights which seem to shine as points in the eternal vastness — little points which are footholds for the imagination journeying through the illimitable; and during the day the cruel glitter of the sun, the subdued energy of the sea, the stifling heat of the air, combine to oppress us into a subjection of being, an acquiscence in the decrees of the power that created us and of which we are the playthings...
>
> "But upon all falls the languor of the tropics, upon all comes the spirit of the East, the insensibility to Time..."

Having thus been brought into a receptive mood for the "spirit of the East," he begins to describe his experiences. The bard of opportunism waxes enthusiastic and pathetic, eloquent and bombastic. Here is a portrait of an Anglo-Indian official as drawn by his "idealistic hand":

> "...walking with dignified helmet on his head and impressive cane in his hand — grave, upright, supermanly in aspect and demeanour.
>
> "A stranger from Mars dropped on the top of this hill would certainly inquire: "Who are these kings? From what other world do they come?" And he would put his questions in sober seriousness. For the Indian official looks the part he has chosen for himself. Indeed, he is as near the perfect official whose type is to be found in heaven, as any whom I have sen."

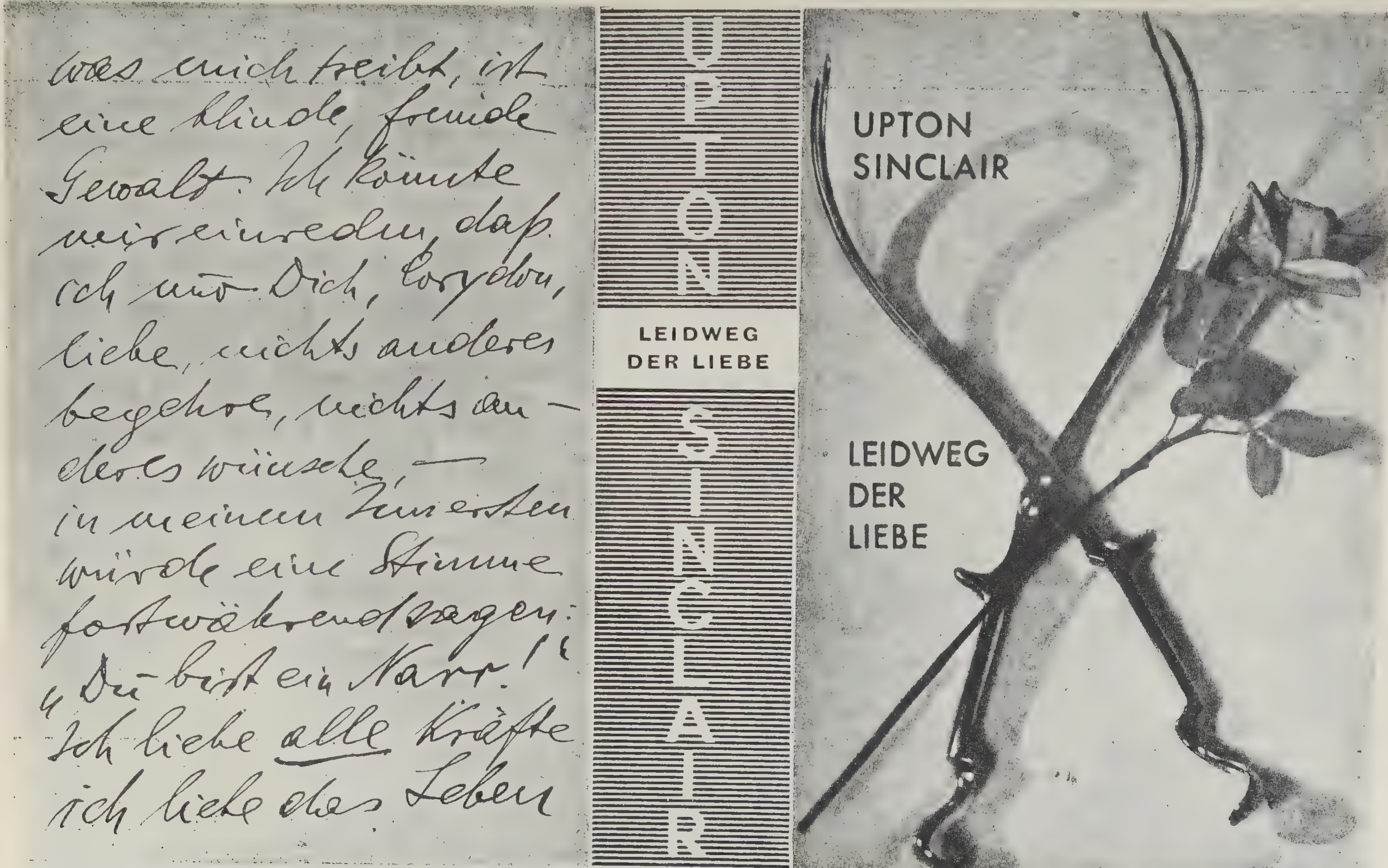
MacDonald does his job well. He idealizes the representatives of imperialism, and the imperialist system of Great Britain. And this method of idealism is a good one of MacDonald, for it allows him to picture the system of British colonization as something divine and unusually majestic.

In MacDonald's book there is no imperialist Britain, no monstrous system of slavery for the hundreds of millions of the Indian population. This would contradict the "idealistic" method, this would not tally with the conception of art as "harmony and order." He pursues a different purpose: he wants to show us imperialism without its claws, its monstrous features disguised and masked. One cannot help quoting one more passage from his book, in which he extols imperialist colonization with brutal arrogance:

> "Taken individually, the Indian official has more than the average amount of virtue. He is sensitive and introspective, for he suffers from fever and exile, and so his very virtues become a burden to him. He is honest, he worships efficiency, he is sensible of his high calling to rule equitably. He does his best in these respects, and he never spares himself in the doing of it. But his path is through a jungle infested by troublesome beasts of prey. There is a House of Commons on the one hand, there are educated, agitating natives on the other. Pursuing his way

The cover of the German edition of Upton Sinclair's "The Millennium"

Mounting — John Hartfield



The bover of Upton Sinklairs "Loves Filgrimage"—John Hartfield alone, as he has so often to do, through this weary land his mind never shifts from his work, his thoughts never turn from his honesty. He takes few holidays, for he spends his cold weather in his district, and with the hot weather comes that maddest of all the mad doings of the English and India—the emigration of the chiefs of Governments to some hill station — and he goes up to meet the rest of the headmen of his cast and burn incense with them in their departmental temples, to attend religious dances, dinner, and receptions at the Viceregal abode,and to purify himself by writing reports and compiling statistics. This goes on for years without a break, except when he is in bed with fever, or when he runs home in a hurry with a broken-down wife or a child ready for exile. His Government pays handsomely for a daily supply to him of home news which is both prejudiced and innacurate, and appears to be designed to upset his nerves; and if his Goverment does not do him that service his newspapers will do for a copper a few hours later. Thus fate is hard on him. "He feels that prestige is the bulwark of his rule. We do not rule India by the sword, but by our prestige." (p. 33).

To be sure, the book is not made up entirely of this "idealistic" admiration of British imperialism. Social-opportunism of the early 20th century, when the book was published, just as during the war and post-war period, invariably tried to disguise before the masses its support of the policies of imperialism, resorting to "revolutionary" phraseology and posing as the defenders of the interests of the working class. MacDonald is not Kipling. The latter could afford to gloat cynically over the brutalities of English officers in India, relishing all scenes of Indian massacres. MacDonald at that time was as yet doing his service as the agent of imperialism by different methods. In this book he mildly criticizes the Indian administration now and then, he even finds some "contrasts" in India.

Thus, he criticizes the system established by the viceroy Curzon. Let us not forget, however, that similar criticisms about Lord Curzon were made by Liberals, and MacDonald does not go beyond that. His extreme "daring" can be seen from the following contrasts

"A tour in India is a study in violent contrasts. Ruler and subject, riches and poverty, jewels and nakedness, fatness and leanness, exist cheek by jowl in this wonderful land, and there is little transitional shading to soften the line separating one from the other. They parade arm-in-arm before you. Each is absolute. It is as though the sun suddenly shot up from below the horizon to the zenith in a moment and blazed upon you, dazzling beams, and then the next shot down into night, leaving you in bewildering murky darkness. The darkness, however, sometimes appears to be everlasting. For days and days one goes through the land and sees nothing but thin bodies toiling, toiling, toiling, trudging, trudging, trudging; or pinched bodies worshipping, worshipping, worshipping with a sadness that one sees in no other temples. India is the home of the poverty stricken. And this was borne in upon me all the more that its poverty was embodied in forms of the most perfect human grace. The woman coming from the well with her pitcher on her head; the mother with her baby astraddle across her thigh; the cultivator behind his plough and oxen; the men walking on the road, in pose and demeanour are as perfect as if they were the models of the best Greek sculptors." (p. 140).

He complains about the lack of educational facilities for the Indian people:

"The demand for wider education exists but the obstacles are twofold. The first is the expense. Our Government can spend over 20 millions per annum on the army, but only two millions out of public funds on education. This difficulty applies to education, both for boys and girls — namely the difficulty of getting women teachers." (p. 93).

MacDonald reveals the imperialist nature of his solicitude for Indian intellectuals.

"That is so. A subtle educated class, a credulous mass: that is India. The educated Indian is the natural cooperator with the administration, and woe betide us if we fail to accept the situation which we ourselves created (p. 122).

MacDonald is anxious to retain British rule in India; he is a loyal subject of "his majesty" and does not mean to advocate the secession of India from the Empire. The limit of his political daring is the advocacy of home rule for India.

Even this concession is dictated by fear. MacDonald, like a keen tradesman, will sacrifice a trifle, so as not to let slip a better bargain. As the representative of the labor aristocracy, he knows the real basis of England's might, he understands that the colonies are the reservoir of her wealth. It is characteristic that even MacDonald recognizes the need for changes in India. The closing lines of the book are filled with anxiety for the future. On leaving India, the future Premier, in great alarm, beholds the spectre of the coming revolution:

"I came away full of presentiments such as possess one to whom a glimpse of some great coming event has been given. That last day in Calcutta continues to haunt me. It was a peep behind the veil. As I drove back through the crowds to my place I saw the pageantry of India, its gilded past, its patient peasant toiling till the sun goes down, its newly educated sons, subtle, resentful, proud, cherishing memories and hopes in their hearts. The smoke clouds of Bombay, the bustle of Calcutta, the ruined cities of the Ganges plains, the crowded temples and ghats of Benares, passed through my mind. Simla with its vanities, both of force and frivolity, the good men of my own people who strive to do righteously, the mistaken men who walk in the darkness which will never lift from their honest minds, came up too. And it seemed to me as though the procession of the old, of India herself were to last through the ages, whilst our dominion was to pass as the shuttle through the warp, as a lightning flash from cloud to earth. How new-inspiring this land and its people are! How temporary appear our dwelling places in it! Even our best deeds, are they of the stuff that abides? Our good government, a revolution could bury it in its own dusty ruins. Our material gains—a spiritual revival could shrivel them up as the sun parches the grass on the plains. Are the pursuits we have taught India to follow anything but a luring shadow? Is the wealth we are telling her to seek to be anything but dust and ashes? Is the industrial India I saw arising, begrimed and strenuous, to last and to overshadow the India one sees at the bathing ghats of Benares or feels in the oriental library at Bankipur? The long years alone can disclose these secrets. The riddle is troublesome." (p. 310).

Such is the practice of "idealism": defence of imperialism, embellishment of colonization, arrogant idealization of national oppression, MacDonald's creative sallies as an "idealist" closely resemble his policies as the prime-minister which caused some caustic comment on the part of Prof. Bardoux, of the League of Nations, as the representative of French imperialism. Anent the MacDonald-Mussolini pact, Prof. Bardoux writes:

"Is it right for the prime-minister, who personifies the idealistic aspirations and the international mission of the working class — with a view to diplomatic success and courtesy — to identify himself with a man and a regime which in its own country has smashed the socialists, and which would not shrink from any military adventure on the outside? He, the pacifist, who in August, 1914, staked his entire political carreer on the ground of some subtle moral considerations, was he not reminded of his sense of duty?

"But," continues Bardoux, "he was actuated here by the desire to remain in office as long as possible... *Idealistic socialism* is too human in its origin to withstand the ministerial atmosphere... It soon fades... The cabinet needs success." (Bardoux, *Socialism in Power*, Paris, 1930).

The art sketches of MacDonald are part of his "philosophy" in the policy of international opportunism; art and politics are united here on the basis of sheer hypocrisy; it is a unity whose substance is treachery, and whose form is bombastic "revolutionary," "idealistic" phraseology.

None other than Vanderwelde showed himself a worthy successor to MacDonald, 20 years later by publishing in 1931 his book *On the Chinese Revolution.*

MacDonald may feel proud of being the leader of a host of opportunistic and social-fascist artists who staunchly adhere to the "trinity" of social-opportunism and social-fascism: repudiation of the class struggle, struggle against the proletarian revolution, and alliance with the bourgeoisie.

E. Elistratova

The Work of Harold Heslop

The English proletariat has not yet created an independent class literature of its own. Opportunism has long held sway in the English working class movement; the upper strata of the workers, thanks to their share in the super profits derived from the colonies, have constituted an aristocracy of labor. These factors have strengthened the hold of bourgeois cultural traditions on the proletariat which has as a consequence been unable to work out an independent class outlook and an art of its own. English writers of working class origin continue the traditions of English bourgeois literature. A number of English writers of working class stock who were congratulating themselves quite recently on being the spokesmen of the English working class in the field of literature (James Welsh for example) have proved active supporters of social fascism, literary agents of the fascists in the workers' movement.

"Working class" themes, so dear to James Welsh, Patrick McGill, Ethel Carney Holdsworth and others serve only as an insidious mask, as a forged passport into proletarian literature, a passport which, in spite of its spuriousness has up till now been taken by many people quite seriously.

Alongside of these definitely social-fascist writers, representing the upper few of the labor aristocracy, we find a number of other English writers who represent those unclassconscious masses who until quite recently were and to a certain extent still are, under the ideological influence of reformism. It is to the latter group of writers that Harold Heslop belongs.

Harold Heslop is the only English writer of working class origin who has openly associated himself with the platform of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers. He is the only writer that has had the courage publicly to acknowledge and criticize his former errors. This gives Heslop's work a particular interest for us. It is for this reason that our criticism of his work differs basically from our criticism of pseudo-proletarian writers. In analyzing the work of the latter we aim at disclosing their true political role, at showing that they are hostile to our class and at counteracting their influence on working class readers. Our criticism of Heslop, however, is inspired by friendly motives. We aim at helping him to develop into a genuine proletarian artist. This he can do only by acquiring in its fullness the world outlook of the revolutionary working class.

Heslop comes of a long line of coal miners, and himself worked underground for 11 years. In 1925 he was sent by the local branch of his trade union to study in the London Labor College. His first novel did not find a publisher in England but was translated into Russian under the title of *Under the Sway of Coal.*

This novel deals with the working class movement, a most responsible subject and one that serves as the best test of the political maturity of the worker writer. Heslop' treatment of this theme shows, however, that at this stage in his literary career he was completely under the influence of reformist ideas.

In this book Heslop regards the workers' movement from a purely esthetic point of view. It is for him the one bright feature of an English provincial town, and stands out in bold contrast to the drabness of the latter. A workers' demonstration in the coal district, for instance, is described as a happy crowd the sight of which warms the heart of the labor leaders who delight in the wealth of color invading the town. Class contradictions are regarded as contradictions between the proletariat and the processes of production. The workers have to contend with unyielding coal seams, and it is the mines that are their undoing. As the title of the book suggests, they are under the sway not of capitalist exploitation but of coal.

One of the figures representing the working class movement in this novel is that of Will Watson, an M.P. and an old trade union leader who looks upon Parliament as the alpha and omega of political life and whose great revolutionary daring is shown by his being a pacifist during the war. Another is Tom Drury the "communist" who finds no difficulty in renouncing his "communism" at a time when the struggle is on the rise, trying though unsuccessfully, to persuade the workers to refrain from active outbreaks.

In contrast to these leaders, shown always in a romantic light, Heslop sets the rank and file of the workers' movement. The conflict underlying the novel ends in tragedy. We have here the "eternal problem" of petty bourgeois literature, the problem of the leader and the masses. It is precisely Heslop's treatment of this problem that betrays his opportunism. The masses are treated either as a purely passive tool in the hands of the leader or else as a blind uncoordinated destructive force. The author does not spare disparaging epithets in describing the "revolt" of the miners.

Opposed to the blind half animal crowd stands the leader Tom Drury, misunderstood and rejected. The latter is steeped in Ibsen and one sees in him the "spiritual brother of Marx." Heslop recreated in Drury the romantic lonely soul of the Ibsen type.

True to the traditions of the petty bourgeois novel, Heslop depicts the social only through the prism of the personal. In his first novel he finds the solution of all social ills in retreat into personal life and in the consolations of petty bourgeois "family happiness." Drury loses the confidence of his comrades, the workers, and is removed from his post as secretary of the local trade union branch and turns for consolation to his "personal life."

In his second novel *The Gate of a Strange Field* (1929) Heslop is still under the influence of this sentimental individualism. He drags into this book the British General Strike of 1926, which possesses such great social importance. In Heslop's hands the strike becomes a background against which are depicted the varying fortunes of his heroes. The workers' movement in so far as it is dealt with at all in Heslop's novel, is not considered as an organic whole, but rather as a mass of uncoordinated details. Heslop deals with local risings and various independent strikes as happenings divorced from the struggle for the collective interests of the working class.

The workers' movement is represented as something chaotic and unorganized, even incapable of being organized and subject to no objective laws. Events unfold themselves quite arbitrarily through the persons of the characters. Thus, for example, according to Heslop, the coal miners during the general strike watched what was going on in front of them like people sitting on the gallary of a theatre watch what is taking place on the stage.

This attitude of an onlooker is characteristic of Heslop's outlook. His outlook on the world is not active or practical but rather meditative. His characters are mere pawns with which fate plays at its own sweet will. To Joe Tarrant at the moment when his relations with Molly have become most entangled "the whole situation appeared to be forced by other hands. They both appeared to be like pieces of rubbish floating down the Tyne and meeting the oncoming tide, bobbing about aimlessly. The longer he meditated upon the matter the more hopeless the tangle seemed to become." (P. 88.)

This meditative attitude, this passivity leads to a kind of fatalism, the characteristic sign of those petty bourgeois influences which so often appear in Heslop's work. The caprice of fate comes in for much attention in his novels. A typical example is the accident in the mine with which *The Gate of A Strange Field* ends, sweeping aside a multitude of unsolved personal problems.

Heslop's political insight in his second novel is of rather poor caliber. Compared with his first work this book's only merit is its criticism of the social fascism of the T. U. leaders. Heslop exposes the opportunist trade union organizations and proves that they are really hostile to the proletariat.—

"Joe lived a full life. It was full of masquerades. The Executive presented itself to him as a man of pretension, nothing more and nothing less. He had often heard of the old-fashioned trade union leaders, and they were squirming about him. They shrivelled his conception of trade unionism. He had striven for a conception of a fighting organization, in fact, he had hoped to find it so in the inner temple. He failed in his search. It was here in all its nauseating, clique-manufacturing, ignorant hideousness. The Trade Union was not a machine but an institution, just like any other insituation, a co-operative society or a trust, that was what it was—a trust, a monompoly of the ignorant superstitions and desires of men." (P. 185).

