INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

CENTRAL ORGAN
OF THE
INTERNATIONAL UNION
OF REVOLUTIONARY
WRITERS

Workers of the world unite!

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INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

Take up the Struggle

Against the Threat of a New Imperialist World War

China has been invaded. Whole cities have been completely destroyed. Tens of thousands of women and children have fallen victims to imperialism. In the Far East the fire of war is raging and threatens to engulf the whole world. The hypocritical pacifism of the imperialist powers has been exposed irrefutably. Countless peace congresses and conferences on disarmament have flawlessly prepared a new world butchery. It is now patent that the social democrats all over the world have, under pacifist guise, been steadily preparing a new world war, and that all the efforts even of those pacifists who were honestly mistaken have proved helpless to stop the present bloodshed. A network of impudent provocations proves conclusively that the war in China is merely the prologue to the most gruesome and hideous war known to history, to a war against the USSR.

The crisis in the capitalist countries, side by side with the unparalleled success of socialist construction, which with gigantic strides is establishing a socialist classless society—this is what makes the imperialists prepare a new bloody carnage.

This is not the first year that we draw your attention to the danger of this war. Several times have we called upon you to protest against the preparation of new wars and be ready to prevent the threatened blood bath. We have pointed out that the social democrats of all countries are preparing the minds of the masses for war. Time out of mind have we declared that he who doubts the preparation of new wars and attempts to hinder our fight against war becomes himself, consciously or unconsciously, an instigator of war and an ally of the imperialists. And now the hour has struck when the expectations of the imperialists and the war industrialists, of their generals and social democrats, are beginning to be realized.

In this hour of danger we call upon you for action. You must use every means at your disposal to mobilize the masses of workers and toiling intellectuals to stop the war. If you don't want to be charged with complicity, expose the instigators of war—the fascists and social fascists, unmask the impotence and conscious hypocricy of the pacifists of all shades. There is not a minute to be lost. Unless you start immediately to work with the utmost energy, unless we are to mobilize the rank and file against war—half of the globe will soon be converted into a battle field.

All workers by hand und brain throughout the world must occupy their posts without losing a second. We call upon you for fight. We feel sure that the fatherland of all workers may depend on you.

Take up the struggle, comrades.

On to the fight against the danger of an imperialist world war!

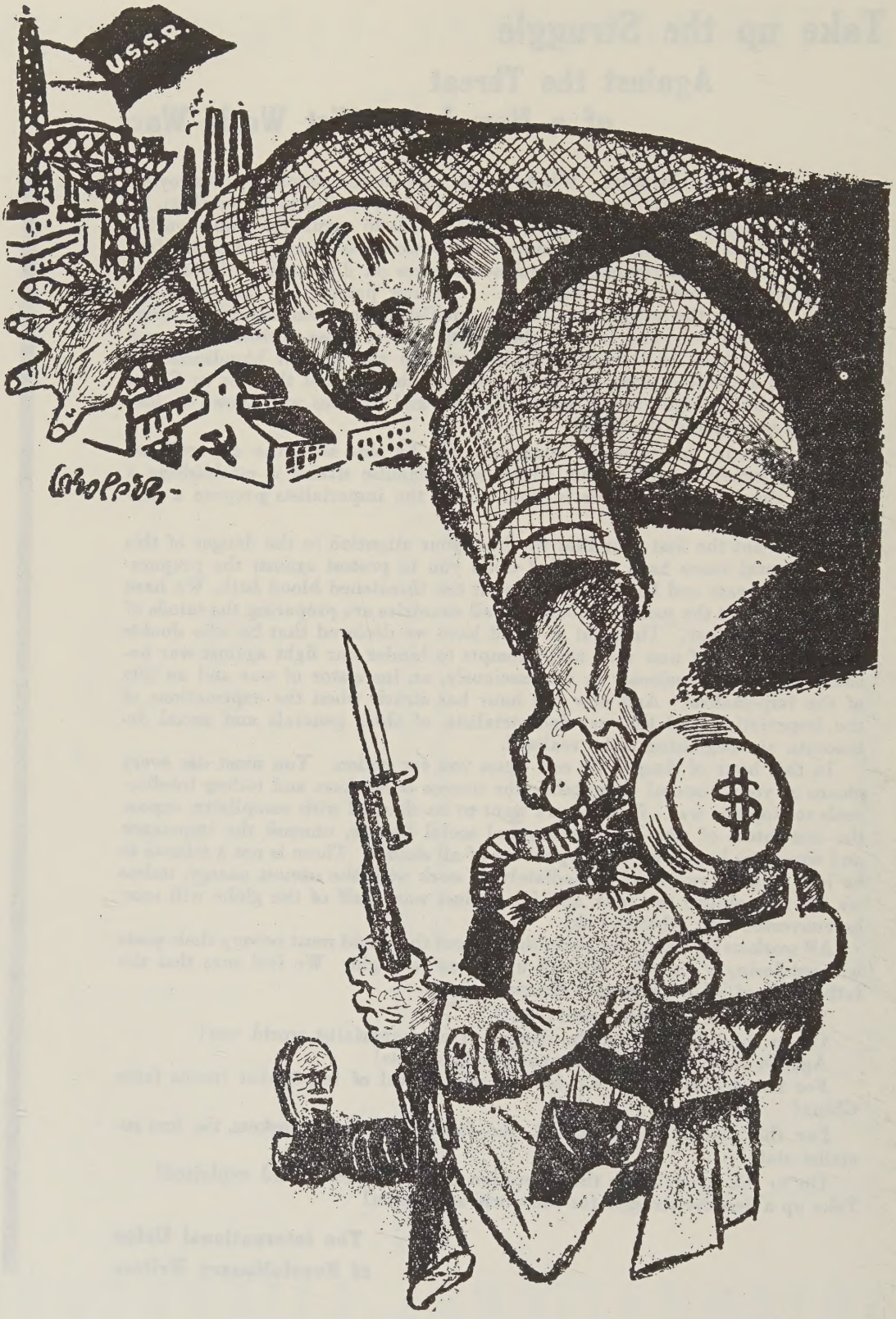
Against the bloodthirsty Japanese imperialists!