However, this criticism is very scattered and indefinite. The author's attitude to the revolutionary movement remains uncertain. This is not because the author was unable to get his book published in its original form. (The book was published by Bretano's after having been cut down to a quarter of its original size. Having seen the original manuscript we must say that it does not give a very different impression of the political attitude of the author.). His second novel shows a certain advance on his first book, but there is no fundamental improvement.

Neither can one speak of any such radical change in his last work, the novel *Martha Drake*. This novel was called *Journey Beyond* in the manuscript but the book was published under the title of the heroine, probably to suit the bourgeois publishers. Here we find just the same failings as in Heslop's previous work. The very acute problem of unemployment is dealt with by Heslop from a narrow individualist point of view, and this not only reduces but also distorts its significance. The fate of a million unemployed, the fate of the proletariat as a whole, is waived aside so that the reader may follow the fate of the "family craft" of Russel Brent, a book dealer's assistant who has lost his job. It is true that Heslop writes that "Martha Brent's tragedy was not only a personal one—it was a social tragedy. But the facts of economics are only known to the economists, and the economists themselves disagree in their explanation of causes." This rather foggy explanation, however, has no organic connection with the novel as a whole.

When Heslop departs from subject matter connected with production, his political acumen becomes still less marked. In *Journey Beyond* the author does not present the proletariat and bourgeoisie as opposed to one another but confines himself to dwelling sentimentally, in a way that can only tend to weaken revolutionary feeling, on the sufferings of the very poor who are outside of class distinctions. In this way the book resembles certain literature tending towards social fascism. (Joe Corrie's *The Last Day*, *The People's House* by Louis Guilloux). In his lachrymose description of the endless roads of poverty Heslop is continuously indulging in naive lamentations about the injustices of society. The question "Why should it be?" is for ever in the mouth of the author and his characters.

"He (Russel) had approached a grissly end. Terrible. He became conscious again. He was outraged. Scared! Why had they scared him? What had he done? Surely, he had suffered! Did they not pity his suffering? And what about Martha? And the child? And . . .O, God! . . . His cogitations became confused. He began to think incoherently. He felt ill-used. They had dealt with him injustly. It was bitter. Injustice is a mockery of all that is sweet and beautiful and tender in the world. Had he done anything to merit this severe castigation? Did he deserve this sudden reserve in his fortunes? If it had been so he would have squared back his shoulders to meet the punishment. But he did not. He had suffered. They ought to have taken compassion upon him."

This empirical treatment of events, which was always characteristic of Heslop is carried to extremes in his last novel. Heslop, as the poet of the family happiness, presents us with a petty bourgeois nest of contentment. He depicts the social in his novel as having its roots in personal well-being in this stronghold of the home. For Heslop the family become the measure of all things.

Instead of dealing with unemployment as a political problem, Heslop concentrates the readers' attention on the individual sufferings of two unemployed workers, Russel and Martha Brent. The fatalism which had characterized his early works is here carried to its exteme limits. He deals with unemployment as a personal problem, as a question of the individual well-being of a single person and reduces it to the personal bad luck of the hapless Russel Brent. "The wheel of time and luck," mere chance, remains the only guiding principle in *Journey Beyond.* In the denouement of the novel the Brents when on the verge of ruin are unexpectedly saved by Russel meeting an old friend who offers him work just when he is attempting to put an end to his life.

Another unpublished work of Heslop's which deserves attention is the Utopian novel *The Red Earth* describing the victory of the socialist re-evolution in England in 1941. The theme of the novel clearly distinguishes Heslop from English writers of social fascist outlook, but at the same time the whole novel shows clearly Heslop's mistaken views on the class struggle and revolution as also the mistake he has made in the choice of his literary method. Revolution is for him a purely arbitarary process, the significance of which is not clear even to those who are taking part in it. Here we find the same fault that we noted in his previous novels.

Throughout the novel one is struck by Heslop's underestimation of the class consciousness of the masses. The following description of the revolution is characteristic of the whole of *The Red Earth:*

"In the dense working class districts the people formed into processions and converged upon the separate municipal buildings. With the ease of military forces they stormed these places, ejected the timid and frightened clerks, and *wandered aimlessly and awesomely* through the places. Rumor ran thick as songs through the city... The sound of a distant rifle shot thrilled all with a nameless wonder. *None seemed possessed of any great ideas.* All seemed vague and yet all was tumultuous.." (Italics are ours.)

This underestimation of the revolutionary consciousness of the masses is bound up with this failure to understand the fundamental demands of the socialist revolution. The revolution breaks out in Heslop's novel as the masses' reaction to the declaration of war between America and England. But the Leninist slogan of turning the imperialist war into a civil war is replaced by a feeble pacifist demand for peace at any price, a demand which becomes for the author the determining factor of the revolution.

"Peace. That was the demand. Peace. No more of this needless slaughter. The question of power had not entered their heads. The idea of establishing a Soviet Government had not occured to most delegates. They were unfamiliar with the idea. Of course, in Russia . . . the delegations had told them about that . . . but here, were not the Councils of Action sufficient? Good enough weapons in their struggle with the Government. They were naive unto the last ounce of intelligence. Let the Government end the war and they would all return to their homesteads and pick up the broken strands of industry and begin once more the process of weaving upon the looms of their great strength, that was all."

As a result of the underestimation of the class consciousness of the masses and of their role in the class struggle Heslop shows the real moving force of the revolution to be a group of conspirators having but slight connection with the masses and who would seem according to the author to represent the advance guard of the working class, namely a party with a certain George Markham at its head. The characters of this novel are particularly worth notice. Markham is, according to Heslop, the moving spirit of the revolution. "His leadership was the leadership of a genius." Numerous passages and historical parallels lead one to suppose that in Markham Heslop is trying to depict a new English Lenin.

And here again we have forced upon our attention the fundamental wrongness of Heslop's method which we have already noticed in his other novels. With Heslop the social becomes lost in the personal. He fogs the lineaments of his hero, representing the revolutionary proletariat by emphasizing his personal "human experiences." A miner by origin, the revolutionary Markham, leader of the English proletariat, falls in love (to suit the sacred traditions of the petty bourgeois novel which requires the love interest at all costs) with the daugther of the social fascist prime minister and the ups and downs of their love affair forms the basic plot of the novel. The movement of social and class contradictions, the course of the revolution itself, are evaluated by the author chiefly according to the degree in which they make for the satisfactory solution of Markham and Dorothy's personal problems. When the revolution is at its height Markham curses reality for taking away from him the woman he loves: "Reality! The bitterness of it all! The earth of reality, as cold as the frost-bitten fields. He shuddered," and later on, when Dorothy breaks with Markham as with a class enemy: "He was suffering the anguish and pain that accompanies the humiliation of jealousy. He was the lover rejected. Yet none had come between them, only *the blind, insensate madness* that sprang out of this *infernal revolution*... Events had conspired to tear them apart. The unapproachable, the deathly, the infinitely had put the withered arm of regret between them, and it held them apart" (italics are ours).

In the last resorts, it is true, Heslop solves correctly the problem of the struggle between the personal and the social. His hero sacrifices his personal inclinations for his class duty. In this sense Heslop has made a definite step forward from the position he takes up in his first novel where a similar problem was solved by Tom Drury giving up social work in favor of his own personal life. This does not however prevent this whole novel being false in its very concepttion, in the way it presents the problem of the contradictions between individual and social principles, a problem which by its very nature can never be an actual problem of revolutionary literature, or in any case not in the way it is presented by Heslop.

It is not for nothing that Harold Heslop was once a member of the Independent Labor Party, a party which Lenin used to speak of as being "independent of socialism." His novels show how very deeply the social fascist bacteria had penetrated into his psychology and infected his work.

Heslop's greatest merit, and one that promises much for his future development along revolutionary lines, is that he is not afraid of bringing militant political themes into his work (and in this respect a distinction must be made in his favor between his work and that of such writers as Corrie who does not depart from the narrow "family life" type of subject. In this respect Heslop is going in the right direction. But the conception, "subject matter" includes not only the subject matter of representation but also the active relation of the author to this subject matter, and its actual treatment in the work of art. This treatment depends on the philosophy of the writer, and it is in this field that we see the faults underlying Heslop's work. The vital and, by its very nature, warlike political subject matter (the problems of the strike movement, unemployment, the fight against the war menace, the socialist revolution) in his hands loses its edge and becomes narrowed down. He proves incapable not only of correctly solving but even of correctly formulating the problems on which he bases his work.

Thus to sum up, the chief failings of Heslop's work which show that his philosophy is not yet the proletarian philosophy are his raising of the individual above the social, chance above law in the working out of social processes, his empirical limitations and his tendency to remain a passive onlooker instead of taking up an actively revolutionary attitude towards reality.

Before Heslop can become a real proletarian writer he must free himself from the last traces of petty-bourgeois individualism and from that sentimentalism of his which fogs the political problems and translates them from the language of the class struggle into the language of personal well-being. Even if up till now the signs of such a radical change in his work have not been very considerable, nevertheless Heslop's declaration at the 2nd International Conference of Revolutionary Writers and the ideological position which he now takes up show that the author himself recognizes the need for such a change. Finally, the task of the critic must be not only to make clear the nonproletarian elements in the work of writers such as Heslop but also to give them active assistance in carrying out a thorough revision of their ideology along revolutionary lines.

S. Tretiakov

John Hartfield

What made him change his German name into an English one? Probably to avoid being mistaken for his brother, Wieland Hertzfeldt, the director of the radical publishing house, *Malik-Verlag*, that published the works of Seifulina, Gorky, Sholokhov and other Soviet writers.

It would be hard to find two brothers resembling each other as little as these. The publisher is an excellent business man. No one knows better then he how to pull wires, how to make clever moves in the publishing market, how to get round authors, get a deadly hold on the customers and melt the stony hearts of the wealthy.

The book-trade in Germany is quite unique. The windows of our book shops in Soviet Russia are crowded with hundreds, if not thousands, of books, while, there, they show three or four titles only.

The publisher only issues a book that is likely to become a best-seller. It must be brought to the notice of the reader by means of clamorous advertisements, it must be made indispensable, it must be on all book stalls, a fortune must be made on it.

It is no easy thing to make the public buy a book in Germany. Books are as dear as theater tickets.

And here, in the private office of the prosperous director, equipped with a dictaphone, a telephone, by which orders can be given to any department by pressing one of the dozen of buttons, where even the sticking of stamps is mechanized and the typists worked like well drilled soldiers, I met John Hartfield. He looked very much like Buster Keaton.

He was very small, pale, serious. Apparently he had been accustomed to talk with people much taller than himself as he always held his nose rather high. His teeth and eyes were always visible to whoever happened to be talking to him, as a sign of trust and confidence.

His voice was low, very low, like the voices one hears in conversation when the train stops. In spite of a slight impediment in his speech, I knew that his voice could ring out with extraordinary clearness and distinctness from a big platform. When howls of dissatisfaction came from his audience he would throw out a few remarks with such absolute conviction that his enemies would listen with respect and his friends with confident pleasure.

The little man earned for himself the reputation of being "as honest as the sun," "as clear as crystal," "not to be bought," "the most disciplined."

"That's the purest of all the Communists from among the intelligentsia in Germany," was the opinion of both Party members and acquaintances.

Other epithets were added, it is true, such as for instance: "not of this world," "impractical," "exploited."

Small people who whisper and have strong convictions are subject to rare but fierce outburts of passion that nothing can withstand. Such fierceness and supernatural strength was concealed in this little Buster Keaton.

"Comrade Tretiakov, you're quite right in what you say. We need clever art. The art that encumbers the markets, the museums, the theaters and the cinema is stupid art," he whispers, either to the audience or to me: I have just finished my speech.

I agree.

"Yes, John Hartfield, we need clever art. But, the art we see around us is not so stupid as it seems to you. It is a clever art in its way, it carries out the work of making people stupid very cleverly."

'Comrade Tretiakov, you are right. But it seems to me that an art that makes people stupid must be stupid itself."

"You're right, Comrade Hartfield."

John Hartfield hates the world "artist."

"I am a photo mounter, my trade is political photo mounting," he says.

He took up this work in 1915 and 1916, while he was in the army. He served in the guards. Buster Keaton must always be eccentric.

A whispering chap about four feet high among the loud voiced giants of the guards. He looks consumptive, his movements are light and delicate. The most suitable type for a guardsman!

He attributes his not being thrown out of the guards for two and a half years to the fact that Hindenburg preferred small soldiers for long marches. They did not get out of breath so soon.

The division to which he belonged was waiting to be sent to the front from day to day. Every day, three hundred and sixty five times a year, the men were waiting, shuddering, prepared for the attack. Tomorrow out in the fighting line. But tomorrow would come and the attack would be put off for another day.

So the attack never came.

1919. The Revolution and the birth of the Communist party. Hartfield joined the party, with his brother and the artist Gross, whom he has never ceased to love even up to now, in spite of Gross's anarchistic twistings and turnings.

From 1919 to 1921, John Hartfield, together with a group of militant communists published a magazine called *Pleite, (The Crash)*.

The journal was devoted to satirical attacks on the bourgeoisie, which was then passing through one of the blackest periods of bankruptcy. The vigor of its assaults and the strength of the associations on which it was built, were reminiscent of our Soviet journal *The Art of the Commune* that came out about that time and for which Maiakovsky and Brik were partly responsible.

Pleite, however, lacked that wealth of theoretical work for which *Art of the Commune* had been notable and which provided material for theoretical work on art for the next ten years.

There was a short break and then Hartfield began in 1923 to work for a satirical journal *Der Knüppel*, (The Baton. It would have been called

The Cover
of the German Edition
of Upton Sinclairs
"Money Writes"
Before Confiscation

Knout by us if it had been published in 1905.) He worked on this magazine until 1927.

Outside of this, Hartfield carried on poster work for the principal campaigns of the Communist Party.

In 1923 the Union of Red Front Fighters was formed. Hartfield was requested by the Party to design a badge for the Union.

His design represented a threatening fist hanging over a crowd of people.

The sign of the fist came to be used by the Red Front Fighters on meeting each other.

The Municipal elections were held in 1925 and the communists came forward with their election list No. 5.

Hartfield designed a poster with a hand, palm outwards, and the five fingers outspread — the fifth election list. This placard was so popular, he says, that the outspread palm became a gesture of greeting used by comrades during the election.

To design a striking poster or badge that would go straight to the mark in campaigns or Party work is very important and by no means easy in Germany. There is, perhaps, no other country where symbolic signs play such an important part as in Germany.

The list of badges and signs of various societies, political, tourist, musical, and research occupy from four to five pages in German almanacs.

Shops selling trimmings and haberdashery have special windows where nothing but emblems and badges are shown. Here you will find the Fascist swastika, the non-party lily of nature lovers, Roman Catholic crucifixes, patriotic eagles, and the red star of the Bolsheviks with the hammer and sickle.

The badges are worn in the buttonhole or cap.

As soon as *Rote Fahne* was founded Hartfield started to work for it as a cartoonist.

Germans remember his caricature of the social-democratic leaders. It showed a group of admirals on board a battleship, for which money had been voted by them.

But Hartfield's great work is not drawing. He is at his best in photo mounting.

These can be seen regularly in *AIZ (Workers Illustrated)*. The photo-mounting for the covers of the *Malik-Verlag* publications are particularly famous.

Starting with rather scrappy stuff, Hartfield has gradually perfected his technique and arrived at combinations of extreme simplicity, exceeding the

John Hartfield explains principles of his photographic mounting to red army men

usual trade and advertisement requirements for book covers.

His are not merely covers, they are posters, they are political, militant caricatures and political generalizations, made by means of photo mounting, in which the documental quality of photography assumes a special explosive force.

He showed me his work, and took out a whole heap of glossy book jackets, covered with photographs.

Here was Upton Sinclair's *Boston.* The black shadow of the electric chair was cast on the blinding square of light left by the open door.

And here were actual photographs of sailors that mutinied, on the cover of Plivier's *Kaiser's Coolies.*

And here was a jacket for a book on espionage among the highest ranks of the German army. There was a fight with the censor about this jacket. A colonel of the Imperial Army, a prosperous officer of impeccable appearance, was shown in the photograph as a man gone slack sitting stroking a prostitute.

The censor demanded that the colonel's hand should be removed from the prostitute's leg. Hartfield cut it out in a square and printed on the white space — "Cut out by order of the military censor." The censor suggested that these words be removed. Hartfield took them out, but substituted the demand of the censor with regard to the inscription.

Just lately he had some trouble about the jacket for Sinclair's book *Money Writes,* which describes the corruption of writers and journalists. The figures of clerks and writers are shown bending conscientiously over their work. Threads stretch from their writing hands to the upper margin, where they are gathered into the grasp of a fat, loathsome, be-ringed hand.

On the other side of the jacket a poetic landscape is seen, where a danhsome young man with his collar open at the throat in a beautiful, Schiller-like manner, gazes down from a gay terrace over a lake. His wife and child and an expensive dog stand nearby. This is a family photograph of the world famous writer, Emil Ludwig, who was extremely popular in Germany. Ludwig began as a revolutionary and innovator. But he was soon bought over. He gave up innovations and did a thriving trade in *Kitsch*—fulsome sentimental novels. These novels bought him the splendid villa on the terrace of which he was photographed.

The writer in question turned out to be the materialized argument for the title, *Money Writes.*

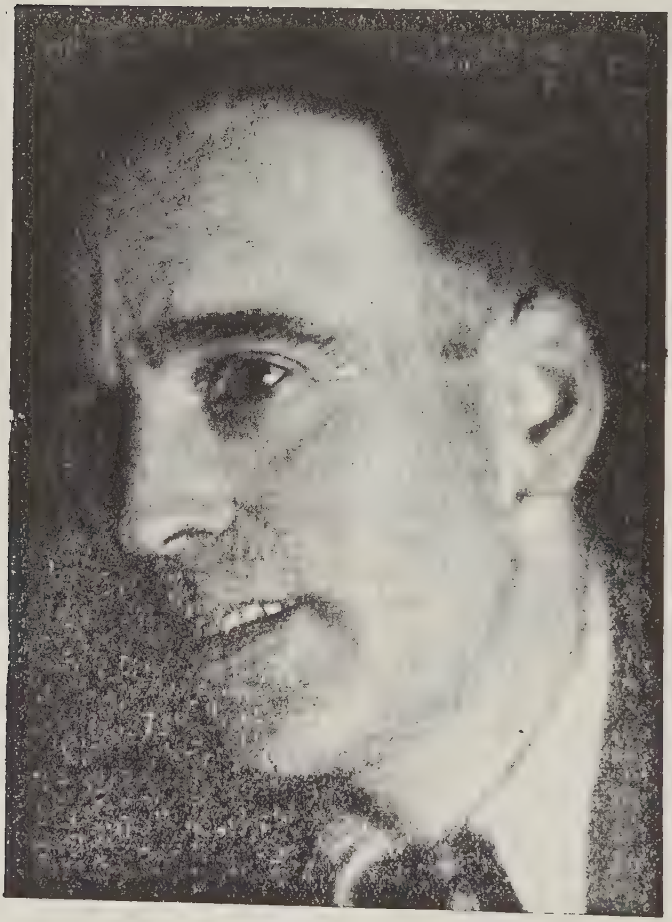
Ludwig, however, would not suffer this affront. He brought it into court and the court ordered the publishers to make the photograph impersonal.

John Hartfield made it impersonal. He cut out the faces of the writer, his wife, child and the dog's muzzle. These four white spaces were a slap in the face for the German censorship, and the novelist, beloved of the petty bourgeoisie.

John Hartfield never signs his posters and book jackets.