For the defense of China, for the withdrawal of imperialist troops from China!

For the defense of the USSR, the fatherland of all workers, the first socialist state!

On to the struggle for the liberation of all oppressed and exploited!
Take up a decisive struggle for the world revolution!

The International Union
of Revolutionary Writers



William Gropper

Manifesto of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers

The International Union of Revolutionary Writers has once again sent a questionnaire to writers throughout the world especially to those who responded two years ago to the question put by the IURW: "What will be your position in the event of the imperialist powers declaring war against the USSR?"

The question put by the IURW this time is: "What are you doing, what do you intend to do, now, when China is already being attacked by Japanese imperialism, when the war in the East threatens to turn into a war of all the imperialists against the USSR?"

In the current issue we publish some of the replies.

Of the writers who on the previous occasion expressed themselves for the defence of the USSR, Mr. O'Flaherty has already managed to reveal himself as a venal calumniator of the USSR. Tristan Remi, who asserted that his position was "the same as that of the revolutionary proletariat," has since deserted from this position, going over more or less openly into the social fascist camp.

The eminent English writer John Galsworthy declared, two years ago, that "any aggressing government whether democratic or autocratic must forfeit the good will of every believer in the Kellog Pact." This time he does not even mention the Kellog Pact, knowing that this would be really too funny today. Mr. Galsworthy prefers to assure us that he has "no knowledge of the 'shameless imperialist provocations' which prove (you say) that the imperialists are ready to attack USSR." Japan's attack on China in no way arouses the indignation of Mr. Galsworthy as a "believer in the Kellog Pact."

He does "not propose to understand" the situation in China, for he is "no politician," and anyway the situation there is "very complicated."

Mr. Galsworthy's reply in itself is significant as a clear demonstration of the practical worth of the declarations made by the gentlemen who "believe in the Kellog Pact."

In contradistinction to Galsworthy, a number of bourgeois writers who two years ago denied every possibility of a war, are now constrained to admit their mistake. Especially characteristic in this respect are the new replies given by Stefan Zweig and Sherwood Anderson.

"I am firmly convinced that the agitation of some irresponsible persons whose aim is to send again millions and hundreds of thousands of people under the guns and the gas bombs is not going to meet with success," wrote Stefan Zweig in 1930.

"You have more than enough of reasons to draw the attention of your country and that of other nations to the danger of war in the immediate future. Two years ago it seemed to me . . . that war was incredible . . . But since the crisis broke out, certain groups of industries see no way out of the chaos except by creating a still greater chaos," writes Stefan Zweig today.

"I do not believe in wars," wrote Sherwood Anderson in 1930. "I fancy the imperialistic capitalistic countries have taught the Japanese this trick. It is an old story and will go on, I'm sure, while money rules the world. My only hope is that . . . the attack on China will lead to the end of such a government in another country," writes Sherwood Anderson today. The present war has not cured him of his petty-bourgeois illusions, but it has forced him to realize that wars are inevitable as long as the source of wars—imperialism—exists, and that he who really wants to fight against war, must fight against world imperialism. In this he is following the example of Romain Rolland, the most courageous representative of the best portion of the Western intelligentsia.

Two years of crisis and of the ever more patent bankruptcy of the capitalist system, have not passed in vain. Ever greater numbers of the Western intellectuals are beginning to open their eyes, and after Romain Rolland—Upton Sinclair, Theodore Dreiser, and Bernard Shaw are beginning to turn their eyes to the USSR, the country to which "the future belongs."

At this moment special importance attaches to this roll-call of our friends over the heads of the imperialist governments. It is not only a review of our revolutionary literary front behind the backs of the imperialist general staffs, but it is at the same time a reminder. Be ready! Act now! There is no time to be lost! If you really do not wish to share the responsibility for the most ignominious of wars, for the war against the fatherland of the whole of toiling mankind, do not content yourselves with mere declarations, but fight against the war today, mobilize the masses for the defence of the USSR, endeavor to prevent by all means the plundering partition of China and the slaughtering of her toiling masses.

In this international roll-call should reverberate with particular force the word of the Soviet writer, of the writer of the only country in the world that is really free and is building up socialism.

For the first time in history the Soviet writer and the writers of West and East are shaking hands across the frontiers as comrade in arms.

The International Union
of Revolutionary Writers

Down With War!

1. Western Writers—to the Toiling Masses of USSR and China

"Down with the Assassins"

In the name of China which is being attacked, in the name of the USSR which is exposed to danger, in the name of the world's peoples, in the name of great human hopes which the awakening of the enslaved races of Asia and the heroic reconstruction of proletarian Russia give us and nourish, I cry: "Help. Down with the assassins."

I denounce before the entire world the abominable lies of the governments of Europe and America, and first of all of France—that clique of adventurists in the service of munition manufacturers, who extend their robbers' arms over the whole world and utilize Japanese imperialism as an executioner's axe to behead the revolution.

I denounce the treachery of those intellectuals who were once sentries on the prow of the vessel, steering it through the storm, but who now purchase peace and comfort at the shameful price of silence and toady adulation, who serve the interests of the owners of gold and honors.

I denounce the Geneva mart and the buffoonery of the League of Nations.

I appeal to the sleeping conscience of the best forces of Europe and America. I call upon the peoples of the whole world who have not yet realized their immense power to cut the rope which plutocratic and military fascism is prepared to throw on their neck tomorrow to strangle the embryo of revolution.

I call upon all forces to seal the union of the working masses of all free peoples.

Romain Rolland

Expose the Warmongers

Up till 1914 I was a pacifist who believed in arbitration. I thought armed conflicts could be obviated by treaties and agreements between the "nations." Life, however, has cured me of these illusions. Today I consider them not merely false and dangerous but positively suicidal.

The "Great Powers" are run by "business men," and all their schemes and proclamations are intended only to *hoodwink the masses.* Capitalism is based on competition and economic warfare and its very existence is bound up with antagonisms that are bound, sooner or later, to lead to armed conflicts. Colonial expansion and other forms of imperialist plunder demand that the capitalists strengthen their armed forces. This is particularly necessary if the bourgeoisie are to destroy the gathering offensive of the exploited and enslaved working class.

The peculiarities of the international situation today are caused by the unjust and unequal peace treaties framed by the victors in the last war and also by the economic crisis whose roots are to be sought in capitalism's inability to cope with its economic, national and international problems. Capitalism is now in its death agony but endeavors to retain its hold on life in two ways: by violence, extraordinary decrees and fascism, on the one hand, and on the other by democratic and pacifist charlatanism intended for the credulous.

War is just as unavoidable today as it was on the eve of the last war. The October Revolution set free a vast country and made of it the home of socialist construction. There thus exist two worlds: the world of socialism and the world of capitalism. The bourgeoisie cannot tolerate this duality. The interests of separate imperialist states may conflict but they have a basis of agreement in their common desire to keep the working class in thralldom and destroy the undeniable results of the socialist reconstruction of half of Europe and half of Asia.

Class hatred of the Soviet Union is one of the factors that makes capitalism and especially European capitalism sympathize with Japan's in-

I regard all war and in particular the threatened world war and invasion of the Soviet Union from the standpoint of a communist and a revolutionary.

vasion of Manchuria and its brazen attempt to colonize Asia. Humanity's dearest interests and its whole future demand that all who work by hand or brain, especially writers, tell the truth about the present situation which is now more tragic than ever. This is their duty and if they fail in it they forfeit the right to be considered soldiers of their class.

Henry Barbusse

If Our Efforts to Frustrate Imperialist War Prove Insufficient, then I, like Romain Rolland, will adopt Lenin's Tactics

You ask me how, at the present moment, I react to the danger of an imperialist war and the attempt to surround Soviet territory by the vanguard of capitalism—Japan.

Even before the beginning of the crisis, my opposition was expressed in everyday activities, no matter where I happened to be—in written appeals, in articles, published regularly in *Europe*, and particularly in my recent writings the first of which will appear this spring in *La Nouvelle Revue Francaise.*

I am not a communist nor a member of any party. I obey only the dictates of conscience, but my principles have not altered a bit since 1917. Both in theory and practice my position has been dictated by respect and sympathy for the Russian Revolution; I always enthusiastically defended the proletarian state. I am unswerving in my sympathies. And if one fine day our efforts prove insufficient to frustrate imperialist war, then I, like Romain Rolland, will adopt Lenin's tactics without any hesitation whatever.

With fraternal greetings,

Joan-Richard Blokh

Save the Five-Year Plan

Every person of normal human feelings must bow in admiration to the brave defence which the Chinese people are putting up against the invasion of their country. Nevertheless, as a socialist, I hold my feelings in check, reminding myself that after all the Chinese government is a capitalist government, just as the Japanese government. If the Chinese should win and cease to be the under dog, it would not be very long before they would be making themselves at hateful to the whole world as the Japanese government is now doing. Such is the nature of capitalism. It lives by exploiting and plundering and cannot live otherwise. We saw it happen in the case of France. We thought of the French as gallantly defending themselves and we sympathized; but now we see France as the master of Europe and the paymaster of reaction.

The one thing that really concerns me about the present conflict is the fear that Soviet Russia may be drawn into it. That is why France and tory Britain are standing out today against the project of boycotting Japan and so bringing the conflict to an end. They expect that before long they will be using Japan to cut off Russia from the Pacific Ocean. This is the real thing that you must concentrate upon, to keep Soviet Russia out of the war and to save the Five-Year Plan. The destruction of the Five-Year Plan is the one thing upon which all the capitalist nations are able to agree.

Upton Sinclair

I have your radiogram about the attack on China by Japan. At any rate I fancy the imperialistic capitalistic countries have taught the Japanese this trick. It is an old story and will go on, I'm sure, while money rules the world. My one hope is that the imperialistic militaristic government, now ruling Japan will sicken their own people and that the attack on China will lead to the end of such a government in another country.

Sherwood Anderson

My stand still the same, Soviet Union must be preserved at all costs.

V. F. Calverton

Arranging Protest on All Possible Fronts

John Reed Club today passed resolution in public meeting protesting against imperialist massacre of Chinese. Has cooperated in public proletarian protest meetings against imperialist war. Club meetings addressed also by Fujimori and Doonping on Chinese situation. Arranging protests on all possible fronts.

Oakley Johnson,
Executive Secretary John Reed Club, New York.

Pledge to fight imperialist war plans with posters, lectures, literature.

John Reed Club, Hollywood

Be assured my vigilant loyalty.

Waldo Frank

In case imperialist aggression will unreservedly support Soviet Union.