AIZ, Rote Fahne, the booklets published by "Malik" sell by hundreds of thousands all over Germany. But probably there are few outside the upper strata of the radical intelligentsia who know that these book jackets, powerful as a great political demonstration, are done by a little artist without a name.

Thousands of our Soviet workers see the *Workers' Illustrated,* enjoy the daring, expressive arrangement of photos in it, cut them out and use them for their wall newspapers — and never know that they are the creation of a small man with blue eyes and a soft voice, an implacable enemy of all capitalists, an iron German Bolshevik who goes by the English name of "John Hartfield."



JOHN HARTFIELD
An artist of the German proletariat

NEW MASSES

1910—*Fifth Year of the New Masses* -- **1926** -- *Twenty First Year of the Masses*—**1931**

One year has elapsed since the Second International Conference of Revolutionary Writers was held in Kharkov, and the time is ripe to check up how the revolutionary press has fulfilled the decisions of the Conference. A survey of the 12 numbers of the *New Masses* for 1931 shows that its reorganization has been attended by a number of achievements.

The task of "participating actively in all the important cultural and political campaigns" (as set forth in the resolution of the American Delegation to the Kharkov Conference) has been fulfilled by the journal to a considerable extent. *New Masses* mirrored all the principal strikes which took place in 1931 — Paterson, New York, Pittsburgh, Harlan, and elsewhere. The journal supported, in various ways, a number of political campaigns conducted by the CP of USA (the campaigns against the report of the Fish Commission, against the August murders in Chicago, against the deportation of alien workers, etc.). As regards supporting the revolutionary movement of the Negro workers (the need of which was particularly stressed in the resolution of the American Delegation to the Kharkov Conference), it ought to be recorded as a distinct achievement that the journal conducted a successful campaign on behalf of the 8 Negro victims of the Scottsboro frame-up (an article by Josephine Herbst, Magil's poems, a play by Langston Hughes, the drawings by Gellert and Ciporin). As compared with past years the journal has acquired a far more clear-cut political physiognomy, as the result of its overhauling on the basis of the decisions of the Kharkov Conference. On the whole, the journal has taken the correct course in its work and can really change from an organ of the radical intellectuals into the leading organ of the proletarian cultural movement in the USA, and acquire vast signifiance for the masses.

Nevertheless, *New Masses* has still to overcome a number of serious defects and shortcomings in its work if it hopes to accomplish all the tasks facing it.

The journal's struggle against fascism has been quite inadequate. *New Masses* gives battle to social-fascism, the agency of the bourgeoisie within the working class with unpardonable faint heartedness. Of course, the muffled mention of the A. F. of L., the somewhat light-weight theoretical letter addressed by Michael Gold to Hilquit (September), and one cartoon by Gropper (May), cannot be considered even as a start in the right direction.

The absence of a systematic fight against fascism and social-fascism is discernible also in the whole cultural and art policy of the *New Masses*. Its struggle against bourgeois literature is still conducted without system, its plan consisting not in profound analytic treatment of fascist and social-fascist tendencies but in polemizing with them (Freeman's article against Wilder /January/, the review of Bolito's play /January/, the polemical "open letter" /September/, Gold's article on Steffens /June/). All this material is served in the shape of controversies on separate issues; there is no planned offensive against the class enemy in literature. Nearing's article on "Reparations" in which he tells the German workers, from his high pinnacle, that the burden of reparations is their due punishment from above, was printed in the May number, without any editorial comment whatever. The magazine has done nothing to help this comrade recognize and correct his mistakes. The journal has not come out against V. F. Calverton who is, without a doubt, ideologically connected with social-fascism. It is significant that as late as 1930 the journal deemed it possible to *entrust* him with the task of fighting fascism: the struggle against fascist Humanism was started in *New Masses* by Calverton's article /April, 1930/. Although *New Masses* closed its colunms to Calverton in 1931 it continued to keep silent about him. The *Communist*, (the theoretical organ of the American Communist Party), however published an article by Foster exposing Calverton already in February, 1931. The journal's silence in regard to Max Eastman, a notorious Trotskyist, must also be regarded as a serious breach in the fight against social fascism.

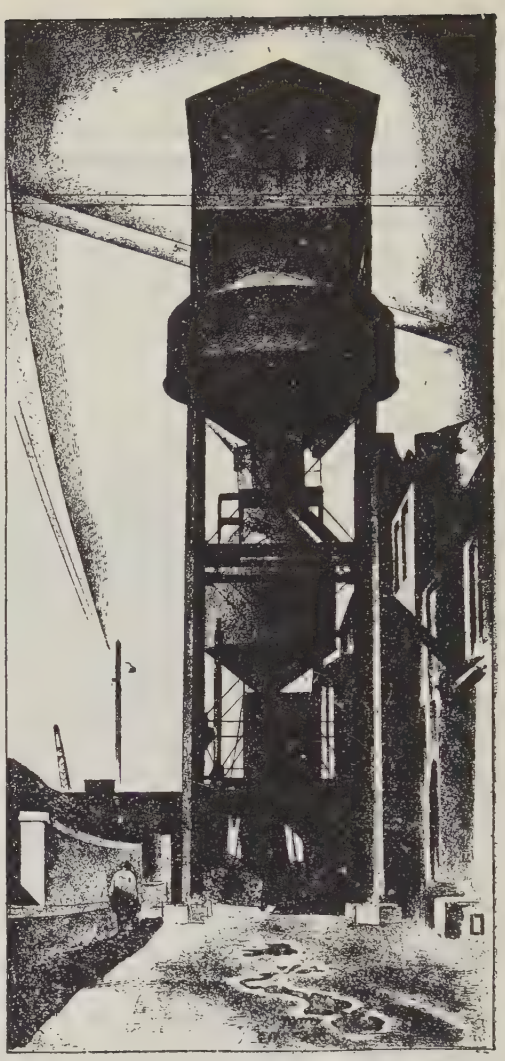
This most serious shortcoming should be overcome immediately. *New Masses* should once and for all dispense with the tradition of "rotten liberalism" which allows it to throw open the hospitality of its revolutionary columns to sundry exponents of social-fascism. At the same time the journal should begin a ruthless exposure of the social-fascist spokesmen, not contenting itself with merely keeping silent about them as in the case of Calverton and Max Eastman.

The journal has not paid sufficient attention to the achievements of socialist construction in the USSR in the light of the intensification of capitalism's crisis. It has been publishing only casual communications (by Falkowsky, Kunitz, Gold) that were frequently, moreover, of superficial and light-weight character (some communications by Gold, the letter about "An American taking a Soviet Wife," etc.). Equally bad is the situation as regards Soviet literature. Of Soviet writers the journal has printed Zooschenko and Pilniak, while Pilniak's novel ("the Volga flows to the Caspian Sea") was advertised in the journal as "a classic of proletarian literature" (a mistake that has since been put right in Gold's critical article on Pilniak in the October issue.) During the entire year the journal did not publish a single serious article on proletarian literature in the USSR. Those works of Soviet proletarian literature that come into the journal's field of vision were not given any clear cut appraisal from the class point of view. For instance, one short review was given to Panferov's *Bruski* and Gumilevsky's *Dog's*

Lane, and no fundamental contrast was drawn between these two works.[1]

It may be observed that the November number of the journal, devoted to the 14th anniversary of the October Revolution, marks a distinct step forward as regards depicting the socialist construction and cultural life of the Soviet Union. Besides the editorial article on the 14th anniversary of the October Revolution, the November issue contains also a sketch by Kunitz on "Soviet Tadjikistan" (the result of Kunitz's journey throughout the Soviet republics of Central Asia with the Second International brigade of the IURW) illustrated by Lozowick (also a member of the International brigade); a drawing by Gropper, "Over the Body of Manchuria," which raises the question of the defense of USSR in connection with the danger of military intervention; the "Decree to the Army of Art" by Maiakovsky, translated by J. Freeman; an article by Hyman Rosen on science in the USSR, and a survey of Soviet periodicals by Leon Dennen entitled, "Soviet Literature." Dennen's article should be welcomed as the first attempt of the journal to contribute to the internationalization of the creative experience of Soviet proletarian literature. The question of the sketch as a genre of proletarian literature, with which Dennen deals in detail, is a most burning question for the entire revolutionary literary movement of America in which the sketch is the leading genre (the creative work of Kallar, Cruden, Russack, and others). One grave defect of the number was its cover design by Phil Bard which gives a quite false interpretation of socialist construction. Endeavouring, apparently, to depict an *Udarnik,* a hero of socialist construction, Bard gives instead the image of a reveller playing an accordion against a background of "impersonal" factory chimneys and shops presumed to embody socialist construction. The net result is a common or garden drawing in keeping with the worst bourgeois idea of "Soviet exotics."

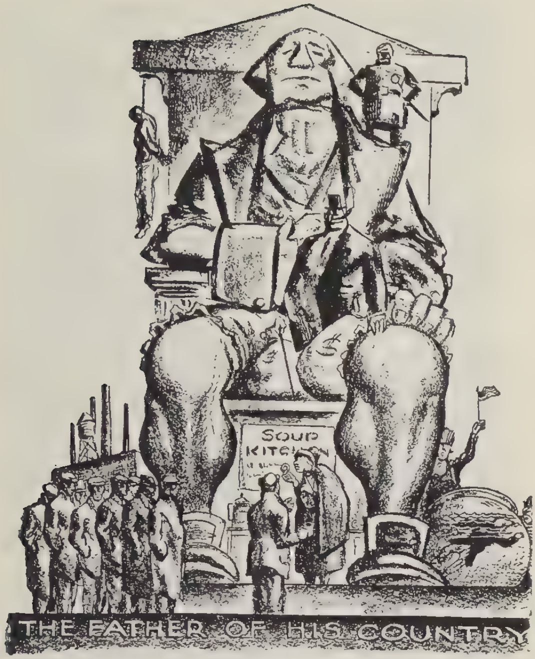
The struggle against the war danger and imperialist intervention in the USSR has been conducted rather laxly and not systematically enough. This activity of the *New Masses* was practically limited to a number of good drawings (by Bard, Gropper, Hernandez, Siegel, etc.). The journal did not systematically expose fascism and social-fascism in the field of war literature. The only things so far done by *New Masses* in this respect were: Harrison's review of Remarque's *Road Back* (August), and the article by Phillip Sterling on *The Songs of War* (December) which adduces interesting material on the role of popular songs as imperialist propaganda during war. The absence of an unfolded planned offensive on this sector of the struggle against the war danger constitutes a grave shortcoming in the critical work of the journal. Pacifism, *a la* Remarque is foreign enough to the *New Masses* but nevertheless it deviated at times from its generally sound position in this question. One example is J. Burke's drawing "What Price Glory-Now" (in the March issue), which tends in the direction of Remarquean pacifism and expresses only the passive horror of the artist before the sufferings connected with war "generally."



Louis Lozowick

As regards the international work of *New Masses,* its correct handling of the question of the Chinese Revolution is a distinct achievement ("Shan-Fei, communist" and a series of Chinese sketches by Smedly, a sketch by Chambers, a series of documents relating to the revolutionary literary movement in China, etc.). *New Masses* also maintains satisfactory contacts with the Japanese proletarian literary movement (an article on NAPF's work, the publishing of the correspondence between the IURW and Literary Front and the Letter of Eitaro and Ayako, members of Literary Front, addressed to the John Reed Club,

[1] A good deal of the blame lies with the IURW which did not supply the *New Masses* with sufficient Soviet material. In the future, the IURW undertakes to keep *New Masses* supplied with up-to-date information on socialist construction and the cultural life of the Soviet Union and also with theoretical articles on Soviet literature and in the first place Soviet proletarian literature, thus sharing its creative experience with the American revolutionary literary movement. It will also send the *New Masses* copies of the best works of proletarian writers and fellow travellers suitable for the journal.



By J. Burke

etc.). Nevertheless, while the resolution on proletarian and revolutionary literature in America adopted by the Kharkov Conference particularly stressed the necessity for closest contacts with England, Canada, Latin America, and the colonies of American imperialism, the results of the activity of *New Masses* in this direction are quite unsatisfactory. This is particularly inadmissible in regard to Latin America where American finance capital pursues an extremely aggressive policy of imperialism. Yet, the questions connected with this offensive of American imperialsm in its colonies and in the countries of Latin America, and with the growing revolutionary movement of national liberation in these countries, have been dealt with only in the sketch by Smedly on the Philippines, in a few poems, in one sketch by Hughes ("People Without Shoes") and in a few drawings. The momentous events in the Philippines, in Nicaragua, in Cuba, the September revolutionary uprising in the Chilean navy, have not been touched upon in the journal.

As regards "clear cut, constant reflection of the struggle of the working class," considerable achievements were made by *New Masses* in 1931 as compared with preceding years. This was demonstrated by a number of sketches, stories, and drawings printed in the journal in the course of the past year. Nevertheless, having squarely approached this problem, the journal has not yet succeeded in being transformed into a militant organ that does not drag in the rear of the revolutionary events but generalizes upon them and derives from them lessons for the future. This becomes very clear if we compare the *New Masses* with the *Daily Worker*, the organ of the CP of the USA. Whereas the *Daily Worker, as a rule,* endeavours to generalize the experience of every strike, of every class collision, of every event in the revolutionary movement, *New Masses*, when dealing with the labor movement, for the most part adopts an attitude of empiricism, failing to summarize its experiences or make the necessary generalizations. At the same time in the literary artistic production of *New Masses* dealing with the struggle of the working class, we frequently come across schematism and abstractions in which the concrete content of this struggle becomes dissolved.

All these mistakes and shortcomings are not accidental. They are traceable to one underlying defect, *i. e.*, the insufficient politization of the whole work of *New Masses*, to the journal's lack of a sufficiently militant party line, in the Leninist sense of the term, in the whole of its cultural political work. It is significant in this respect that the *New Masses* has not dealt with the historic utterances of Comrade Stalin in recent years. This of course, is not accidental: it is entirely due to the insufficient politization of the whole work of *New Masses.*

To do away completely with the traditions of "rotten liberalism," to overcome empirical limitations in its political work, to establish close and permanent working contact with the *Daily Worker*, while constantly and systematically working for a higher ideological political level in its *entire* work through the struggle to master the Marxist Leninist theory, — such is the road ahead of the journal. The IURW, for its part, promises great aid to the journal in the future, in the politization of its work, so as to turn *New Masses* into a truly militant and leading organ of our movement in the USA.

The insufficient politization of the work of *New Masses*, the insufficient impregnation of the whole activity of the journal with the spirit of party militancy, leaves an impress on the whole of its literary artistic production.

In spite of the *New Masses* attempts to organize its whole work, we find in 1931 now and then a resurrection of the worst traditions of the past when the revolutionary content of the work was subordinated to experiments of a formal nature. The satirical drawings and cartoons in *New Masses* are sometimes so mild and harmless that they might be reprinted in any bourgeois humorous journal. Such, for instance, is a whole number of drawings by Otto Szoglow, "The Flowers that Bloom in the Spring Tra-la!" "Consider the Lilies as They Grow," etc. Szoglow's "School Opens" on the title page of the September number may be considered as a clear demonstration of how the revolutionary artist who has not yet reached a sufficiently high ideological political level proves incapable of embodying in his creation the dialectical unity of the part with the whole, how he concentrates the whole fire of his critique on isolated phenomena of the capitalist system without showing their connection with the system as a whole. Criticism of the American bourgeois system of popular education should, and does, enter into the program of *New Masses:* but this critique should be part and parcel of the general revolutionary activity of the journal, and should not be made the way Szoglow does it in his drawing, with its "estheticism turned inside out." The cover design of a mass revolutionary organ like *New Masses* should serve as its militant banner, and it was hardly advisable for the journal to put on its cover this drawing which is, after all, of a casual and non-militant character. A concrete example of the manifestation of direct political indifference in the work of *New Masses* is given by the entirely incomprehensible grotesquely shawy cover design in the April number (by Gropper). In this connection we must warn the editors of *New Masses* of the danger involved in publishing along with the militant covers of Steinhilber /January/, Gellert /April/ etc., such covers as those of Szoglow /September/ and Gropper /April/ already referred to, or Remarquian cover by Burke, "What Price Glory-Now" /March/, or the cover by Bard /November/, with its fantastic delineation of Soviet life, etc.

The insufficient politization of the work of *New Masses* has resulted in that the journal so far, in the whole of its literary and artistic production, has not yet succeeded in showing the leading role of the Communist Parties and the Comintern in the world revolutionary movement. The task of presenting the image of the Bolshevik that was set before the entire international revolutionary literary movement by the recent resolution of IURW in connection with Comrade Stalin's letter "On Some Questions of the History of Bolshevism" stands quite acutely before *New Masses.* As a step in this direction should be noted "Our Comrade Munn [1]"—a story by the young writer Wittaker Chambers in whose person *New Masses* acquired one of its best contributors in 1931.

The drawings, stories, and poems printed in *New Masses* even in those cases when they have a distinctly militant character, now and then are guilty of presenting the revolutionary movement in the light of undue spontaneity. Gropper's drawing "The Hunger March" in the February issue, is significant in this connection. The hunger march of the jobless is depicted by Gropper as a purely spontaneous movement; the artist fails to show how the spontaneous resentment of the masses is conducted along the channel of an organized movement led by the Communist Party; in Gropper's drawing the whole energy of the hunger marchers is fruitlessly spent in shouting. Furthermore, this objective minimizing of the militancy and organization of the labor movement appears, for instance, even in the best sketches of Robert Cruden. His sketch, "Layoff: Ford Factory" (February), while giving a harrowing picture of capitalist exploitation under the conveyor system, does not show any militant solution of the contradictions of the capitalist system. The workers are depicted by him as thoroughly downhearted and subdued people that are incapable of putting up any resistance:

> "When we went out in the morning there was a long line of men drawn before the pay-office, Like stricken beasts, they stood in dumb pain, their eyes glazed over with hopelessness. I shivered—I too would soon be standing in that long line of silent, hopeless men."

In an other story, "Men Wanted" (April), Cruden depicts a clash between workers and police as something spontaneous that dies down as suddenly as it breaks out:

> "Down went the storm fence; the hiring office was crushed to matchwood as the thousands charged on. The road was packed with running men whose shouts and cries penetrated even the factory . . . Tim was in the vanguard. Like the others, he just sped on, bent *on vengeance knowing not where he was bound, knowing not what he would do.* (The italics are ours). All that he saw as he ran was Steve, prostrate on the ground, blood streaming from his battered head.
>
> "And then the rush stopped. In a moment the men stopped, quivered, and then turned to press back against the thousands behind them . . . From behind him he heard cries and screams as the police attacked. Fear possessed him. By now he had caught up with the men, but now they were turning and fleeing in all directions in a frenzy of fear." (*N. M.* April, 1931, p. 11).

Along with this underestimation of the class consciousness and militancy of the revolutionary movement, which marks to a certain degree the general physiognomy of *New Masses* for the last year, there was a certain, perhaps unconscious, exaggeration of the stable and unshakable might of capitalism. Such drawings as, for instance "Morgan the Magnificient" by William Hernandez (April), or "This Depression Affects us All" by Morris Becker (March), where an emaciated and submissive worker is trampled under foot by a capitalist, "The Father of His Country" by J. Burke (February), where the colossal figure of Washington, seated upon bags of gold, seems to crush by its might the miserable crouching figures of the jobless, objectively represent an attempt to prove the immutable nature of the capitalist system, and this in 1931, when the economic crisis in the USA is growing apace . . .

Besides these tendencies which reflect a relative unripeness of the literary-art movement in the USA, we find a fetishization of the capitalist technique in the work of some of the contributors.