Floyd Dell

Mobilizing liberal organizations and universities to send resolutions Stimson Japanese ambassadors. Arousing protest by press film theatre posters special meetings unmasking imperialist provocations.

Mobilizing cultural resources for thorough exposure imperialist aims. Hail successes Chinese Soviets.

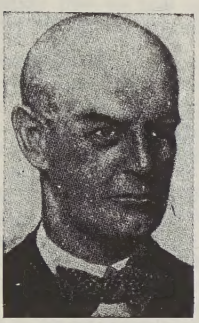
John Reed Club, Philadelphia

Mass Demonstrations and Protests

In response to your cablegram, I will say that we are fully aware of the dangerous possibilities of the Japanese imperialist invasion of China, and that we are anxious to do all we can to thwart the war plots aimed at Soviet China and the USSR. Our membership is widely distributed, but we are urging all our members to give full support to the activities of the Workers' Cultural Federation and the John Reed Club in mass demonstrations and protests against the Japanese invasion.

Jack Conroy

I am no Politician



Sirs,

In answer to your telegram received only here, I am afraid I have no knowledge whatever of the "shameless imperialist provocations," which prove (you say) that imperialists are ready to attack USSR. I should have said that no one in England at least, even dreams of such an attack.

As to China and Japan, I do not propose to understand a situation which seems not only very complicated but to change from day to day.

But in any case I am no politician, nor am I aware that my opinion of political matters carries any weight whatever.

Believe me, truly yours,

John Galsworthy

Practical Anti-War Work

In reply to your cable received, requesting me to report on my activity and action in fighting the imperialist war, allow me to state in short as follows:

1. Enclosed are just a few of the many cartoons on the subject which have been published in the *Morning Freiheit,* the Jewish party paper and one of the largest circulation. I have also drawn many cartoons for other publications such as the *New Masses,* etc.

2. I have held exhibitions of cartoons, drawings, and paintings on the imperialist war and the defence of the Soviet Union, throughout the west coast of the USA like Berkley, San Francisco, Los Angeles and in galleries in New York City.

3. At present, I am at work on a Mural painting to be exhibited in the Museum of Modern Art, which thousands of people visit weekly, and shall register my protest by exposing the war plot against the Soviet Union, in this painting.

4. I am also organizing, through the Bureau of the John Reed Club a counter exhibition to the exhibition of the Modern Museum, to be held in the Galleries of the John Reed Club by its members. The Artist Group of the John Reed Club have also been active in painting posters and streamers for demonstrations.

With revolutionary greetings,

William Gropper

Eastern Siberia Menaced

Gentlemen,

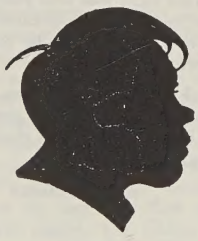
I have your cablegram of yesterday. The enclosed articles both from the Baltimore Evening Sun, set forth my views of Asiatic situation. A summary of them would be too long to cable, and so I must send them by mail, and apologize for the delay. My belief is that the United States will try to avoid war with Japan. It would be long and costly. Public opinion in America seems to favor it at the moment, but Big Business is dubious, and will probably be strong enough at Washington to prevent it.

The Manchurian invasion is Russia's affair. The United States could not conceivably land enough troops there to expel the Japs. But Russia, I think, could do it. That it will have to be done soon or late is manifest. If Russia permits the Japanese to get a firm foothold in Manchuria, then the whole Eastern Siberia will be menaced.

Sincerely yours,

H. L. Mencken

Defend the Soviet Union



I am convinced that all armed conflicts between nations must be condemned as being opposed to culture. Armed conflicts however, are the handwork not of the peoples, but always of their rulers. And in the Sino-Japanese conflict I adhere to my old position that the attackers must be branded as criminals, and should be refused all support while the attacked party should be given every assistance.

Japan has acted criminally as the champion of an unscrupulous imperialism. For me Japan has always been the incarnation of Prussianism in the Far East. Japan's treatment of women, children and invalids proves how far imperialism is ready to go in its mad thirst for power. The Japanese invasion of China, however, is but the beginning. The intrigues of the international imperialists make clear their intentions with regard to the Far East. The organization of a White-Guard army, the shipping of poison gases and munitions from all countries to Japan, the League of Nations' transparent attitude to the Sino-Japanese conflict—all prove convincingly that dying capitalism is getting ready to attack the Soviet Union, the country of Socialism. The Japanese soldier is made to face death in the interests of his oppressors. Mil-

lions of proletarians must fight to alleviate the world economic crisis, a crisis caused by the profiteering hyenas in capitalist countries. An undreamt of crime is about to be committed: imperialism and capitalism plan to stop the progress and peaceful development of the Soviet Union; they are itching to destroy that nation's achievements.

It is undeniable that such a war will be directed against the class conscious proletariat of the whole world. It cannot be denied that the defeat of the Soviet Union would be followed by a hideous reaction in all countries. It need not surprise us, then, if the most harmless of democrats be given over to the executioner. The whole world would be thrown back into the Middle Ages. Those who can see to the end have only one choice: to fight on the side of the world proletariat for the Soviet Union and for enslaved China. The voice of conscience tells every man who thinks honestly about social questions and believes in progress that his duty is to give merciless battle to the imperialist criminals.

Oscar Maria Graf

It should be clear to everyone that he who fights in defence of Soviet Russia, fights for peace.

Ernst Toller

An Imperialist War that Imperils the Achievements of the USSR will be a Blow to the Working Class of the Entire World

My position remains the same as it was two years ago. An imperialist war that imperils the achievements of the Soviet Union will be a blow to the working class of the entire world.

But it should be assumed that the workers—at least in the leading European countries—in case of such danger to the Soviet Union, will close their ranks and rise in its defence.

Kete Kolwitz

The USSR must be Protected at All Cost

Dear Comrades:

I received your telegram referring to the Japanese provocation against the Soviet Union, while attending a mass meeting of red sportsmen.

Over 10,000 red sportsmen were gathered in the City Hall, the largest building in our town. We read out your telegram and it aroused a storm of indignation over the imperialistic provocation in Shanghai. 10,000 proletarians sprang to their feet and took a solemn pledge to defend their proletarian fatherland whenever it is in danger.

Friedrich Wolf

We Mobilize the Toiling Masses by Exposing Secret Munition Transports

In case of an imperialistic armed assault upon the Soviet Union, we, worker correspondents, like the thousands of other Hamburg workers are ready to defend it to the last drop of our blood.

We worker correspondents and proletarian writers have already given proof that in our practical work we fight against the danger of an imperialist war and mobilize the toiling masses for revolutionary struggle by exposing and denouncing the secret munition transports to Asia.

We, worker correspondents, and proletarian writers in particular, swear that we will exchange our pen for a rifle in defence of the Soviet Union.

Willi Bredel

Every Person who Holds Dear the Culture of the Human Race must Side with the Working Class and the USSR

The Japanese offensive in Manchuria and China has unveiled the ghastly features of imperialism. The military preparations against the Soviet Union are no longer a secret. The number of provocations increases from day to day. The capitalistic world has started its offensive.

Every writer to whom the culture of the human race is dear must side with the working class and the USSR, and strain all efforts to arouse the masses. With words and deeds, with pen and rifle —in defence of the Soviet Union to the last drop of our blood.

Berta Lask

War Against War!

Japan's military aggression in the Far East which aims at preventing the creation of a Soviet China and making the Chinese proletariat an object of colonial exploitation, is at the same time the first demonstration of the imperialist world against the Far Eastern republics of the Soviet Union.

It is no accident that a war psychology is now being created in the imperialist countries and that the governments' policies hinge around the preparation of war. In Germany the fascists already openly offer themselves to foreign war-mongers as allies in the fight against bolshevism. For this reason they are permitted to enter the Reichswer. The bourgeois and social fascist press is redoubling its attacks on the Soviet Union, employing methods amazingly similar to the military propaganda at the beginning of the last war. The radio is now completely in the hands of anti-proletarian and anti-Soviet elements, in spite of the fact that it is supposed to be an impartial public service and that friendly diplomatic relations exist between Germany and the Soviet Union.

What problems are we faced with? First of all we must do our utmost to explain the truth to

those deluded and deceived folk that have begun to succumb to the war fever. We must expose the vile machinations of the instigators of war.

If, however, the criminals succeed in turning the minds of the people in favor of war, and the signal for attack be given, then there remains but one thing for us to do, and that is—join the united front of class-conscious proletarians and proclaim war against war and its instigators, so that the first clash would convert the bourgeois war into a war for the defense of the Soviet Union.

Erich Weinert

Let Those who are Young and Strong Go to Russia for the Coming War

It is high time to stop this nonsense of collecting signatures for manifestoes of protest. The hundred best writers of our day are powerless to stop the threatened avalanche. Must the intellectuals become once more the laughing stock of history?

They cannot hinder that which the trade unions cannot hinder today, namely the production of munitions and poison gases. Who can seriously believe that the protest of the "hundred best writers" of America and Europe will result in the unloading of a single tank or bomber. Let those with military knowledge, those who are young and strong go to Russia for the coming war. Let those who cannot do this stay where they are and learn more. If they survive the collapse of capitalism, they will have to help reconstruct the economic life in the future communist system of the world international. They can only help in this big work if they are competent and armed with full responsibility.

Arthur Hollitcher

We Demand the Return of the Dutch Warship "Van Galen"

This confirms the receipt of your telegram of February 12. We are now drawing all our comrades into active work and are issuing leaflets calling upon all toilers to stand in defence of the Soviet Union. We have also endeavoured to draw the Anti-Imperialist League, the Socialist Art Society, "New Russia," the Society of Friends of the Soviet Union and the Stroika into our campaign against intervention in Soviet Russia.

We demand the return of the Dutch warship "Van Galen." To every assault on the Soviet Union we will react by calling upon the masses to revolt.

We have asked the revolutionary writers of Holland to issue an appeal to the workers through all newspapers.

In readiness to render our assistance, we remain,

With comradely greetings,

Hank Brujantes,

Secretary of the "Link Ritken" Union.

Together with the Communist Party of Holland

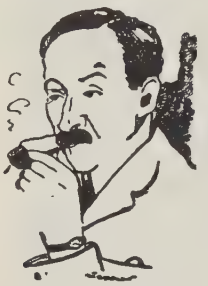
I am taking an active part in the struggle led by the Communist Party of Holland against the outrageous provocation aimed against the Soviet Union.

I am secretary of the Society of Friends of the Soviet Union and editor of its magazine, which popularizes the achievements of the USSR and exposes the imperialist policies of the Dutch government.

Almost every evening I speak at worker's meetings where I often demonstrate Soviet films showing Soviet construction, the Red Army, etc. I keep up agitation for a national congress against war and the reactionary government of Holland.

Vanter

A Vicious Group Wishes to Solve Its Private Difficulties by Plunging the World in War



You have more than enough of reasons to draw the attention of your country and that of other nations to the danger of war in the immediate future.

In my opinion this danger is really very great. Due to the crisis in Europe and America things have become more critical during the past two years.