This applies particularly the work of Louis Lozowick. Lozowick depicts the process of production as devoid of personality and of human traits; the *human* factor in the class relations under the system of production escapes the field of his artistic vision. By showing the might of technique "in general," outside of its class content, of technique *per se*, Lozowick falls into a fetishization of capitalist technique.

The traditions of petty bourgeois passiveness, of pacifist humanism, are still strong in the creative work of a certain section of contributors like William Gropper, Hugo Gellert, Phil Bard, and others. Gropper's "One Less to Feed" (January) showing a funeral procession in a working class district, or his "Slicing a Small Portion a Little Thinner" (July) dealing with the question of wage cuts, or Bard's "So I'm Jellah, Am I?" (August) showing the breaking up of a demonstration by the police and the brutal treatment of working woman in the crowd, or "Alookin' f'r a Home. . ." by Esther Shemitz (May) where an evicted Negro family humbly and tamely sub-

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[1] We regard this story as an achievement for *New Masses.* As far as we know, this story for the first time in American literature gives a revolutionary exposition of the problem of the agricultural crisis and correctly raises the question of the leading role of the Communist Party in the revolutionary farmers' movement. Ih should be mentioned that Chambers s story also formed the basis of a play of the same name written by Hally Flanagan and Margaret Clifford and first staged by the students of Vassar college. According to a recent report in *New Masses,* the play has since been translated into Yiddish and presented at the Jewish worker's playhouse under the title of *The Drought.* Thus Chambers's story, was brought before large masses of the population.

"Hunger March" by William Groppe

mits to injustice, or "Sunday Morning" by Mary O. Johnson, (December), or "Needle Trades Workers" by Mitchel Siporin, (May) etc., go to show that many of the artists of *New Masses* are simply unable to break away from empirical social portraiture. In representing the crisis of capitalism these artists limit themselves to portraying passively the sufferings and hardship it inflicts on the working class without even hinting at a revolutionary solution of the crisis. Their creation does not express any direct revolutionary deductions, and is not imbued with a class militant content.

In some cases this empiricism, this passive registration of facts of class "oppression," amounts to complete repudiation of the revolutionary class struggle, to an advocacy of passiveness and non-resistance. Such, for instance, is the deceptive illustration by Gellert to Marx's *Capital* (October issue of *New Masses)* which depicts a submissive victim falling under an axe intended to symbolize the brute force of the fascist dictatorship. Such is the drawing by Mitchel Siporin in the April issue of *New Masses*—"Southern Holiday"—showing the lynching of a Negro in mystical tones, something like a Walpurgis night, while the figure of the lynched Negro, as though crucified, is illumined by mysterious "sacred" halo. These utterly non-revolutionary motifs, decadent by their nature, find their analogy in a certain section of the literary output of the journal. For instance, a distinctly decadent and passive mood characterizes one of the poems by Langston Hughes in the February issue of the journal:

Tired

I am so tired of waiting,
Aren't you,
For the world to become good
And beautiful and kind?
Let us take a knife
And cut the world in two—
And see what worms are eating
At the rind.

Equally decadent is the poem by J. Kallar (December):

. . . Faces, now so unlovely and sad,
were you ever wise and resolute? O corpse faces,
pasty faces, dead faces, did your eyes
ever smoulder with creative hate?
Faces growing on that evil sour apple tree,
withered fruit of sour poisoned stalk,
sad harvest of work and looking for work,
harvest of mine, harvest of factory,
harvest of lumbercamp and sectiongang,
poolroom faces gazing at poolroom floor,
waiting, thinking maybe, wishing a little,
praying for strong men to plow the sour soil!

This rotten passiveness which may well fulfill a demobilizing function, which depicts the working class as tired and weary sufferers vainly waiting till the world will turn beautiful and good," as people who "wait, perhaps think, desire a little," this tendency on the part of some contributors to *New Masses* betray the influence of the worst traditions of the "literature of poor people" *(Armenleuteliteratur)* that does not rise above the lacrymal portraying of the sufferings of humble and oppressed people in the nature of "lofty sacrifice" and submission—an influence that was sharply denounced at the Kharkov Conference: "The real proletarian literary movement has nothing to do with this kind of literature preaching christian humility and bigotry, taking capitalism as a necessary and unavoidable condition of the modern world,—a literature which is blind, inert, sentimental and submissive." ("Resolution on Political and Creative Questions," in Special No. *L. W. R.* 1931. p. 91).

At the present time we must again call the attention of *New Masses* to the danger of tendencies of this kind in the creative work of its writers and artists. For, the "labor thematology" in itself cannot yet serve as the criterion of revolutionism of a given work. We know that social fascism resorts in literature to labor thematology as a means for disguising its anti-proletarian ideology. The lacrymal sentimentalism that we find in the works of McGill, Corrie, Hyde, Walsh and other writers connected with social fascism anent the sufferings to which the "poor workers" are doomed by inexorable fate, serve in the long run as a means of varnishing the realities and of disarming the proletariat in its class struggle.

In connection with the necessity to reconstruct *New Masses* on the basis of politization of its work, we are confronted with the task of finally liquidating these alien class influences on the front of revolutionary art by a real reconstruction of the creative practices of the journal's contributors, by waging a determined and irreconciable fight against all varieties of pacifist humanism, passiveness, and non-resistance.

The backwardness of the *New Masses* (and also of the John Reed Club) on the front of literary theory which existed at the time of the Kharkov Conference and was recorded in the "Resolution of the American Delegation on the Question of Proletarian and Revolutionary Literature in America" adopted by the Conference, impels the IURW at this stage to check up this branch of the activity of *New Masses* with particular attention. It has to be confessed that this backwardness is still far from having been eliminated. The journal has quite inadequately carried out the task of promoting a higher theoretical standard in the American section of IURW by internationalizing the experience of the whole of the international revolutionary literature movement. The publication of a report of the Kharkov Conference in the February number, and a series of documents on questions of the Chinese and Japanese revolutionary literature movement published in the journal in the course of 1931, should be recorded as a fundamental achievement for *New Masses* in the domain of this international work. Besides this, there was not a single really serious article published in the journal during the whole year on questions of the international revolutionary literature movement. The only article by John Herrmann, "The

Revolutionary Writers of Europe" (July), besides its extreme superficiality, suffers also from a lot of inaccuracies and general theoretical mistakes. Thus, for instance, Herrmann characterizes quite falsely Marchwitza's first novel, *Sturm auf Essen,* as being "bourgeois in form and revolutionary by its content" and claims that a similar estimation is given of the novel by the Kharkov Conference. On the question of the revolutionary literature movement in Germany, Herrmann falls into a grave error when he makes no discrimination whatsoever between the German proletarian writers and the fellow travellers, enumerating in one breath, as "the most prominent novelists of the left wing": L. Renn, E. Glaeser, O. M. Graf, H. Marchwitza, W. Bredel, Th. Plivier, P. Neukranz, F. C. Weisskopf, A. Seghers, K. Gruenberg etc. Finally, Herrman apparently denies entirely the existence of a proletarian literature in Germany at the present time, thus making a serious right opportunistic mistake. This much may be gleaned from his vague remarks on proletarian revolutionary literature in Germany:

> "A revolutionary literature is certainly developing in Germany at a speedy pace. Proletarian literature will develop. Out of radical bourgeois literature grows revolutionary literature and how can you have proletarian literature until you have had that?"

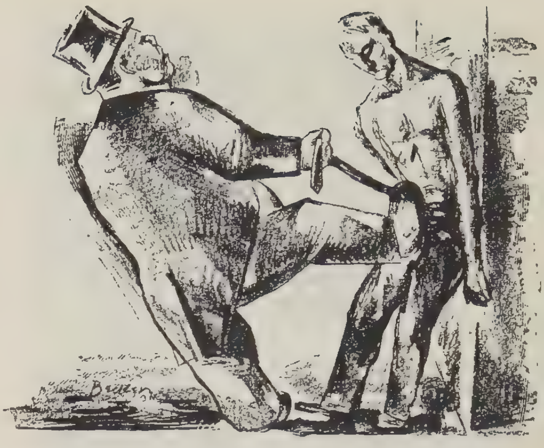
Herrman deliberately ignores the existence of a distinctively proletarian literature and envisages but one source of revolutionary literature—the work of the fellow travellers, ignoring the worker-correspondent movement and its role in the development of proletarian literature. The publication of this article without any editorial comment we regard as a right opportunistic mistake on the part of *New Masses.*

Besides an absence of general theoretical articles on questions of the international revolutionary literature movement, there was very little in the way of concrete criticism of separate works of international proletarian and revolutionary literature. The only exceptions were two reviews, one of *The American Paradise* by Kisch and the other of *The Kaiser's Coolie* by Plivier.

Neither did the journal give enough theoretical guidance to the revolutionary literature movement in the USA. As regards maintaining contacts with worker correspondents, but paltry results have been attained by *New Masses* so far. The work of the journal in this direction was virtually limited to the publication of a few letters of a casual character (for instance, the "Letter of a girl pioneer to her non-communist father.").

The organization of "open forums (see "editorial announcement" in the February number of the journal) has not yet been carried out in practice, as far as we know. Yet, such collective discussions on the work of the journal would have played a tremendous role in drawing worker correspondents around the journal This will be one of the basic and necessary steps on the part of *New Masses* on the road of transformation into a real mass organ of revolutionary art in America, and it will mean the fulfilment of the task undertaken by the journal two years ago.

As regards the contact between *New Masses* and the John Reed Club and the many cultural organizations of the workers in America, as well as the guidance of their activity, although this contact



"This depression affects us all" by Morris Becker

was kept up fairly systematically by means of the permanent section, *Workers' Art,* nevertheless the work done so far should be considered inadequate. The journal confined itself to publishing a few notes on some of the cultural organizations without giving them any theoretical guidance. In *New Masses* in 1931 there was no reflection whatever of even the most fundamental discussions that had arisen on important questions in connection with the activities of the John Reed Club and other organizations. We must also refer to the fact that the journal made but little use of the great wealth of material furnished by the Conference of Worker's Cultural Organizations held in New York last June. *New Masses* did not even publish a brief report of the Conference proceedings or a single article dealing fully with it contenting itself with merely publishing the program adopted by the Conference. At the same time the article by Michael Gold "Toward an American revolutionary culture" (July), which dealt with a number of general cultural problems, contained some incorrect statements in essence amounting to overestimation of past achievements in regard to the creation of a proletarian culture. For instance, his assertion that in the USSR the cultural revolution has been practically completed, that the "new man" has already emerged, who with ... 'this very subconscious repudiates competition, jealousy, mad ambition, ruthlessness and personal inflation; all the vaunted values of a capitalist society." Equally exaggerated is Gold's statement as to the degree of development of proletarian literature in Germany which amounts in the final account to ignoring the influence wielded by fascism on certain elements of the working class.

As regards the general world outlook of those taking part in the revolutionary cultural movement in America, special attention should be called to the importance of anti-religious propaganda and the role it ought to play in the general theoretical activity of *New Masses.* The task of combatting every kind of priestcraft, mysticism and idealism that serves as an ideological weapon of fascism, is indissolubly connected with the task of raising the theoretical level of the whole of the revolutionary cultural movement, and of every participiant in it, on the basis of mastering the

Marxist Leninist theory. *New Masses*, while it has done a certain amount of anti-religious work by literary art means (Chambers's "Comrade Munn," and a series of drawings), has nevertheless, until quite recently, failed to carry on systematic theoretical anti-religious work. Bennet Stevens' article "Those Christmas Bells" (December) should therefore be welcomed as the first step made by the journal in this direction.

While on the one hand, the *New Masses* during the last year worked insufficiently at extending the proletarian basis of the revolutionary literature movement by means of attracting the wide masses of worker correspondents, it has also done very little indeed as regards extending its influence over the American fellow travellers. Yet the question of attracting the fellow travellers to the side of the proletariat is very acute in the USA at the present stage of the economic crisis in view of the realignment that has taken place among the American intelligentsia during the last three years under the influence of the crisis. Now that fascism, through the instrumentality of the Humanists, and erstwhile "liberal" organs like *The New Republic* with its slogan of "Let us take sway Communism from the Communists," through the instrumentality of all its cultural political organizations, and entire press beginning with "the larger magazines" (like *The Bookman* which is a stronghold of the Humanists) and ending with the gutter press, is endeavouring to win over to its side the wavering elements of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia, it behooves *New Masses*, as the leading organ of the revolutionary literature movement in the USA, to utilize all its possibilities in the fight against fascism, to win over from it these elements of the intelligentsia and draw them into the ranks of its movement. This task has up till now been inadequately fulfilled by the journal.

Apart from the fact that during the whole of 1931 *New Masses* did not publish a single article on the general subject of revolutionary fellow travellers (in this respect the journal was backward even in comparison with its own record for 1930 when this question was in the centre of the journal's attention, to recall the discussion between Dos Passos and Robert Evans on this subject as an instance - apart from this, *New Masses* during the whole the last year, for instance, did not give a singl article about such a prominent revolutionary writ r as Dos Passos, contenting itself with printing two of his sketches "Two Portraits" in the November, and "Wesley Everest" in the December issue). Yet, the prospects of further evolution in the creative work of Dos Passos are of vital interest for the whole of our movement. The activity of Upton Sinclair remained outside of the journal's field of vision during the whole year. Particular stress should be laid on the mistake committed by *New Masses* in regard to Theodore Dreiser. From the time of the famous letter of Dreiser to the John Reed Club in the Summer of 1930, the basic document that marked the definite identification of this eminent American artist with the revolutionary fellow travellers, and down to September 1931, *New Masses* did not print in its pages a single line by Dreiser himself, nor did the journal say one word about the importance of the revolutionary change in his ideology, whereas the *Daily Worker*, published during the same period several political articles from the pen of Theodore Dreiser which, together with his recent general

"Southern Holiday" by Mitchei Sinorin

political activity, have certainly exercised a revolutionizing influence on wide circles of the American intelligentsia. The article on Dreiser's 60th birthday (September) and the open letter to Dreiser by Michael Gold (in the same issue) do not fully fill this serious gap in the work of *New Masses*. In future, the journal should establish closer contacts which Dreiser; we are waiting for the appearances of his contributions in the pages of *New Masses!*

The general theoretical backwardness of *New Masses* already referred to is a serious handicap in the matter of guiding the proletarian and revolutionary literature movement in America, especially as regards the fellow travellers. Thus, for instance, in a survey of the poetry of the fellow travellers, (February) while correctly appraising the work of the Rebel Poets, the journal limited itself to a few cursory remarks about this group without any elaborate criticism of their anthology, although this was a quite essential task in view of the place occupied by the Rebel Poets in the revolutionary literature movement of the USA.

The confusion that exists among contributors to the journal on the most fundamental questions of proletarian literary theory seriously hinders it from taking un a correct stand towards individual writers. As a case in point we might mention Melvin Levy's review of the latest books by Colman, Dahlberg, and Carlisle (May). Levy advances an "original" theory of proletarian literature. He says:

"The literature of the proletariat develops from two sources. First of course, there is that which comes from the militant worker himself or from the intellectual who has cast his lot with him and bends his talent to the conscious expression of workingclass problems and aims. But perhaps equally as important—and certainly as significant —is that writing which deals with the worker, and as a class; not because the writer *intends* it to, but because the powerful stirring of the proletariat has forced itself upon him without his will, impregnated him with the knowledge as a fact of that which he might not be willing to admit even to himself. Into this classification belong the three books reviewed here. In the Kharkov sense of proletarian literature as that written for, by and of proletarians, they do not, of course, belong. Some of the writers certainly—perhaps all of them—are not workers; nor have they written to workers. But they have written *of* workers. And not workers merely as human beings who happen to be in coal mines or lumber mills instead of bank directors' chairs, and who love and hate (as publishers' blurbs are apt to have it) without reference to their class."

'Louis Colman's Lumber, for instance, though it has no revolutionary ideology, is a proletarian novel in a way that even the *Iron Heel*, which states Marxist principles, but whose people are college teachers and financiers, is not." Levy further writes, apparently in praise of the author, that:

"Colman is completely innoocent of the accepted terminology of many (too many) of our class writers. He never, for instance, mentions the class struggle; perhaps he is hardly aware of it. Yet in every point in his book we *see* the class struggle, inevitable, above the will of the writer or his characters."

Apart from the mistaken opinion that revolutionary ideology comes of itself, "irrespective of the desire of the author," and the strange criterion by which he estimates the value of alleged proletarian literature (comparing such work with Jack London's *Iron Heel)*, particular stress should be laid upon the principal fallacy contained in the above quoted review, namely the unique "liberalism" by means of which Levy obligingly "extends" the concept of "proletarian" literature, turning it into a label (now interpreted in the sense of the Kharkov Conference, now in the sense of Melvin Levy) that might be affixed to any book. We know to what objective results such an "extension" leads in practice. We know how by the aid of such an "extension" in France, for instance, fascism in the person of Poullaile has foisted anti-proletarian literature under the mask of "proletarian literature." For this very reason we must achieve perfect clarity once and for all upon the fundamental questions of proletarian literature, such as are touched upon by Levy in his review. This is a condition *sine qua non*, and if *New Masses* should fail to carry it out, it will never be able to fulfil its responsible role as the theoretician and guide of the proletarian and revolutionary literature in the USA.

This necessity to do away with the backwardness of *New Masses* on the political and theoretical front, while facing the journal with the militant task of raising its political and ideological level through systematic activity at mastering the theory of Marxism Leninism, by studying the whole experience of the international revolutionary literature movement in the sphere of creative theory, by linking up the activity of the journal with the everyday struggle of the American working class and its vanguard — the Communist Party of the USA, by creating a wide worker correspondent movement around the journal and by attracting the largest possible numbers of revolutionary intellectual fellow travellers, at the same time raises equally responsible tasks before the leadership of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers and before the English edition of its central organ, *International Literature*. The IURW takes upon itself to watch with the closest attention the work of *New Masses*, subjecting to a critical examination (through the Anglo American Commission of the IURW) every new issue of the journal. In view of the general weakness of the Marxist criticism in America, IURW undertakes to continue in its central organ the work started already last year — the study of the fundamental problems of Marxist Leninist criticism — and also to extend and systematize the work of *International Literature* in the sphere of concrete critique of the basic phenomena in contemporary American literature.

A. Elistratova

BOOK REVIEWS

The Playboy Goes to Russia [1]

In the spring of 1930 Mr. O'Flaherty, an Irishman who writes in English paid a visit to the Soviet Union. He travelled on a Soviet ship, and stayed here a mounth, visiting Leningrad and Moscow. He then returned home and published a volume of tomfoolery, whose only difference from similar anti-Soviet concoctions by Messrs Beraux, Istrati and others is that none of its cock-and-bull stories could be taken seriously even by the most die hard readers of the bourgeois press.