Two years ago it seemed to me—and I openly told you so—that war was incredible because it was of no particular interest to anyone—not even to heavy industry. Things ran smoothly, there was a boom in business and both the bourgeoisie and the workers were more or less content. Much was expected from building schemes. But since the crisis has broken out certain groups of industries see no way out of the chaos except through creating a still greater chaos.

For many branches of industry a war abroad would be the only deliverance from inevitable bankruptcy. This is confirmed by the fact that immediately after the first Japanese offensive the shares of certain industrial enterprises shot upwards on the world exchange. To this should be added the desperate plight of the unemployed. There are hundreds of thousands of young men, especially in Germany, who have no opportunity whatever to discharge their accumulated energy. To escape from forced idleness they are willing to do anything that comes along, to fight for any old cause: for China or for Japan, for fascism or against fascism. To escape from sluggishness and torpor they are ready to plunge into hazardous adventure.

The working class of Europe is exhausted and starved and has never experienced real prosperity for it has no particular aim. The workers are intimidated because the crisis threatens their living conditions.

Thus, the present moment is particularly favorable for the war mongers. For the first time they would find followers not only among those who want war but also among those who seek war just to escape from the nerve-wrecking conditions of the present day.

But to whom could one appeal? The conscience of the world is lulled by the sweet but harmful talk of the complaisant press, and even the burst of shells in Shanghai could not call it to life.

Nobody takes the League of Nations seriously any longer. All really valuable proposals are

killed by diplomatic procrastination. The intelligentsia thinks only of its own welfare, and its indifference encourages the criminal activities of the politicians. Socialism which was once international, in 1914 became national and has remained so ever since. It will oppose war in 1932 just as half-heartedly as it did in 1914. In every country it supports only the interests of its own state.

Neither China nor Russia can figure on any serious help. The most they can expect is a polite expression of sympathy and nothing more.

A few score European intellectuals will, of course, speak out, but at such a time of violent commotion little could be expected from their protests. The League of Nations has long ceased to have any ethical or legislative significance. In this critical hour there is no place for illusory hopes, and what is really needed is coolheaded and vigorous determination. This is especially necessary for the reason that a vicious group wishes to solve its private difficulties by plunging the world in war. Russia must not serve as an outlet for this scheme and should, therefore, give no occasion to war. It is better to tolerate their clumsy provocations than add fuel to the flames.

The firmer China and the Soviet Union are (in accordance with their inner determination) the more difficult will it be to carry out this foul plot.

No false steps! What is needed now is patience, patience and still more patience.

We must endure bravely the present dark days for when they pass the forces that are now scattered will gradually unite and bar the path of these marauders of humanity and check their sinister advance—their attempts to overcome personal financial difficulties by plunging the world in war.

Stefan Zweig

We Call Upon the Masses to Fight Against War in the East

We call upon the masses to fight against the war that is being waged in the East, against the treacherous and aggressive plans of the imperialists, and in defence of the Soviet Union. At the same time we ask the representatives of the intelligentsia what they intend to do to prevent a world war? What they are doing to combat the war that has already begun and defend the Soviet Union?

The Union of Proletarian and Revolutionary writers of Austria

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A Letter from El Kara, a Czecho-Slovakian Proletarian Writer

Comrades:

I answer your questions not only for myself but also for the majority of the proletarians of Czecho-Slovakia. We are opposed to all imperialist wars which always serve the predatory interests of capitalistic states and bring nothing but death and poverty to the proletariat, we fight such wars by all the means at our disposal, because we know that eventually, the contradictions between the capitalist states can be solved only by war. We are ready to do our duty when war breaks out: convert the imperialist war into a war of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie of their own and other countries:—a war for the emancipation of the proletariat, for communism.

Our attitude toward the Sino-Japanese armed conflict is the same as that of all class-conscious proletarians. Our sympathies and our solidarity are first of all with the Chinese Soviets and the Chinese Red Army—the Chinese proletarians who were drawn into war by Japanese provocations and by the Chinese and international bourgeoisie.

Our sympathies are likewise with the proletarians of Japan who are driven to the battle-field to fight for the interests of Japanese capitalism, to kill their brothers—to exterminate the Chinese proletariat. Inasmuch as we are united by the bonds of proletarian solidarity, we follow their struggle against this war with great attention. We are convinced that we can help them best by fighting our own bourgeoisie.

We know that the purpose of this war and of the arming of the entire capitalist world is to destroy the first proletarian state—the USSR. We are on guard to frustrate these plans and are filled with determination to defend the Soviet Union against all its enemies. My personal desire, in case of an attack on the USSR, is to join the ranks of the Red Army and, rifle in hand, defend and fight for socialism.

El Kara

A Letter from the Proletarian Writer Vashek Kanya

Dear Comrades:

To your question as to how I fight against the slaughtering of the Chinese proletariat by Japanese imperialists and the forthcoming attack on the Soviet Union by the imperialists of the whole world, I reply:

Together with the revolutionary proletariat of Czecho-Slovakia I protest against the Japanese plundering in China and Manchuria, and likewise against the war preparations in western Europe. I am always prepared to defend with all my strength, the only worker's and peasant's state—the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

My sympathies are with you.

Vashek Kanya

A Letter from John Olbracht

The Japanese revolutionaries are the ones who could fight against Japanese imperialists aggression best and with the greatest hope of success. But the war in the East acquires tremendous international significance for the reason that it endangers the interests of the first socialist state in the world. And all people with ideals must fight for it, for the preservation of its power and for that peace which is necessary for the building up of socialism and the new life. As to what the revolutionary writers should do, let the Union confer with the workers of the USSR. Let them say what they expect from us and what strength they attribute us with. I think that it is our elementary duty to oppose all intervention in the USSR, to fight against all material and moral support given by our governments to the Soviet Union's enemies, to parry attacks and falsehoods against the Soviets, to explain the truth to our people, and, if a capitalist country turns its guns on the USSR, to call upon the masses to wage open warfare against them.

John Olbracht

2. Soviet Writers and the War Danger

We Will Burst the Powder Magazines of our Talents

The recent exposures of our press prove that the Japanese imperialist weasel aims at swallowing up the Soviet Far East as far as Lake Baikal. We can no longer doubt that Japanese aggression in China has for its object the preparation of a base from where Japan could attack the USSR, just as her military activities in Korea paved the way for the seizure of Manchuria.

But a note of alarm can now be distinguished in the arrogant tone which lately has become so very characteristic for Japan.

"It will be difficult for Japan," writes one authoritative military man, "to deal the Soviet Union a deadly blow."

Evidently some remnants of prudence still persist in the weasel's nature. Rent with doubts about "a deadly blow" the weasel hides his fear of a deadly counter-offensive under bombastic and warlike pronouncements.

And in fact, the situation seems rather risky. Just think, the 19th Chinese Army, although betrayed by its own Government, succeeded in shattering the rosy dreams of the Japanese Imperialists who hoped to march triumphantly through China. So one can imagine how many armies, absolutely devoted to their Government, which in its turn, is absolutely devoted to its armies, a Japanese officer is liable to encounter on the vast plains of the Soviet Union!

Even a preliminary draft of a "big war," even that rough sketch of it which we can behold now in the Far East, completely disproves the theories of Fuller, Sext and other Imperialist generals who overrate technique and underrate the active role of the army, its moods, desires and tendencies.

In defending every stone of its country the Red Army of the USSR will defend the dearest interests of the toiling masses of the whole world.

The national hate of a Chinese soldier is powerful. But how very much more powerful is the highly consious international enthusiasm of a Soviet fighter, let him be Russian, Ukranian, White Russian, Georgian, Tartar or Uzbek.

We revolutionary poets, novelists, playwrights, essayists and feuilletonists all over the world will burst all the powder magazines of our talents to strengthen this enthusiasm and defend our wonderful heroic republic, the sole justification of all human history.

I. Selvinsky

If You Keep Silent — Who Then, Are You?

In its efforts to find a way out, Imperialism has decided on war. The war has already begun with the impudent plundering of China. And we hear its approaching echo now. Its target is the country that is building a classless society. We are quite ready to face the war, because we know that this war is suicidal for capitalism.

But the USSR is not only the first proletarian State. The USSR is a concrete symbol of that humanity to which all of you strive. Silence is criminal at this critical moment We ask you to remember what you gained for the blood that was spilt in the last war? And if you remain silent, who, then, are you?

L. Leonov

Now Is the Time to Fraternize

In the year 1915 munition factories were built along the banks of the river where we boys used to spend our time fishing. Many of our townsmen thought this was good, because there would be powder to conduct the war and after the war, why, times would improve. Most likely the inhabitants of Essen and Liege thought likewise. Now, in the year 1932, America sends her chemicals to Japan, while Germany and France send munitions. Nowadays no one expects to see better times after the war, so, perhaps, all that is taking place now is no war?

My generation recollects vividly how after the battles in the Carpathians, Marne and Verdun, all Europe was studded with concentration camps. But the Japanese imperialists are not anxious to take their enemies prisoners. Besides then it was

the soldiers who were mostly killed: now they exterminate the peaceful population.

Can this be called war? My generation read papers full of chauvinistic articles written to glorify war. Today the Commission on Disarmament is dancing another minuet. Does this mean that war is already going on?

But don't the marauders keep their rogues in good trim? Aren't the diplomats well paid for their skill in hiding a war that has actually started? Is it really so very difficult to conceal the rattling of guns, the building of munition works, the destruction of cities and the thousands of slain? Everything has been already hidden—there is no war.

The main thing now is to keep secret how many millions of soldiers, and of what nations, will be thrown into the slaughter, how many billions of gold and of what countries, will be spent out of the pockets of the people. This must be hidden as long as the military censorship does not affix its seal on every outburst of anger, wrath and indignation, as long as the international gendarmes do not stifle the moans of the betrayed conscript.

My generation, we who have fought on the Marne and at Verdun, we know far better than the others what an illusion a distant battle-field is.

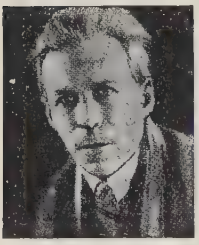
So we had better fraternize right away.

Here, take our hands, comrades of the old massacre.

Let our handshake be the first to tear the mask from the newly started war.

P. Sletov

An Episode



It was during the years of intervention. Huge, gray warships slumber in the Golden Horn — the harbor of Vladivostok. At the headquarters of one of the Great Powers may be seen small, slim figures of rosy cheeked soldiers in red-trimmed military caps. They are scattered everywhere in the streets of this taciturn city—the city of international speculators, political gamblers and adventurers. The residents of the Great Power behave arrogantly. Usually dressed in plain coats and hats, they now display an exaggerated patriotism owing to the presence of many officers of their armies. They are decked in their national costumes, they clink the wooden soles of their shoes and wag the sleeves of their wide theatrical costumes. Are not their troops in the city and does not the whole place therefore belong to them, this gang of international go-getters, traders and colonizers?