To argue with Mr. O'Flaherty would be like using heavy artillery against sparrows. There can be no talk about exposing him, for Mr. O'Flaherty cannot be considered a shady person. On the contrary, everything about him is quite clear, transparent even. Transparent to such a degree that through him, like through a window pane, one can distinctly see the influence of the *Daily Mail, Rul, Novoye Vremia* and all the other fascist and white guard papers of the world, from which O'Flaherty has copied his book. The yarns of this eye witness make one roar with laughter, and that is the book's only merit. Thus, for instance, on board of a Soviet ship Mr. O'Flaherty saw with his own eyes men with wigs and painted faces, a phenomenon most likely due to Mr. O'Flaherty's fondness of the wine bottle which he himself acknowledges. In Leningrad our playboy visited the winter palace, the former residence of Russian tsars, and there saw the bed, on which Nicolas II, the last of the Romanovs, departed to glory. This astounding discovery reveals the touching intellectual innocence of our "willynilly comedian," who thinks that all a writer needs is intuition, and that knowledge of the elementary facts counts for nothing. [2] In the streets of Leningrad Mr. O'Flaherty happened to see crowds of men in red caps, but... without trousers, which hallucination is undoubtedly a result of the same unfortunate and intemperate friendship between our merry traveller and his namesake Paddy O'Flaherty. During his sojourn in Moscow Mr. O'Flaherty studied the well-known "Pilniak case," and came to the conclusion that the cause of Pilniak's "sufferings" was not his counter revolutionary book, but the black envy aroused by his enormous fees. Such an interpretation is in perfect accord with the commercial world outlook of Mr. O'Flaherty, who despite all his atheism has remained faithful to one god, that of cash.

Mr. O'Flaherty announces his political creed with disarming frankness. To say that he offers us one after another all the meals of the world's counter revolutionary kitchen would be almost a euphemism. Mr. O'Flaherty's views are the views of a dyed-in-the-wool imperialist and fascist. The following quotation gives the best confirmation of this:

> "We find that in all periods of recorded history a community with more energy, cunning and intelligence than its neighbor set up a hegemony in the course of its development and expansion. Some, like the Romans established an empire by commercial exploitation, but in all cases the imperial communities built up great civilizations and cultures. Indeed, imperialism and culture and civilization have been until now inseparable and always synonimous. Even the Italian republics of the Renaissance period were little commercial Empires who paid crusaders to make trade routes to the East. [1] In fine, when you accuse the British Empire of being cruel and tyrannical, it is just the same as accusing an oak tree of being a cruel tyrant, because the destruction of neighboring smaller plants is necessary to its growth. One might say that the exploitation and oppression of India's millions was necessary for the production of Darwin, Newton and Shelley by providing that luxury and leisure and pride of being which are the backgrounds of the flowering of genius. [2] Nor should I, as an Irishman deplore the conquest of Ireland if that conquest helped to inspire the proud genius of Shakespeare." (187-188)

These aphorisms of our bold Liam would do justice even to the most die-hard organ of European fascism *Antieuropa* (published in Italy). Everybody knows however that the gentlemen

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[1] Liam O'Flaherty, *I Went to Russia*. Jonathan Cape. London, 1931.

[2] Mr. O'Flaherty describes his literary method as follows: "It is no use showing me the city in detail and giving me figures and facts. I could see nothing and learn nothing. I know merely by intuition. I feel essences. I don't see surfaces." (134)

On page 278 Mr. O'Flaherty illustrates the practical use of his method of studying a foreign country and fathoming the nature of things: "I picked up," he says "girls in the streets by the same method as in other countries."

Mr. O'Flaherty seemed to be quite satisfied with this sphere of knowledge and did not find it necessary to acquaint himself with the life and work of a single factory or mill, or a single educational establishment. He probably did not want to overburden his weird intuition.

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[1] Here is another specimen of Mr. O'Flaherty's anecdotic ignorance: only his unparalled intuitive genius could make of Lorenzo and Cosmo de' Medici organizers of crusades.

[2] The reader will readily understand that here Mr. O'Flaherty places on a level with such geniuses as Shakespeare, Newton, Shelley and Darwin another genius, *i. e.*, O'Flaherty himself. The figures he mentions were reared on the soil of a culture rooted in exploitation. This culture, however, stifled the potentialities of the overwhelming majority of mankind and the names mentioned by O'Flaherty represent brilliant but rare exceptions. The mass productions of this culture, however, comprise the work of innumerable varieties of mediocre parasites and the O'Flaherty variety does not belong to the least known of these. It is not our intention here to investigate the relations between the creative work of Shakespeare and the exploits of the English soldiery in Ireland. We shall only point out, that this observation could be made only by a "shoneen," who has licked the boots — and not only the boots — of those who have put to death the best of Ireland's heroes in the fight for national freedom from Robert Emmet to James Conolly and Liam Mellowes.

from *Antieuropa* are ready to consider even their blood-relation Aristide Briand a communist and a bolshevik for the reason that he propagates his smart illusions about combining imperialist banditry and the ideal of Pan-Europe.

Mr. O'Flaherty's philosophy perfectly matches the classical antisemitism which he shares with the noble international Russian-Austrian-French-German brotherhood of Markov-Lusger-Drummond-Hitler. Walking out of the Soviet Mission, a Soviet visa in his pocket, Mr. O'Flaherty utters a hoarse anti-Semitic yell which continues to the end of the book. No less than two thirds of the volume are devoted to showing up the "Jewish essence" of cummunism. Mr. O'Flaherty is hag-ridden by the "Jewish" incubus. On the Soviet ship he is closely surrounded by Jews, and only the faithful brandy bottle can give him peace and oblivion. Here the chicken brains of Mr. O'Flaherty hatch a brilliant though not quite original conception borrowed with slight alterations from that rich and fecund "literature" sold by hawkers on church holidays together with scapulars and other implements of piety. According to this conception the whole of human history amounts to an eternal antagonism between the fair, noble and cheerful "Viking" and the gloomy fanatical and ascetic "Jews." This staggering idea is developed in a special chapter (page 63-84, chapt. IV "Jews and Vikings") where a half page or so is devoted to a criticism of Marx — a desperate "Jew," who did not know the first thing about the beauties of "Viking's" life.

Obsessed by this idea, Mr. O'Flaherty comes to Moscow and Leningrad, where the nose and ears of a "Viking" help him sense the "Jewish" spirit and rhythm of these cities. No doubt only some strange and inexplicable fortuity prevented Mr. O'Flaherty from detecting disguised Jews in the monuments of Peter I and Alexander II, which he had the opportunity to see in Leningrad. This however might be explained by the lack of time, for Mr. O'Flaherty's sojourn in the Soviet Union was rather short, which of course is to be considered as a mitigating factor.

After this one can pretty well guess what would be given by such a well prepared witness of the great revolutionary events going on in the Soviet Union, the land of proletarian dictatorship and victorious socialism.

We shall not go into the details of the "Viking's" philosophical meditations about bolshevism as a "new religion" which he copied out of the books of his French predecessors. His yarns about "Soviet imperialism" are of a more practical character. Here again he is not original, but only obediently follows the unwritten (but none the less firm) instructions of the class, on whose order the book has been concocted. Undoubtedly the Western bourgeoisie has set the "Viking" a very definite task — to frighten the European public with the ghost of bolshevist conquest threatening Europe. To realize this cheap trick suggested by the General Staffs of Europe, Mr. O'Flaherty making use of his remarkable erudition, develops a theory of bolshevism as a new stage in the evolution of Russian national aggression. Forgetting his "Jewish incubus," Mr. O'Flaherty indulges in profound historical digressions like the following:

"By looking back over Russian history an interesting theory sprang into my mind with the vividness of a drama. It was that the whole of Russian history from the beginning of the tsarist period to the present day and on in the future, is a direct continuation of the will to conquer the world... The Tsars were overthrown. But the Russian colossus reorganized itself and crept away towards the East, away from these doorways into Europe which the European tsars had built. The wise Lenin armed with all the newest ideas of European statecraft retired on Moscow with his people and began a new policy of Russian expansion towards the East." (111-112).

Having established the fact of the bolshevist "expansion" eastwards, Mr. O'Flaherty proceeds to warn Europe. "Woe to Europe!" exclaims the courageous viking, his hair standing on end with fear, 'Russian bear... has... become more dangerous..." (112). Wild hordes are rushing (in the "Viking's" head!) from East to West threatening European culture and European civilization. "They shall come with fire and sword, lousy, hungry, thirsty, rampant, to take by plunder what is lacking in their territories. So, woe to Europe!" (178).

Mr. O'Flaherty is raving, no doubt. But he is raving at the command of his class, which will use these ravings as a rallying cry in their preparations for an armed attack against the first proletarian state in the world. To strike with awe the brains of European philistines, terrorizing them with the ghost of bolshevist expansion, to throw seeds of military chauvinist psychosis upon this fertile soil, to reap the bloody crop of intervention, to strangle the proletarian revolution in the west, and the colonial revolts in the East — such is the clear and noble purpose served day and night by the pens of divers hacks and hirelings. M. O'Flaherty also belongs to this select intellectual profession. He almost emphasizes this fact with his cynical sneer of a person not ashamed of his real longings: "My purpose in coming to Russia was to write lies about Russia... the more I suffered, the more courageous I should have to write lies about it" (159).

The only purpose of this buffoonery can be to advertise the fact that O'Flaherty is boldly swimming against the stream, opposing his "independent" point of view to the ever increasing sympathies towards the USSR shown by a certain part of European writers. By the way, according to Mr. O'Flaherty's own statements, his sufferings were chiefly due to the overcrowding of Moscow trams and the lack of pubs.

But to render our "Viking" his due, we must point out that his sincerest wishes are expressed with a truly exemplary frankness. Consider for instance the end of the book, its final note so to speak, which is worthy of expressing the innermost hope of Mr. O'Flaherty's life: "So does everything come to an end. So will the Leninist movement come to an end and give way to another" (299).

For the conclusion of his work Mr. O'Flaherty has to assume a rather lyrical and philosophical tone, but some hundred pages back the same idea is formulated with remarkable practicality. The scene is laid in Leningrad. Mr. O'Flaherty talks with a party woman, an occasional acquaintance of his. The "Viking" is as usual preoccupied with his own stomach, complains at the emptiness in that part of his person, grumbles over the lack of suitable restaurants and of course blames the Soviet system for all these shortcomings. This interlocutor tries to explain to him the situation, speaks of the difficulties of socialist construction in a country surrounded by capitalist countries. But this and similar explanations do not satisfy the intuitive genius of Mr. O'Flaherty! "Oh, let them die of hunger," I cried in rage. (p. 174).

There can be no doubt about the sincerity and frankness of this outcry. Expressing such a wish with regard to the working class of the USSR, Mr. O'Flaherty only expresses the innermost longing of his masters, a longing which — unfortunately enough for them — will never be realised.

We consider it superfluous to draw conclusions from this, but shall direct our reader's attention to some additional traits, no less characteristic of Mr. O'Flaherty.

In the first chapters of his book the "Viking" displays indifference to all kind of social problems. Bolshevism as such presents for him far less interest than a horserace or even a good football match.

What then could have led our hero to make such a long and unpleasant journey? Well, nothing other than the present state of the book market in Europe, where only two kinds of goods are quoted at a sufficiently high price: autobiographies and books on the USSR. Mr. O'Flaherty had already made a pile out of the interesting experiences of his life, but his appetite does not diminish and his eyes are turned towards the East from whence a bright light dazzles him — the golden light of cash. After a little hesitation Mr. O'Flaherty makes for the Soviet mission and gets a visa. Thus begins the creation of *I Went to Russia* "I write it honestly,"—declares O'Flaherty, "for the sole purpose of making some money..." (11) It seems that the "Viking" knows very well how to combine his concerns about the future of civilization with his interest in his own pocket. We now only have to learn more about the commercial methods of Mr. O'Flaherty.

A fortnight or so later we find his a guest at the International Bureau of Revolutionary Literature. As it happens, the Bureau is at that time busy with its famous questionnaire, asking the writers of Europe and Amerca to define their stand in the event of capitalist attack on the USSR. Naturally enough Mr. O'Flaherty is also asked the same question. Bear in mind, gentle reader, Mr. O'Flaherty's immortal sentence: "let them starve."

Hearken to our bold hero. "I looked slyly around the room at the revolutionary writers of Moscow and saw that they were all intelligent above the ordinary, not the sort of people one would be likely to find up to their necks in mud and water on a night of heavy bombardment. Indeed, it was easy to see that they all belonged with one or two exceptions to the race that is chosen for the last two thousand years for commerce, but not for war.

'Why pick on me?' I thought. 'My teeth are bad and my liver is diseased. But still... I have only eight roubles and I'm far from home.'

"So I wrote,[1] God forgive me, having no intention of ever again firing a shot on anybody but my creditors:

"Should capitalist Europe declare war on the Soviet Union I'll make war on capitalist Europe with every means in my power" (217).

This statement was then published in several languages. Now Mr. O'Flaherty reveals the secret of his radicalism. And what is more he points out that in case of a different answer no troubles would have arisen for him. "I do not wish to infer that I would have been treated with discourtesy had I told the truth, that I would not have been paid my royalties and that I would have been left without a room or a guide" (218).

If so then why did not Mr. O'Flaherty say what he thought? To this there can be only one answer: Mr. O'Flaherty imagined that somebody wanted to buy him and he made up his mind to sell himself at a good price. Later, with an easy mind and a full purse he would return to his defence of European civilization against bolshevist expansion. Here our "Viking" outstripped even his teacher and predecessor — the international adventurer Panait Istrati. For even that rascal had tried to disguise his political corruption under maudlin phrases about "principle."

Mr. O'Flaherty had to recognize his mistake. The bargain did not come off. It turned out that nobody wanted to buy him. The comrades from the IBRL took his answer as a thing self understood and turned to their other affairs. The disappointed "Viking" had nothing to do but to pray to god and his master to forgive his untimely "revolutionary" declaration.

The present article could have been far shorter. There were Henri Beraux, Paul Morand, Panait Istrati, now there is O'Flaherty and a number of other hack writers. Moreover, torrents of swill are being poured daily from all the slop pails of the bourgeois press and parliaments. It is really impossible to respond to every display of bourgeois stupidity, the more so that the rage of the old world is usually expressed with excruciating monotony. But in O'Flaherty's case it is necessary to utter special warnings and destroy illusions which may still exist. Years ago Mr. O'Flaherty permitted himself the luxury of mild disaffection of a rather anarchist character, directed chiefly against certain aspects of the bourgeois social order. This enabled him to flirt with revolutionary groupings in international literature, and in particular — with the IBRL. But time has shown that behind this disaffection of Mr. O'Flaherty there was nothing but the vanity of a philistine elbowing his way to a "place under the sun." And when the growing crisis of capitalism and the irrepressible progress of socialist construction led to a new and more definite formulation of all the questions connected with the existence of bourgeois order, — O'Flaherty wrote *I Went to Russia.* The lost sheep returned to the fold. He has lined up with the whole motley crowd of anti-soviet scribes. It appears that Mr. O'Flaherty had conceived the wish to add to the number of the official emblems of this brotherhood, and so offered them a voluminous production of 299 pages.

In conclusion we shall say a little about another characteristic feature in Mr. O'Flaherty's pasquinade. We are speaking of the fear to which Mr. O'Flaherty was subject during the whole of his travel. The "Viking" begins to shiver when he first enters the Soviet ship. His trembling in-

[1] In fact Mr. O'Flaherty had then made an even more militant declaration which he no longer remembers, owing to his inborn forgetfulness. This is what he wrote: "In the Great War I suffered as a tool of British Imperialism and next time I will be very glad to get my own back." Mr. O'Flaherty has lost all his teeth at war, he said. But now, after a thorough study of Mr. O'Flaherty's personality, we suspect that he lost his teeth in some other kind of conflict — and hardly undeserved, we wager!

creases as the ship comes nearer to the Soviet shores. From time to time our "eye witness" has such attacks of shivering, that his book falls from your hands. But to give him his due, we must point out that his greatest attacks of fear are faithfully registered by himself. The main blow is struck in Moscow. During a walk Mr. O'Flaherty finds himself before a large building. "I looked up. It was the headquarters of the Russian Communist Party... I hurried away instinctively..." (246-247).

Mr. O'Flaherty has good reasons to be afraid. It is not the fair headed 'Viking" that trembles before us, but the very soul of his class. This soul has visited the country which is doing away with the last remnants of the bourgeois regime. The soul raged, raved, slandered, indulged in curses and threats, but — shivered, shivered the whole time. For it could not help seeing in the Soviet country the symbol of its near and inevitable future, could not help realising that its own story is coming to an end.

M. Helfand

Tvorba [1]

Tvorba is already in the sixth year of its existence. It was founded by Professor Salda — a prominent leader of the radical section of the Czech intelligentsia. Originally it was a typical intellectual eclectic magazine, intended for a narrow circle of readers, principally the followers of Professor Salda. It contained articles and notes on the most various subjects: on poetry and culture, on tradition and revolution, on the agrarian question, on Goethe and Shakespeare, and on current events.

At the end of 1927 the bourgeoisie of Czecho-Slovakia, aided by its armed forces, its political parties, press and intelligentsia came down upon the communist movement. As was later proved by the exposures of deputy Stribrny, the bourgeoisie spent enormous sums on bribery, endeavoring to burst the Communist Party from inside. In fact, a strong liquidatory group was formed within the movement itself. This group made things hot for the new leaders, and succeeded in getting hold of two of the largest Party newspapers in the province *(Liberty* in Kladno, and *Equality* in Brno), while in Prague they were assisted by the police, who supressed *Rude Pravo*, the central organ of the Party.

Such were the circumstances under which the magazine *Tvorba* fell into the hands of the Czechish Communist Party. From the very first *Tvorba* had the urgent task of filling a gap in the Party press. The magazine became a political, fighting organ of the masses, shedding the light of Leninism on all happenings that concerned the interests of the working class in Czecho- Slovakia.

Such incidents as the shooting at worker's demonstration in *Duksovo, Kosuty*, in Carpathean Ukraine, which aroused all Czecho-Slovakia, were fully dealt with in *Tvorba*. From the very beginning political articles and sketches, feulletons, skits and photos predominated in the magazine. This made the magazine popular with the masses.

During the short period of its existence its circulation reached 10,000 copies, an imposing figure for Czecho-Slovakia. Though the magazine caters for the masses, it maintains a high quality and hence, its influence on the advanced workers and particularly on the youth, is undoubtedly great.

The magazine is devoted not only to politics, but also to literature and art.

How does it cope with its tasks? How does it shed light on literature, on Czecho-Slovakian literature in the first place?

Unfortunately, we must admit that systematic treatment not only of foreign, but even of Czech literature, (in particular proletarian literature) is not to be found on the pages of the magazine.

So far, the magazine has only contained articles about such writers as Brezina, Irasek, Dyk, Stasek, and this merely because these authors happened to die. Otherwise the readers of the *Tvorba* would never have heard about them.

True, last year *Tvorba* conducted a campaign against "poetism" (a tendency similar to surrealism in France) which holds sway in modern Czechish literature. Stanislav Nejmann wrote an article "Art without content and its criticism" for *Tvorba*. Nejmann gave a profound Marxist analysis of this trend and exposed its bougeois nature.

No attempt was made to give a scientific analysis of "poetism" from the stand point of dialectical materialism.

Thus recently *Tvorba* has printed the resolutions of the Kharkov Congress, V. Vaclavek's article on the Congress, Comrade Gubner's speech at the Congress, M. Gorky's article and finally extracts from Ermilov's book *For the Live Man in Proletarian Literature*. *Tvorba's* readers could hardly form a clear idea of the philosophic bases of proletarian literature with the help of such materials alone.

This is by no means accidental. In our opinion the magazine in general underestimates the political importance of literature. It has no systematic stand in the matter of literature: not a single novelette, not a story, not a tale of Czech, Slovak or German proletarian writers (excepting essays of V. Kanja and Lida Cekotova). The sketch occupies practically the whole attention of the editors. The sketches of E. E. Kisch and I. Erenburg are in special favor. Of the works of West European proletarian writers extracts have appeared from the tales of E. Glaeser, Grupp, Plivier, and others.

All this is absolutely insufficient by way of antidote to the powerful bourgeois press, which by devoting considerable attention to literature, draws the writers into its camp.

Despite all, *Tvorba* is the only revolutionary magazine in Czecho-Slavokia and one of its main tasks is to lead the proletarian movement in literature. But what is the meaning of this leadership in contemporary Czecho Slovakia? It is by no means sufficient to publish the resolution of the Kharkov Congress, or the letters of the IURW.

Such leadership implies relentless struggle with bourgeois literature which now has the monopoly. It means to fight with those individual writers who serve as spokesmen of fascism, to expose their counter revolutionary role, to destroy their

[1] A weekly magazine, devoted to literature, politics and art. Published in Czech in Prague.

influence over the masses and over those intellectuals who have thrown in their lot with the proletariat.

Proletarian literature can muster strength only by combatting bourgeois literature. A strong detachment of proletarian writers can be formed only by able leadership of this fight and by giving careful attention to each individual proletarian writer.

In this connection the position in Czecho Slovokia must be regarded as far from flattering.

Last spring the Union of Proletarian Writers organized an excursion to the Karlov Foundry Plant, to assist the striking workers. On their return the writers published a number of essays and sketches, which pointed to mistakes on the part of the leaders of this excursion and the writers own lack of training for this work. They did not work out a plan of action, did not subdivide their work with the result that only one theme was treated: scabs and pickets.

One "trifle" escaped their attention: the plant itself. The history of the class struggle in the plant, the heroic activity of the Party nucleus, which succeeded in leading the workers in their fight. It must not be forgotten that the strike lasted six weeks, the workers not giving in, until all their resources were exhausted. All this the writers failed to notice.

Another interesting example is afforded by the writer Kanja. At the present moment Kanja is the only person with proletarian tendencies, to make his way into literature. But he has a number of most serious mistakes and deviations. He is an offspring of the lumpen proletariat rather than of the proletariat, and nearly every book he writes eulogizes his vagrancy and tramping. He idealizes criminals, depicting them as fighters against the existing regime. And *Tvorba* fails to disclose these errors, and keeps silent. This attitude, naturally, hinders him in his re-education. This is very unfortunate as Kanja is by no means devoid of talent.

Tvorba does not struggle in an organized fashion for proletarian literature. Moreover, the magazine absolutely fails to recognize painting. During its entire existence it has not published as much as a paragraph on the subject, whereas much attention is devoted to architecture and the cinema, particularly the latter. Nearly every issue contains reviews of Soviet and American movies.

True the problems undertaken by the magazine are great. It cannot be said that *Tvorba* does not cope with these problems on its 16 pages. It mobilizes the masses, moulds their consiousness, shows them that the only escape from capitalist crisic lies in social revolution. This is why the censor is so merciless to *Tvorba*. There is not an issue that is not confiscated by the censor. Sometimes the magazine appears with a number of pages blank. But thi sdoes not release it from its historical duties to proletarian literature, does not release it from the necessity of fighting on the most difficult front—literature. It is to be hoped, that the editors will cope with this important task in future.

M. Skachkov

INTERNATIONAL CHRONICLE

USSR

A TALK TO WORKER WRITERS BY MAXIM GORKI

I should like to say a few words about the movement for calling shockworkers into literature.

You are all the time on the job, and from your ranks there are coming forth new men charged with class energy. Even when these are not sufficiently organized, politically and ideologically, even then one feels that the new man is on the way.

Today I was at the plenum of the Central Committee and saw people whom I did not know before. These are young people, probably 35 years younger than I. In European parliaments, let us say in England, you would hardly find deputies of the Labor Party and their ministers reason as did Com. Yakovlev, Com. Yourkin of the Kolhozcenter and others.

They all have a remarkable knowledge of the things they talk about. They know their trade as master workers of socialist construction.

These are the new masters of the earth, master-socialists, called by history to create new conditions of life.

In listening to them I thought: "If our men of letters only knew their trade as well." There are thousands of you, comrades, and no doubt some among you after five or ten years will become masters in literature. You possess that which men of letters of my generation and the generation following me did not possess: *i.e.*, a broad grasp and understanding of the energy which products all kinds of things and changes the relations between people. You are in the midst of this life, in the very thick of it. This gives you an unusually rich experience, provides you with excellent new material. You will enter life much better and more richly equipped than did the writers of my generation.

It seems to me that this is a sufficiently correct evaluation not only of what one may expect of you but also of what should be demanded. As shock workers in plants and factories you yourselves create things and for you it is of course much easier than for others, to tell and picture the process of changing reality, the process of changing the old and educating a new man.

Before passing on to other questions, it is necessary to talk about some faults common to all your books.

I know that my demands may seem excessive, nevertheless they must be presented. This is in your own interest, in the interest of the literature you are building up. Literary work—is not easy work.

Many serious themes are compromised in our literature, are ruined and maimed because of the haste in which books are written. Haste should perhaps not be considered a fault because our young people have accumulated so much that they like to say it as quickly as possible. For this reason young writers either don't say enough, or else talk too much, striving to write as beautifully as possible. They get entangled in a mass of superfluous words.

We have long books of some hundred pages where there is hardly enough material for 30 or 40 pages. This is a common phenomenon. You have not learned the habit of economizing in words, just as an inexperienced carpenter cuts up many boards before he can make some insignificant stool. This uneconomic waste of material is due to technical inexperience.

One very important theme that is ignored by you is the peasant's introduction to factory life. Lads are coming to the towns who were brought up under entirely different circumstances. The village has bred in them all kinds of prejudices. Possibly they no longer believe in god or devil or ghosts. But the fact that they once believed in all this is still alive in them. There is still that dark inner urge to find some belief, to get a backing in something, without investigating this "something." In the villager this mood is very strong. He is still inclined to seek something unusual beyond our mundane life, even though this life itself has become unusual thanks to the changes caused by the revolution. The energy of the revolution germinates and develops among the toiling people the world over. This is the case in China, in Spain, in North and South America and in the Scandinavian peninsula. Communism is a demand made by history, presented by the working class—by the proletarians of all countries. But it happens that the words "socialism" and "communism" are used more often than they are understood. For the peasants it is particularly difficult to understand the great meaning of these words. The peasant prefers faith to knowledge. The people lived during many decades in an environment that could not ensure dignity, valor and daring of thought.

If we take folklore, the oral creation of the people, we shall see that the village folk produced many more myths, legends and tales than the town; we shall observe that the songs of the village treat of the relation between the sexes, the beauties of nature, etc. The social motives are expressed in the fact that man does not like to leave his habitual environment, his village and go to work or to the army. We have reached the point when a lad goes gladly to the army, to the factory, to the collective farm—but still with certain remnants of prejudices and superstitions.

A worker takes a formless piece of material—a lump of iron ore—and creates needles, guns and everything between needles and guns. He produces huge uncanny machines. The effort of the worker is to master all the forces of nature, to take from nature all he can.

Take a peasant, place him at Magnitostroi, at Selmash, at the Amo works, at Electrostal,—let him see the processes of production. Try to guess, study, tell how all this affects him. He is unable to express it in words, all is new and mysterious, more mysterious than the things by which his ancestors lived. He comes and sees other people, who talk differently and think differently to him. This is one theme, which in its turn gives rise to many other themes. The processes of production must be taken more widely than they are now. I talk not to criticize you, not at all; I wish to point out the direction for the literature of the shock worker. You should deal with central themes, you should strive to organize the workers' experience. In many plants, even in small ones there takes place a creative process: reason masters the forces of nature in order to make them work for it—for mankind, for the whole world. It is evident that those of you who have a passion for literature and who are destined to become men of letters should treat of these themes.

Recently I wrote somewhere that it is easier to write about the old. This is quite so, comrades, because the old has stratified, settled and formed itself. But now everything changes at an incredible rate. Not so long ago there were 52% of collective farmers, today there are 54%. This has happened during two weeks—what a growth! With such changes, it is exceedingly difficult to keep abreast of life and those changes that take place in man himself. I meet many comrades, whom I have known before. They have grown to a degree which is quite unbelievable. One meets them and asks: "Is it really you?" Reality educates man wonderfully; if it does not break him it surely rejuvenates him. This is particularly evident in that sphere where man was most defective.

Let us take for example the colonies for the homeless and socially dangerous. Look at what is done with these people by the working class, the Party and the Soviet power. I need hardly mention that bourgeois Europe has nothing to compare with these achievements. There were such efforts in America: 500 men were paroled from the penitentiary, but during one year 85% again landed in prison. Of the remaining 15% some committed suicide because no one wanted to give a job to a man from jail; the others disappeared heaven knows where, probably became hoboes.

Near Moscow we have the Bolshovo colony. This is an excellent institution. It houses many former "criminals." There are 1,600 of them work there. They have an excellent factory. They produce 100 pairs of skates and 900 pairs of shoes daily, not to mention other goods. They have five dormitories. Among them are many young communists. Some of them, while working there, attend high school. Look also at the Dzerzhinsky colony in Nikolo-Ugreshy, near Kharkov, where 1,300 lads are at work.

The educational value of our life is particularly evident on such a material. I know these down and out folks very well, these are those who were knocked out from the life of the nation. I also know that it pays to put them back on their feet.

Take all these colonies of juvenile delinquents. We really have no juvenile criminals, we have the homeless. We have almost struck the term "criminal" out of our vocabulary. In respect to the sabotager we still talk about "criminals," but here we have the socially dangerous, and these socially dangerous we make over into socially useful beings. They become excellent citizens, fine workers—on the land, in the factory and wherever else you want.

How was the criminal formerly treated? The abnormal criminal type was from the outset condemned to the penitentiary, he could not expect mercy, he was the enemy of society. Nowadays these "enemies of society" are turned into useful citizens. Recently 73 of these men received their trade union membership card.

Many other facts could be indicated, but I shall not fatigue you. I shall only say that we live in such a storm of events, in such a strain of energies that we frequently lose sight of them and much escapes us.

I have cited these facts as an example of the influence of reality upon man. I would like to draw the following conclusion: the pulse of life must be felt in literature. Although we ourselves live by great passions, we do not introduce these powerful passions into our literature. It is high time we learnt how to make our literature a passionate affair.

MOSCOW—A PORT

The idea of turning Moscow into a maritime port by lining up the Moskva river with the Volga arose from the necessity of giving an adequate water supply to Moscow's population. The present average per capita water consumption is 128 liters daily as compared with 560 liters in New York, 400 liters in Paris, and 870 liters in Chicago. Prerevolutionary Moscow was on the starvation rate of 61 liters. During the revolutionary period the bolsheviks have trebled Moscow's water supply bringing it up from 8.5 million to 27 million buckets. Nevertheless even now only 73% of Moscow's thoroughfares and 42% of the houses are served by the water pipe system. During the summer, owing to low pressure, the upper stories in some of the main streets are without water.

Moscow is the capital city of the proletarian revolution, and its population should have an adequate water supply. But from what sources can this water be drawn?

At present the metropolis pumps 27 million buckets out of the Moskva river, and in 1935 a minimum of 60 million buckets will be needed. Yet, the average daily flow of water into the Moskva river (exclusive of the spring flow) is from 57 to 60 million buckets. This means that the whole water would have to be pumped out, without leaving one drop of it for navigation purposes. Of course, this is impossible as river navigation is of tremendous importance to Moscow. Besides petroleum from the Volga and the Oka, considerable cargoes of building materials are carried by the water routes, relieving congestion on the railways.

There were numerous projects for securing Moscow an adequate water supply. For instance, it was proposed to regulate the annual flow of water from the rivers of the Moskva basin by sluicing the Moskva, Istra and Ruza rivers.

Another project called for the construction of a pipe system to pump water from the Volga or the Oka.

The latest project, submitted by the engineer V. I. Avdeyev, is simple as well as momentous, solving simultaneously the two problems of Moscow's water supply and of navigation. It renders the Moskva river navigable, and it provides for its future lining up with the Caspian, Black, and Baltic, and possibly even the White Sea. The Moskva is to be linked up by means of canals with the upper currents of the rivers which empty their waters into these seas. Under Avdeyev's project, the problem of Moscow's water supply is solved by having the water from the Volga and the Oka flow into the Moskva over a permanent canal. This project was approved by the plenary session of the Central Committee of the CPSU last June, and construction work on this project is now being started.

Under the new system of water supply, there will be a steady flow of water from the Volga on the north, starting at the town of Staritsa, running over the Senezh pass, and into the Skhodnia river near Moscow. At the same time there will be a flow of water from the south, from the Oka near Kaluga, taking in all the rivers en route.

The realization of this project of turning the water from the Volga and Oka into the Moskva was considered by many as a "physical impossibility." True, it involves a vast amount of hard and unusual work, but it is unquestionably a fully practicable scheme. Such alluring vistas are opened up that it will pay to overcome all difficulties encountered in the realization of this momentous project.

The basis of the project consists in the proposition to raise the level of the Volga at a suitable point, near the town of Staritsa, by means of a dam 2/3 of a kilometer long and 33 meters high. The watershed which separates the Volga from the Moskva—the Sinezh lake—is to be deepened to 32 meters by digging a trench 40 kilometers long. A canal is to be dug from the village of Rodnya to the town of Klin, 150 kilometers long, which will link up all the local rivulets.

Such is a brief outline of the project, on which work has been started. The estimated cost is about 200 million rubles, and the time schedule has been provisionally fixed at four years.

The water from the Volga will reach Moscow at such a level as will secure a continuous supply of water to the entire metropolitan area. The level of the Moskva river will be raised to such a height that it will take in all the streams, brooks, ponds, etc., and will thus result in considerable improvement of the ground on the banks of the river in and around Moscow. Moreover, a considerable volume of water will then become available for industrial purposes, for hydraulic power production, anti-drought measures, etc.

However, the outstanding and monumental feature of the project is the prospect of turning Moscow into a deep water port. From a practically waterless city lying far inland and remote from the sea routes, Moscow will become a maritime port carrying on shipping with all the seas, not to speak of the huge development of inland navigation. The realization of the project has already begun, and there is every indication that the great construction will be completed within the period provisionally scheduled.

France

ROMAIN ROLLAND ON "LITERATURE OF THE WORLD REVOLUTION"

Romain Rolland has sent Bruno Jasiensky, the Editor-in-Chief of *International Literature* a letter in which he comments on the numbers of French Edition of *Literature of the World Revolution* sent to him.

"The Review made a very favorable impression on me. You may count on me as a subscriber. I have been able to form a judgment—both as to subject matter and artistic merit — on several contributions in the first number. I was particularly impressed by O. Erdberg's 'Chinese Short Stories' which in my opinion will rapidly secure a wide popularity for their author.

"I also liked Bela Illes' story with its touch of manly poignancy. The humor of Laicen's "Money" appealed to me.

"As for the number devoted to the Second International Conference of Revolutionary Writers, I consider it a remarkable historical document which is highly instructive for all of us."

THE POPULISTS ON THE KHARKOV CONFERENCE

The special number of *Literature of the World Revolution* in French, German and English, containing the resolutions and a stenographic report of the Kharkov Conference, was published after considerable delay and hence could be circulated abroad only comparatively recently. It is for this reason that the bourgeois press of Western Europe is only now commenting on the Conference. In France M. Andrè Teriv, a leader of the populists (fascist literary school which advanced the demagogical slogan of "working class themes") and the literary critic of *Temps*, was one of the first to comment on the Conference. In a lengthy article published in *Opinion* Teriv reprints the resolution on French literature and adds his own commentaries. Of particular interest are his explanations of Soviet literary terms. Thus, a fellow traveller according to M. Teriv, is a "pioneer of proletarian literature" while a worker correspondent is "a writer sent specially to a factory to share in the life of the workers and exalt this life in literâture."

M. Teriv strongly objects to the slogan of cooperation between proletarian writers in capitalist countries with the fellow-travellers, advanced by the Kharkov Conference. M. Teriv "warns" the radical petty bourgeois writers against such co-operation! The communists, he claims, only want to make use of the bourgeois literary masters in order that they "teach the secret of their craft to smiths, tinmen and farm hands." The communists, he continues, intend to throw these literary masters aside as soon as they have no further use for them.

Greece

ΠΡΩΤΟΠΟΡΟΙ

Protopori (Vanguard), a Greek magazine published in Athens since 1928, leads off its September 1931 issue with the appeal of the Kharkov Conference to all revolutionary artists of the world. The magazine also contains an appeal to the advanced intelligentsia, who are called upon to line up with the masses for joint struggle against fascism:

> "The present situation requires new forms of struggle. Fascism has unmasked itself and is openly preparing for battle with feverish haste. It seeks to deal a death blow to the oppressed masses by waging war on all fronts: in politics, trade unions and in science. The masses are faced with two alternatives: either fight to the end or succumb. The same dilemma faces the intelligentsia: war or death.
>
> "This is why the toiling masses have already begun to organize themselves into anti-fascist unions. All who stand for progress must join the anti-fascist unions, where they will come into closer contact with the masses and shoulder to shoulder, fight for the common cause—the liberation of the toilers.
>
> "Join the anti-fascist unions!
>
> "That's where we all belong!"

The magazine contains a notice in which the Society of Friends of Soviet Russia invites all sympathizers to take part in its congress. The Society plans to publish a monthly journal which will keep its readers informed about the USSR. The journal promises to acquaint the wide laboring masses with the achievements of socialist construction.

It is of interest to observe that *Protopori* prints the writings of workmen writers who are just starting their literary career, promising them the utmost assistance in their studies. Thus, *Protopori* prints a story by Comrade Georgiu, a worker, who in a few colorful words describes the horrors of the Saloniki prisons, the tortures and humiliation to which political prisoners are submitted.

The magazine protests against the persecution of *Rizospastis*—a daily newspaper. The true object of the trial in which *Rizospastis* figures as the defendant, was to suppress the only political newspaper that openly protects the interests of the oppressed masses and denounces the agents of the bourgeoisie. Protesting vigorously against the prohibition of this newspaper, the *Protopori* calls upon the advanced intelligentisa to add their voice to its protest. The magazine claims that the suppression of this newspaper signifies an intensification of the fascist terror and of the preparations for a new imperialist war and the participation of Greece in the intervention plot against the Soviet Union which istriumphantly laying the foundations of socialist construction.

The bourgeois press was unanimous in demanding the prohibition of *Rizospastiss*. The editor of *Rizospastis* was sentenced to eight years imprisonment, and several communist workers who expressed their sympathy with the editorial staff during the trial were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

Under the headline "A Fitting Response to Our Appeal," the magazine publishes a letter from a group of Jews in Saloniki who answered the call of *Protopori* to join anti-fascist unions and organized a Jewish vanguard group. The group promises to do all in its power to increase the circulation of *Protopori*.

The magazine also prints an interview with Lunacharsky, and contains translations of articles by Lunacharsky, poems by Demyan Bedny, songs about Stenka Rasin and original stories and poems on the life of Greek workers and poor peasants.

Czechoslovakia

PROTEST OF SEVENTY

A number of prominent Czech, German and Slovakian representatives of science and art have issued the following protest against the shooting of a workers' demonstration in Freiwaldau:

"We protest!"

> "We cannot remain silent in the face of what is happening here; we speak for all who have not lost their sense of moral responsibility. Demonstrators are being shot down! To demonstrate is the right of the people, and even under the Austro-Hungarian regime demonstrators were unmolested. Armed attacks, such as we have now, were then unheard of. Now, in this free nation, under a free government, men and women can be shot in the back when leaving a meeting. The question is one of humanitarianism not of politics. We protest because silence would make us accomplices to the shooting. We protest in the name of a sane humanity against those arguments which would justify such actions. No sane person can approve of an armed gendarmerie which can shoot at will children, women and those who merely disperse with the crowd. It is indeed a disgrace that we are asked to assent to these crimes. Those of us who think and feel otherwise, call for an end to these occurrences.
>
> Prague, November 23, 1931."

Only the newspaper *Rude Pravo* published the full protest. The social democratic papers published only parts without printing the names of those who signed (except for the *Peoples Review* which gave three). The bourgeois papers ignored this unpleasant incident. However, it did produce a noticeable effect upon many bourgeois intellectuals as is indicated by the signatures of such writers as Makhar, Shalda, Kraech and Fisher who enjoy considerable authority even in bourgeois circles.

The style and content of the protest are characteristic of those hazy "humanitarian" principles which unavoidably lead to confusion. Thus, what sort of a "free nation" is it where women, children, and even those in the dispersing crowd are shot down? And why is this question not one of politics?

In the protest of the seventy, much was left unsaid and much is vague. The authors would have nothing to do with politics but their protest is itself an important political act. These eminent Czech intellectuals found the courage to raise their voices against a single incident which is only a link in a whole chain of oppression. They should have found the courage to raise their voices against the whole criminal regime of dying capitalism which murders workers and peasants and allows thousands of proletarian fighters to rot in jail.

In connection with this protest, the Free theater of Vockovetz and Verikha decided to contribute the proceeds of the December 29th performance to the unemployed of Freiwaldau, where a brutal terror reigns. This is the first time in the history of the Czecho-Slovakian theatre that money was contributed to unemployed.

Finland

THE REVOLUTIONARY PROLETARIAN, LITERARY MOVEMENT IN FINLAND

The reaction in Finland after the unsuccessful revolution of 1918, played havoc both with the working class and with proletarian literature. The civil war and the white terror robbed the working class of many militants; the losses on the literary front were also considerable. Many writers emigrated (among them Kessi Kaatra, who died in Sweden in 1928) while others turned traitors out of selfish motives; these have gradually drifted to the camp of social fascism (Emil Lindtal).

The period after the civil war demanded that the best working class fighters confine their activities to the purely political struggle; few were left for work in art and literature, while arrests and imprisonment usually cut short the activity of those who could spare time for literary work.

Thanks to the monopoly the bourgeoisie hold in the field of publishing they played havoc with working class readers. This was the heyday of the dime novel which glorified the "war of national emancipation." As an antidote to such putridness there appeared writers who aimed at depicting the life of the proletariat and its struggle, from a working class point of view. Such was the work of Emil Lindtal and Conrad Lichtimjaki, who were known to the workers even before the civil war. However, their writings suffered from ideological shortcomings. Their subsequent treachery is the best proof of their uncertain convictions. Lindtal has found in the social fascist camp that "Glorious future," which he so extolled in his poems, while Lichtimjaki has thrown in his lot with the bourgeoisie to please his capitalist publishers.

Kessi Kaatra had denounced bourgeois literature in the old days, but long years spent abroad and separation from the working class of his native land left their mark on his work.

Kaarlo Valdi started writing poems, stories, novels, and plays in 1921.

The struggle of the revolutionary writers against bourgeois literature lacked organization and leadership, but nevertheless, even then "antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat on the literary front was in evidence." (Kosonen). The working class writers founded the Union of Workers, Writers and Artists.

The launching of the Union (in August, 1928) signified "a new stage on the hitherto stony field of proletarian literature in Finland" (N. Parviainen). It fought the bourgeois ideology dispensed to the workers by the social fascists, the myrmidons of the bourgeoisie.

To expose fascism, social fascism, and the preparations for war against the USSR was the all-important problem of the moment. The best members of the Union began to work under these slogans. Fascism replied with arrests and imprisonment.

The Union waged a struggle against bourgeois influence in its own ranks, by means of leadership and educational work in the pages of the magazines *Ichteisvoima* and *Ita ja Lansi (East and West)*.

Translations were made from revolutionary German writers and Soviet magazines. Special attention was paid to the subject of socialist construction in the Soviet Union.

Much propaganda was done by means of poems, songs and "living newspapers." The Union worked in conjunction with the newly formed "agitation and propaganda troupes." In 1929 there were over two hundred such troupes in Finland, which propagated the ideas of the Union. The anti-fascist, anti-social-fascist and anti-militarist activity of these troupes, as well as their struggle against military preparations, should be valued highly (and were so valued by the revolutionary workers' movement of Finland). The Union had practically no relations with the revolutionary writers of other countries.

The history of the Union is brief. It was organized in 1928, and was suppressed in the middle of 1930 when its most energetic workers were arrested and the magazine *Itajaransi* suppressed. A congress of representatives of the Union was held early in 1930. At this time the Union had only ten branches. The congress outlined the future work, discussed the problem of training new forces, and the drawing in of worker correspondents, and decided to publish a magazine. Previous to this the Union had no definite organ of its own, and its members published their work in the various workers' magazines which appeared from time to time. The work of editing the magazine *Ita ja Lansi* was entrusted to Ludwig Kosonen, the secretary of the Union. For many years this review had been an illustrated workers magazine. It was now converted into an illustrated artistic literary magazine to serve as the Union's official organ.

The Union's first magazine was launched in 1929 and contained only short works written by the members of the Union. It was planned to launch a second magazine in June 1930, but this venture proved unsuccessful.

The members of the Union wrote chiefly short stories, sketches and poems. The absence of larger works was due mainly to the fact that the members were not in a position to devote themselves wholly to writing. Oinonen, however, wrote one novel *At the Crossways*, and Karlo Valli, another. Ajalol Jarga had written two novels somewhat earlier, which suffered from ideological shortcomings. Some novels by Soviet proletarian writers have been translated (Gladkov's *Cement*, Kaverin's *Nine-tenths of Fate*, etc.).

Ludwig Kosonen was appointed the first secretary of the Union. At the time of his election he was in prison for belonging to the banned "Union of Socialist Youth," in which he carried out educational cultural work. His term of imprisonment being about to expire, it was decided to utilize him for this work. This fact is sufficient proof of the lack of new forces for work.

Ludwig Kosonen is undoubtedly one of the best Finnish working class writers. His verses breathe the optimism of class struggle and enjoy extensive popularity among the working youth of Finland. His numerous tales, sketches and poems are also well known. He was, furthermore, one of the most active leaders of the "agitation and propaganda troupes." Many of his songs are sung by the workers. In June, 1930, when editor of *Liekk (Flame)*, a weekly magazine for young workers, he was persecuted by the fascists. He is now living in the USSR and gives his whole time to writing. Rudolf Parviainen was also an active worker on the cultural front. A voluminous writer, he was sentenced to five years hard labor for his activity. Otto Oinonen is the only representative of the young generation of writers who has devoted himself entirely to literary work. He has written a novel called *At the Cross Roads* which was published in 1930.

This book, notwithstanding certain defects, is the first Finnish proletarian novel to deal with recent developments in the class struggle. Oinonen has also made translations from Soviet writers. The novel *At the Cross Roads* has been translated into Russian.

After the congress, Leo Salminen was elected secretary. The onslaught of fascism was at that time felt with especial fury. Several members of the Union were arrested. Salminen was just out of prison. His crime was that he had organized "agitation propaganda troupes" of young workers and had protested against the ban on the educational organizations of the working youth and the decree outlawing all workers' organizations. Salminen's activity in the Union was brief, the Union was banned, and mass arrests followed.

Tatu Vjatjanen was the first victim of the fascists. He was the first to expose in his works the social fascist agents and opportunists — renegades who had sneaked into the revolutionary workers' movement. He was sentenced to three years hard labor.

The last of the "Trio" of the best writers of the young generation — Armas Jajkija, is a staunch fighter against fascism. At the May 1 celebrations in 1930 (forbidden by the authorities) he made a lively speech against fascism and social fascism, exposing the military preparations against the USSR. He was later arrested by the social fascists and sentenced to five years imprisonment. He has written many memorable writings (*"Lenin's Decree," Sawyer's Assistant)*.

Anny Suonyo, another representative of the young generation, was also sentenced to a term of imprisonment. The same fate has been meted out to many other writers. After these numerous arrests the fascists found it easy to demolish the whole organization.

In Finland today a revolutionary writer is bound to end up in prison. But no prison can stop the movement. New forces will come, new organizations will spring up to renew the struggle under the leadership of the Communist Party. The revolutionary working class writers of Finland are well aware that they are not alone, that the revolutionaries of all countries are with them.

Italy

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF GIOVANNI GERMANETTO

I still remember the scene there was at home when they found out that I had joined the antimilitarist group in our town. It was called the "International Union of Anti-Militarists," and was headed by the notorious Hervé, now a nationalist and fascist, but at that time sentenced for having, according to his own statement, "trampled the national flag in the dirt."

There was quite an uproar at home. My grandfather was on old artilleryman. When I was a little boy he used to tell me about his life in the army. Now he was beside himself with rage. And he certainly had good reason to be, at least from his own point of view. He, a plain farm-laborer, worked up to the rank of artillery sergeant. (It was such a noble thing, the artillery!). He had earned three silver medals and received a pension, which, by the way, did not relieve him of the necessity of working for his living at 70 years of age. He had fought in the Crimea in 1854-1855, and took part in the Italian wars of independence in 1859, 1866, and 1870. King Victor Emanuel had actually shaken hands with him! Besides all this, my grandfather was extremely proud of the fact that he had fought under General Bava-Beccaris, the same general who, in 1898, restored order in Milan by shooting down workers with machine-guns.

My father had also been an artillery-man at one time and would both sit and show off before my uncle, who had only been in the infantry. He used to get very offended sometimes. They would always talk about shells, about light and heavy cannon, and the trajectory.

Grandfather often came to see us and so I often heard stories of his campaigns (I knew them by heart), my father's theories and a large number of military terms. In this way I learned a great deal about the theory and practice of war.

My grandfather would put out glasses, plates, bottles, forks, bread and salt-cellars on the table and explain the positions of the cannon to me.

No one would expect that after such a course of military training, I would finish up with antimilitarism.

It was a memorable evening. Everybody was at home including grandfather, father, mother, grandmother, an old aunt and my uncle who tried feebly to defend me against them all, perhaps because he had only been in the infantry and the others had ridiculed him for it.

They bullied and criticised me, and then presented me with an ultimatum: I was to choose between my family and anti-militarism. It was a serious question, particularly from a financial point of view.

I was not an experienced barber at that time and my father and grandmother knew this very well. I had often practised my art on them and usually managed to slice off bits of their skin along with the hair.

My grandfather often used to say that his barber-grandson had let more blood out of him than all the Russians, Germans and Americans taken together.

So now I had to decide at once how I was going to live. I was given several days to think and I decided—to join the Socialist Youth Organization, then just being started. This was in 1903. The anti-militarist group proved incapable of active work and so its business has been conducted from that time on by the Socialist Youth Organization.

The ultimatum did not allow for this. A brief family council was held and after this I left the town.

I am quite an old member of the movement. I was born in Turin on January 18, 1886. My father was a metal-worker and my mother a textile-worker. I joined the anti-militarist group in 1902, the Federation of Socialist Youth in 1903, and the Italian Socialist Party in 1906. I remained in the latter until 1921, that is, until the birth of the Italian Communist Party.

At 45 years of age I have already been a member of the Workers' Revolutionary Movement for twenty nine years.

I was secretary of the local group of the Italian Socialist Party, and secretary of the Provincial Federation during the war. After the war I was elected to the National Executive Committee of the ISP. During the war I was editor of some socialist weeklies and after the war worked on *Avanti!*, the central organ of the Socialist Party.

I always belonged to the left wing of the Socialist Party and in 1920 joined the Communist fraction then being formed.

After the split in the Socialist Party that took place in Livorno, in 1921, I worked as secretary of the Communist Federation of the province of Cuneo, Upper Italy. Later I was elected candidate of the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party and in 1929 became a member of the Central Committee.

I was responsible for the newspapers of the provincial Federation, and at a later period was one of the editors of the central organ of the Italian Communist Party, *Unita.*

I was sent as a delegate to the Socialist Congresses held in Ancone, in Reggio Emilia, to the secret Conference in Florence in 1917, to the Congress of Rome in 1918, of Bologna in 1919, Livorno, 1921, (at which the Party split took place), and took part in the work of the National Council of Florence and Milan in 1920, when the factories were seized by the workers. I was also present at the Constituent Congress of the Italian Communist Party at Livorno in 1921, in Rome in 1922, in Lyons in 1926, and at the IV Congress in 1931.

What part have I taken in the trade union movement? In 1903 I joined the Turin League of Barbers. In 1906 I was chosen secretary of the local labor bureau, took part in and led many strikes. I was elected secretary of the provincial labor bureau of Cuneo in 1921 and in 1925 was transferred to work in the Central Trade Union Committee of the Party. In 1926 I became the general secretary of the Federation of Employees. I took part in the congresses and conferences of the General Italian Confederation of Labor in Milan, Verona and Genoa, and also the meetings of the Confederational Executive Committee.

As regards the international work of the Party: I attended the IV, V, and VI Congresses of the Communist International and the IX Plenum, also the X, the II, III, IV and V Congresses of the Profintern and the VI and VII sessions of the Central Council of the Red International of Trade Unions.

In 1924 I was elected to the Executive Bureau of the Red International of Trade Unions, and in 1930 made a member of the Secretariat, which I have remained up to now.

I write for the international trade union and political press.

At the second International Conference of International Labor Defense (MOPR) I was elected a member of the Executive Committee of that association, and at the International Conference of Revolutionary Writers, held in Kharkov in 1930, I was elected a member of the presidium of that Bureau.

I have been brought up for trial eight times, including two important trials of the Italian Communist Party, one in 1923 and the other, in 1927, when we were tried by a special fascist Tribunal. I was interned during the war, and in 1927 sentenced to five years' exile. I was twice wounded by the fascisti.

As far as my work in the field of proletarian literature is concerned I have written a number of stories, published by the Communist Press in Italy — *L'Araba a Genova. Il Congresso dei Morte in Guerra, Cocaina e Belle Donne.*

While in the USSR I have worked for several papers and magazines and written *The Autobiography of an Italian Barber*, which has been published in Italian, Russian (four editions) German, Polish and French. Translations are also being printed in Ukrainian, Japanese, Spanish, Georgian and English.

It is curious to think that the lessons of my old grandfather, who loved me, after all, should have driven me in the direction he least expected or desired.

And I hope still to do something for the good of the proletarian revolution under the banner of the Communist International and in defense of our socialist fatherland, the USSR.

China

THE SITUATION IN THE LEAGUE OF LEFT WRITERS IN CHINA

(Letter from Shanghai)

The rapid development of the revolutionary movement in China is forcing the imperialists and the Koumintang to an ever more brutal use of terroristic methods. The whole world knows of the murder of five of our comrades. Another has been buried alive, and many are arrested without cause. These atrocities are a hard blow for our League, although the pressure of our enemies gives direction to the work of the League.

The League made a number of errors in following the line of Li-Li-sian (one of the leaders of the "left" wing of the C.P. of China). Our organization was not clearly revolutionary; we overestimated our strength and therefore could not keep the non-revolutionary and opportunist elements out of our ranks. The increased pressure of the terror gradually eliminated these elements. Some were bribed by the Koumintang and joined the puppet show—as we call the "literary politics" of the Koumintang. Our forces are so weak that a number of important tasks are being fulfilled only on paper. This leads us to adopt a number of decisive measures. We fully realize the need of uniting our forces and to accomplish this, we must re-register the League members, and remove all opportunist traitors. At the same time, we will improve our organs, and strengthen our leaders in practical work. We are publishing the *Literary Journal* and *Tsian Sao (Outpost)* through which we participate in the struggles of the masses. We can proudly state that every member is not only active, but takes the initiative in practical work.

As a result of the events in Manchuria, a new wave of revolution is rising throughout China. Our League is taking an active part in the agitation and propaganda against imperialism.

Although we formerly underestimated the importance of literary creation, we now recognize it and are encouraging original work among our members. To improve the technique of original literary work, we have organized a "Commission for the study of original production" and also a "Commission for literary criticism."

In an attempt to counteract the growth of the proletarian revolutionary movement and its influence on the masses, the Koumintang has organized in Nanking a group called "Literature of the three principles of Sun-Yat-sen." By spending much money on bribes to the "lumpenintelligentsia" and literary bohemians, it is making them propagandists for "national" literature. All the writers leading this movement are either spies of the Shanghai general staff or members of the executive committee of the Koumintang. Our enemies stop at nothing to intimidate the revolutionary writers; they are trying in every way to corrupt our League from within. They deceive the masses with national fascist propaganda, issue orders to the police to close book stores and publishing houses of the proletarian writers, and spy upon all radical elements. Their organs of national literature, a weekly and monthly called *Tsan Fun (Vanguard)*, are poor in every respect. The students and youth refuse to read them. Even moderate writers are dissatisfied with these "creations" and if it were not for the withe terror of the Koumintang, this dissatisfaction would long ago have been expressed openly.

The "Vanguard" group, in Shanghai is supported by Chang-Kai-shek while Hu-Han-mina supports the group at Nanking which issues the *Literature of the three principles of Sun-Yat-sen.* Very likely the everlasting dissensions among the various Koumintang groups will weaken their influence over the masses. Nevertheless, we must not underestimate the danger of reactionary literature. We have decided to use all legal and illegal means in determined struggle against them. With this aim in view, we have organized a "Commission of Theoretical Struggle."

Our League has a branch in Peiping, which is the cultural center of North China. Most of the students at Peiping are of the poorer classes whereas the Shanghai students come from bourgeois-compradore families. The withe terror is not as brutal as in the South and therefore the Northern branch of the League is growing rapidly (at present the branch has over 100 members).

We receive letters from Tokyo asking us to organize a branch of our League there. Thus in a short time the League will grow considerably.

SUPPRESSION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY CULTURAL MOVEMENT IN CHINA

Five writers have been arrested by the imperialistic police of the international settlement in Shanghai, delivered to the general staff of the Shanghai-Usun garrison and executed. Such acts of violence take place not only in Shanghai. Not long ago several students were beheaded in the Sichuan province for reading books on economics; the principal of the fifth public school in Shirin was sentenced to five years imprisonment, and the dean of the school to nine years and 11 months imprisonment, merely because their students had read Marxian literature.

Aiming to deal a death blow to all progressive thought and creative endeavor, the special criminal code issued by the Nanking government in February, 1931, includes, by order of the imperialists, the following articles: paragraph II, clause 2: "Anyone making use of writing, speech or drawings for purposes of propaganda against the nation will be sentenced to death or imprisoned for life." Paragraph III: "Anyone, instigated to violate clause 2 of paragraph II, who instead of reporting the instigator to the police, himself agitates against clause 2 of paragraph II, will be sentenced to imprisonment for life." Paragraph IV: "Anyone, advocating any doctrines other than San-Minchu will be sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than five and not more than 15 years." According to these laws all advanced thinkers and artists who revolt against the Koumintang and imperialist rule risk being imprisoned for a term of not less than five years, or even being executed.

The publication of radical books and periodicals is forbidden. Nine book shops in Shanghai were raided and closed by the Koumintang authorities merely for serving as agents for the Hua Sin Booksellers and keeping a stock of books on Leninism. Many bookshops were raided and closed in various other localities. According to information received from publishing circles many books enjoying world fame were forbidden to be translated into Chinese. Among these are such works as: *Historical Materialism* by Bukharin, *Ten Days That Shook The World* by John Reed, Plekhanov's article on art, *Mother* by M. Gorky, *Oil* by U. Sinclair, *A Week* by Libedinsky, and others.

Magazines, newspapers and other periodicals are subject to repressive measures. According to the Press Law passed by the legislative body of the Nanking government on November 29, 1931, "publications that are harmful to China, the Kuomintang or the San-Min-chu, or that seek to overthrow the National Government, are prohibited." (Paragraph IV, clause 12). Furthermore, according to paragraph 7, all publishers of newspapers or magazines must register at the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Nanking government. If, however, a publication contains matter on the Kuomintang or San-Min-chu, it must also be registered at the Central Committee of the Kuomintang. It is obvious that under such conditions the existence of Marxian periodicals is impossible. The police headquarters of the French imperialists in Shanghai prohibited over 40 different newspaapers, including the following: *The Illustrated Soviet, Red Marines, The Red Banner, The Revolutionary Worker, Mopr, Leninist Youth,* etc. The *Tayuan Times* and *The People's Voice,* published in the Shensi province were banned by the local militarists. The *Harbin Daily News* published in Harbin, was banned for printing material unfavorable to Russian emigrants—the allies of the ruling class in China. Considering the Press Law passed by the Nanking government not rigid enough, the militarists of the Uhan province demand that newspaper publishers pass a special examination by the Censor Committee, and that throughout the period of "communist suppression" all newspapers be kept under the direct control and censorship of the local government. In all the white provinces of China all information intended for publication in the press is, as a rule, submitted to strict censorship of the local government. It goes without saying that left organizations have no chance whatever of organizing public exhibitions and theatrical performances. Even foreign pictures which contain only the shadow of an idea dangerous to imperialism and the Kuomintang are prohibited. The well known American film produced by Fox Brothers, "All Quiet on the Western Front" was not allowed to be featured in Nanking and Canton. The explanation given was that "anti-militarist propaganda is undesirable at a time when the campaign against the reds is not yet over." While the "Street Angel" was being shown in one of the cinemas in Shanghai, a group of Italian sailors broke into the theatre and burnt the film "in defence" of their nation's reputation which they claimed was being disparaged in the picture. Pudovkin's "Storm Over Asia" has been absolutely prohibited in the foreign settlement of Shanghai. In the Chinese quarters it was shown only after a large sum had been paid to the local branch of the Kuomintang, and even then a final scene was added in which the Kuomintang banner was conspicuously displayed.

The Kuomintang does not limit its activities to featuring the national flag at the end of imperialistic films. Publishers who formerly issued radical journals are forced to print so called nationalist literature. Those who study or teach revolutionary philosophy are arrested; school masters are forced to sign obligations to the effect that revolutionary doctrines will never be taught in their schools; the Kuomintang authorities employ all means possible to encourage lectures on ancient philosophy and classical literature, hoping thus to arouse in the students respect for Confucianism. The Nanking government recently assigned 100,000 dollars for the reconstruction of the Confucian Temple in Shantung. Dai-Tsi-tao, head of the Examination Council of the Nanking government personally contributed 100,000 dollars for the erection of the Boa Hua Temple in Nanking. These facts taken together prove convincingly that the Kuomintang is making frantic attempts to befog the Chinese youth with religious and feudal ideas. Not for nothing do the imperialists and the Kuomintang fight against the left cultural movement. The unusual development of the left cultural movement and the progress of Marxism reflects the rapid growth of the revolutionary movement. During recent years the revolutionary movement has led to the organization of a League of Left Writers, a Socialist League, a Dramatic League, a League of Actors, a Society for the Investigation of Public Problems, and a Literary Research Society, all of which are concentrated in Shanghai. All these organizations united to form a Confederation of Left Cultural organizations. The League published 15 different periodicals *(The Cultural Advance, Pioneer, New Ideas,* etc.) which aimed at popularizing Marxism and Leninism among the wide masses of China. The practical and theoretical work of these organizations is directed against the ruling class and its San-Min-chu, and against bourgeois philosophers. It is supported in its work by the laboring masses and the students. These organizations have taken many a stand in defence of freedom of press, speech and organization.

The imperialists and the Kuomintang have come to realize that the Left Cultural Movement is a great power, and in their attempts to suppress this movement they adopt extremely harsh measures, not even hesitating at wholesale murder. At present the movement has been forced underground, but nevertheless it is making progress not only in Shanghai but also in Peking, Tientsin, Sichuan, etc. Not long ago the Society for the Investigation of Public Problems, which was organized by the more advanced students, held an illegal conference at which over 20 representatives were present (including one from Formosa). The conference published a protest against white terror and the advance of imperialists and the Kuomintang on the Red Army. Furthermore, the conference decided to oppose the National Assembly that is being called by the Nanking government, for the reason that this "National" Assembly is really a gathering of landowners, militarists and capitalists who will never permit that freedom of press and organization for which the Society is struggling.

Japan

DESTRUCTION OF THE LITERARY FRONT

The left theatrical organization "Daini Bunsen" has decided to affiliate to the theatrical section of NAPF—the only revolutionary dramatic organization in Japan. The decision was announced as a result of the answer made by the IURW to the protest of the "Bunsen" group. This answer revealed the social fascist nature of the "Bunsen" group and resulted in the recognition of the need for uniting with NAPF in the struggle against "Bunsen."

ACTIVITY OF JAPANESE FEDERATION OF PROLETARIAN ART—NAPF

The Association of Japanese Proletarian Writers has launched the first literary newspaper in Japan, *Literary News*. For financial reasons, the Association of Japanese Playwrights suspended the publication of *Proletarian Theatre* last autumn, when it affiliated to NAPF. However, it is now about to publish its own organ, *The Theatrical Magazine*. Like the journals of the Association of Proletarian Writers, the *Literary News* and *The Theatrical Magazine* will encourage worker and peasant correspondents. *Napf* has published an appeal in which it warns its correspondents against the danger of indulging in literary criticisms and theoretical discussions instead of learning through experience in the class struggle. It ends with the slogans: "For joining the ranks of the International movement!" "For increased worker and peasant correspondence and improvement of its quality!" "For strengthening the creative method of the revolutionary proletariat!"

The *Literary News* has announced a competition for short stories, articles, etc. It is curious to note that among the stories sent in, some were in the classical poetic forms *tanka, haiku* and even *senru* (humorous verses of three feet).

The "Japanese-Soviet Society" announces short courses for the study of Russian (as well as Esperanto and German). This acquires a special significance in the light of the recent "incident" at the Institute of Foreign Languages in Tokio, where a group in the Russian language department was found studying Soviet revolutionary literature. An examination of the personnel of the "ill fated" department soon disclosed that students who entered the Russian department did so for the purpose of studying communism, in spite of the steps taken to ensure "reliability" of students. Repressive measures quickly followed.

The Association of Proletarian Writers organized in Tokio the first Proletarian Library for the purpose of spreading workers' literature among the masses. The low membership fees—ten sen per month for workers and 20 sen for students and others, helps to accomplish this purpose.

The magazine *Napf* will announce regularly all contributions to the current issue of the *Antireligious Struggle*, the organ of the Antireligious League. Nothing but these titles will reach its readers however, since every issue of the magazine is confiscated.

The Association of Proletarian Musicians has grown and become more active during the past year. The Association is concerned not so much with creative work as with propaganda for revolutionary music, particularly for revolutionary songs. With this aim in view the Association is orchestrating and transposing songs suitable for choruses, etc. It organizes choirs for workers' demonstrations and social evenings, etc. It has published songs. It releases gramaphone records which are widely used by the proletarian theaters and cinemas. A special evening performance which the Association tried to give was forbidden by the police because of the revolutionary songs.

The traveling proletarian kino gave performances in the villages near Tokio and along Kansai (Kobe and Osaka) last autumn. It showed Japanese revolutionary and art films: "War of the Slaves," "Child," "The Dockers," "May 1" and others. The police systematically suppressed the performances, unexpectedly forbidding advertised pictures to be shown, and interrupting those that were permitted to start. Gramaphone records of revolutionary songs, which were to accompany the pictures, were prohibited. The workers and peasants displayed much interest in the films. "The Dockers" which expresses the corruption of the opportunist professors, was most successful, especially so in Kobe where it was loudly applauded. At Osaka the police threatened to close the performance because of the songs. However, the workers continued the melodies without the words, singing with such enthusiasm that the police hesitated to stop them. "Prokino" also intends to visit Kiushu and northern Japan.

Contributions of proletarian writers to the left bourgeois press are increasing. Every issue of *Kaidso* and *Tuo-Koron* for the current year gave space to proletarian writers. However, these journals continue to publish work by petty bourgeois writers such as Hosoda, whose sensational novel *Spring Truths* was definitely classed by *Senki* as a typical opportunist work. Other contributors are "venerable" bourgeois writers, like the decadent aesthete Hagai Kafu, Simadzaki and Tosop. On the other hand, some of the proletarian writers who write for *Napf* also publish their work in such petty-bourgeois journals as *Salon, Literary Age;* Katoaka Teppei is publishing his novel in the bourgeois paper *Osaka Mainiti*.

This condition has developed an unusual controversy in the latest issues of *Napf*. Several worker correspondents reproached a number of prominent proletarian writers (Tokunaga, Kobayasi, Katoaka, Kubokava, Murayama and others) for neglect of the left organ, as is shown by the insignificant number of their contributions to *Napf* as compared with the number of their contributions to the bourgeois press in 1931. One of them even argued that *Napf* should be discontinued so that all efforts could be put into *Senki* so as to have at least one strong organ. He draws his conclusions from the fact that NAPF is:

> "compelled to limit itself to the school boy exercises, written especially for it by immature intellectuals who are inexperienced in proletarian literature."

The succeeding issue contained many replies to this argument among which was that of Kisi Sandi who refutes the accusation of the artistic immaturity of the contributors to *Napf*. He points out that the Association of Proletarian Writers must enlarge its press in every way, rather than diminish it; that *Napf* is creating a proletarian literature not by means of individual "famous writers" but by developing new writers from the ranks of the workers; and that therefore such creations as come from these young writers have unquestionable value. None of the replies commented on the work of proletarian writers published in the bourgeois press.

Two "Senki evenings of proletarian culture," participated in by 14 left organizations, besides Senki, took place on September 19 and 20 at Ueno park in Tokio. As usual more people came than could be taken care of. The more popular these affairs become, the greater the police repression. All banners, including those for the struggle against the confiscation of *Senki* were torn down. Only two placards remained, "Read Senki" and "Long live our day of culture." Some of the speakers were arrested and others were not allowed to speak. Chuso Yuriko was interrupted just as she started her speech on the Soviet Union. Expressions of sympathy were with the speakers in spite of the fact that applause was stopped by the police who were scattered throughout the crowd.

Apropos of the suppression of revolutionary music, *Napf* in its report on the affair wrote:

"We were deprived of the right to our songs. We will retrieve them by force! Even though our proletarian musicians were forbidden to play and were forced to leave, the red song of struggle resounds in the breast of the proletariat."

The persecution to which the Japanese "Anti-religious League" is subjected, is not limited to the confiscation of its journal. During August and September, its executive was arrested. *Napf* issued a proclamation addressed to "the workers and peasants of all countries" calling on them to the struggle against religion:

"Our enemies with their illegal repressions have once more clearly shown us that religion is an instrument of class oppression, the enemy of workers and peasants."

Napf is publishing *An Anthology of Anti-imperialist Short Stories* for the purpose of exposing the exploitation of the colonies and semi-colonies and of showing their struggle for independence. It will contain stories by experienced writers and also by budding proletarian writers.

In 1931 *Napf* issued two large sets of books for popular reading: *Proletarian Encyclopedia* in 12 volumes and *Encyclopedia of Proletarian Art*. The first set is of a politico-economic character. The volumes are: I. History of the Workers' Movement of the World; II. Workers' Political Economy; III. Marxist Political Theory; IV. What is the Third Period?; V. Construction in the Soviet Union; VI. Present Situation of the Imperialist Countries; VII. Development of Historical Materialism; VIII. Analysis of Imperialist Japan; IX. Present Japanese Workers' Movement; X. Agrarian Problem and the Peasant Movement; XI. Colonial Problem; XII. The Great Chinese Revolution.

The second set, *Encyclopedia of Proletarian Art* is edited by Akita Udzyako and Eguti Kan, and deals with all aspects of art.

The Japanese Society of the Friends of the Soviet Union issued the first number of its new monthly, *Friend of the USSR* on October 15, 1931. It is altogether a fine publication and is profusely illustrated with excellent photographs. Besides *Friend of the USSR* there are two other journals in Japan devoted to the Soviet Union: *USSR*, a monthly, deals with economic and political topics and *Soviet Art* which is devoted to literary questions in the USSR.

The Japanese Association of Proletarian Artists and the Japanese Association of the Proletarian Kino (now part of NAPF) will each publish a monthly journal: *Art News* and *Cinema News*.

Chus, Yuriko's book *The Five-Year Plan and Soviet Art*, is now in its second printing.

Whither, an new autobiographical novel by Tokunaga Naoshi, has been published recently. It tells of the gradual awakening to class consciousness of a young peasant who finds his way to the city, then to a factory and finally to prison.

PROLETARIAN PUBLICATIONS

The publishing house "Senki" has issued a selection from the works of Japanese proletarian writers, members of the Union of proletarian writers and collaborators of the magazine *Senki (Battle Banner)*. The symposium is called *36 writers of the Journal Senki* and the editors are Egoti Kan and Kioi Sandan, an introduction being furnished by Egoti Kan.

The collection contains stories and poetry written by the best Japanese proletarian writers: Kabayasi Takidzi, "On the Benefit of Citizens," Tokunaga Naosh "A Petty Bourgeois,' Egoti Kan "Children's Detachment of Death" and others.

The profits will go to the families of Japanese proletarian writers who have suffered from the white terror.

A new book by Kazumoto Ceitiro, a young proletarian writer and critic, called *"Through the Red Front"* has been published by *Senki*. The author recounts his impressions of a trip to the USSR and describes his experiences in the "Second Red Capital," as the author calls Berlin, where he stayed more than a year.

The proletarian writers Jamada Saisaburo and Kavaguti have compiled a small *"Encyclopedia of Proletarian Art"* which is shortly to appear. This, the first attempt of its kind, was made necessary by the very rapid growth of proletarian art in Japan. The need for such a work has long been felt, especially by the younger proletarian writers.

The *Library of Soviet Writers*, published in Japanese, includes *Quiet Don*, by Sholokhov, translated by Satomura. The series also includes the following: Semenov's, *The Nucleus of Worker Correspondents*, Olesha's *The Old and the New*, Bachmetiev's *Martin's Crime*, Furmanov's *Chapaev*.

A library on the theory of proletarian art called *Lectures on Proletarian Art* which comprises 12 volumes has been published by Naigaucaya in conjunction with NAPF. The editors are the proletarian writers Akita Udziaku and Egoti Kan. The literary section of the Library was compiled by the leading proletarian Japanese writers — Kabayasi Takidzi, Xacimoto Eiciti, Nakano Dzudzi and others.

The first volume contains the following articles: "What is Proletarian Art?" — Nakano, "Soviet Literature" — Tudze Ukiko, "Proletarian Literature and Questions of Form," — Takiko, "Laws of Creation in Art," — Togunaka, "Theater," — Murama, "The Story of the Development of the American Cinema," — Ivasaki and others. Several articles have already appeared in the second volume on literature, theater, music and cinema. The literary part of the second volume contains the following articles: "Esperanto and Proletarian Literature," — Akita Udziaka "The Peasant Question and Literature," — Xocano Kadziro, "The Laws of Creation in Art," — Kabayasi Takidzi.

The lectures on proletarian art aim at preparing young writers and workers from the peasantry and the working class in different branches of art and therefore are issued in mass editions and are written in simple language.

The well known proletarian writer, Kabayasi Takidzi, writes in connection with the *Lectures:* "Proletarian literature exists already ten years. The reason for the slowness in bringing out writers from the workers and peasants is to be explained in large measure by the absence of a good text book. The publication of the *Lectures* should fill the gap." The proletarian writer, Tokunaga Naoshi writes: "I recommend the *Lectures on proletarian art* to every literary aspirant, especially among the youth of the peasants and working classes."

The society of Japanese proletarian writers is publishing a *Symposium of Anti-imperialist Stories* and in this way participates in the activities of the International Anti-Imperialist League in connection with the opening of the colonial exhibition in Paris. The Society reminds the peasant-worker masses of Japan and her colonies that the Anthology cannot be entirely composed by the Society — it is necessary to secure the co-operation of beginners among the peasant-worker writers from every country.

PROLETARIAN ART

The Society of Japanese Proletarian Artists is working hard on the organization of travelling exhibitions. One such exhibition has been organized in the district of Sato in the prefecture of Kingato in conjunction with the local department of the journal *Senki* and during two months time it has already travelled through several villages and been attended by many thousands of workers and peasants. The travelling exhibition has stimulated the organization of the "Battle League of Proletarian Culture" and plays an important part in the class struggle in the district of Sato.

Temporary exhibitions, demonstrating the creation of proletarian art have been opened in several districts in Japan. In Amori an exhibition of Proletarian Caricatures given by the Tokio Society of proletarian artists was organized on the iniative of the local co-operative society.

In Tokio an exhibition of pictures, posters and sculpture was organized by the local department of the Union of Proletarian Artists and was visited by 1300 people. This exhibition helped to popularize *Senki* and *Napf*.

An exhibition with the same slogan was organized in the town of Udzi by the local department of *Senki*.

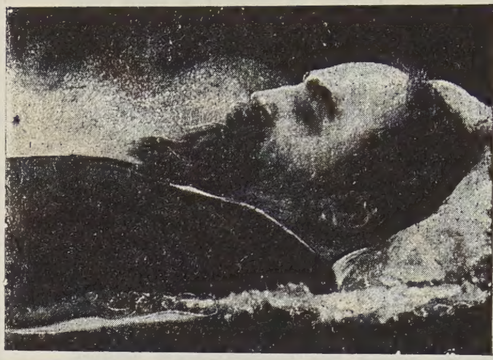
The local department organized an exhibition of proletarian works of art in Osako which was visited by 1083 people in three days. Similar exhibitions were organized in Koto and in Kobi.

NAPF; Organ of the Japanese Section of the IURW

Sergi Borisovich

BERNER

1888—1932



The untimely death of Sergei Borisovich Berner has stolen from our ranks a highly gifted translator of revolutionary literature. His death is a great loss for Soviet readers.

Sergei Borisovich did not come of proletarian stock. Neither did he accept the *Weltanschauung* of the revolutionary proletariat. But this did not prevent him from serving honestly in the Red Army for three years in succession.

He started his literary career by translating into Russian the works of Anatole France. Later on he introduced the work of several radical petty bourgeois writers to the Soviet public. During the last years of his life he gave up much of his time to translating Paul Vaillant Couturier, Bela Illes, Egon Erwin Kisch and other members of the IURW.

His translations are notable for their faithfulness and high artistical level, and have helped to strengthen the bonds of international proletarian solidarity.

His *Weltanschauung* underwent changes as the result of his work over revolutionary proletarian literature. In recent years he abandoned his former position of a bourgeois intellectual and became an extremely active social worker, coming nearer to the outlook of the revolutionary proletariat. Sergei Borisovich not only translated the works of proletarian writers of many countries but worked actively to popularize and circulate them.

In the Person of Sergei Borisovich Berner the International Union of Revolutionary Writers and its organ, *International Literature*, have lost a talented translator and trusted co-worker.

Secretariat of the I.U.R.W.
Editors of International Literature

Editor in chief **Bruno Jasienski**
Ass. Editor: **Antal Hidas**

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