The cheeks of the soldiers are rosy and dimpled. They are mostly youngsters. They are in a strange country. They have the appearance of peasant lads, separated from their families, fields and meadows, from the primitive routine of their rural days. They are on sentry duty and are not against showing off. Probably the Russian soldiers in Turkey during the Caucasian war did the same.

The city is in the grip of a sludgy languidness. Depression holds sway. Treachery abounds. Petty haste in calling conferences, endless negotiations and treaties between adventurers and representatives of the Great Power. Her masters of ceremonies pick out "Local Patriots" willing to represent the interventionists and keep up the appearance of a "local Power." In a word to play the role that Poo-Hi plays for Manchuria today. The ominous cracking of riffles and triggers is heard. The city is filled with a hideous putrid smell of wooden soles.

Beyond the city stretches a hillrange covered with impenetrable virgin forests. The only beings who dare to live there are snipers. They are called "partisans," these crack marksmen who are never wide of the mark. And these flat hills surround the city like an iron cordon and are stronger than the rifles of the red cheeked soldiers in their red trimmed caps who tranquilly and solemnly change guard before the headquarters of the Great Power.

To push the hillrange further away from the city and to expand the "neutral zone," some "incident" must be invented. Sentries are placed along the railway leading far into the country. The same dimpled, red trimmed peasant lads. Their sentry boxes are separated by a few score of meters. They change guard firmly and assuredly, banging their rifles against the tracks, turn round automatically and stride back to the barracks.

But once a few sentinels failed to show up at the barracks. They had been killed (such was the assertion of the representatives of the Great Power) by the snipers, these remarkable marksmen for whom it was child's play to hit a squirrel's eye. The needed "incident" had been found. The Great Power's troops set off into the country to purge it of "bandits."

But a special commission that investigated the matter, discovered one very odd detail about the murdered sentries. Strange as it may seem, all the wounds were in the forehead and their eyebrows were singed as if the shot had been fired at close range. Whom could the sentries permit to approach so close? Maybe the snipers? But why need they approach so close if they could hit a squirrel's eye at a far distance?

These questions remained unanswered. Nobody ventured to ask them because nobody was willing to expose himself to the risk of being caught and brought to the headquarters of the Great Power.

Call to mind that night, that year, that district. Quietness all round. The noise of steps. "Who goes there?" "Friends." Who would think of approaching the sentry at night. It must be someone well known to him, an officer who has to be obeyed. An electric torch dazzles the eyes. Maybe a question "Is everything in order?" and all of a sudden the shot straight into the forehead. So that burned eyebrows form involuntary curls.

I thought then that this was a national trait, this heartlessness, cruelty and cold blooded calculation. Now I understand better. This is a class trait, this heartlessness, cruelty and cold blooded calculation whether it manifests itself at night by the sea or by broad daylight in Geneva.

N. Asseyev

We and They

It is impotent, it is shrunken up like an empty wine skin, the famous international law which is now being renovated with tawdry idealistic slogans.

The real law of the latter day capitalists is law of brute force, the law of the gun.

The dialectics of history have driven them to this law with iron and relentless logic; armed to the teeth they kill and plunder the helpless.

But we know how this will end for we are armed with dialectical scientific thought. We know they will quarrel over their spoil and in a last convulsive grip will deal one another the deadliest blows. We are well aware of the fact that whole regiments of soldiers, after stabbing their officers will march with music over to our side.

We know that the bloody bath will eventually drown the Imperialists who are preparing it. But, though we know all this, we are ready to defend our country, our socialist fortress, we are on the alert and are vigilant, knowing we may expect an attack at any moment. Besides, we know that not only the proletariat all over the world but also all honest and right thinking intellectuals in Europe and America are with us. But to be with us does not mean to keep silence and wait for events to develop. To be with us means to oppose war in an organized fashion, to establish councils of immediate action, to prevent the transportation of munitions.

To be with us means to defend the Soviet Union in deeds and not in words. Because only our way will lead humanity out of the horrors created by the capitalists in their frantic death agony.

N. Ogniov

We Are the Country of Peace

At a meeting of writers held to protest against the execution of the eight young negroes one member of the American Communist party, Comrade Washington, himself a negro, said: "The eyes of the proletarians all over the world are fixed on the Soviet Union. That is their only help and hope." And these words, pronounced not in our language by a man not of our hemisphere, not even of our color, but withal a comrade who shares our views and fights in our ranks, once again give convincing proof that the world's workers are one and that they have one goal: the liberation of the toiling masses.

The USSR means "help and hope" for the proletarians all over the world. It is the most advanced country today. And the capitalists know this just as well as the workers.

All these years the Great Powers and also the powers that are not great have been preparing for war both openly and secretly. Much has been and still is kept secret. Now and again bourgeois newspapers give vague information about new gases, bacteria, shells flying 1,500 kilometers, and scores of new means of destruction. And all this is directed against the only country that is building socialism. It is all meant for us.

We, Soviet writers, active members of the Literary Union of the Red Army and Navy are armed with pen and pencil. But this weapon in our hands must be more far-reaching and effective than the shell which flies 1,500 klm. Only it must have a different direction.

For words spoken in defence of the proletarian country, there exist no distances. We speak in Moscow but all the world hears us.

Writers of the West, best representatives of Western intellectuals, friends of the USSR, we must hear you speak in defence of our country. You, together with us, must come out in defence of the Soviet Union and fight in our ranks for the socialist fatherland of the toiling masses all over the world.

Vera Inber

Speak Out, Leaders of Culture

The war graves of the last imperialist slaughter have not yet been forgotten. The maimed and the broken still live in our midst, bearing witness to crimes of the governments of all the nations. And again war! The Chinese people have been attacked. The USSR is also menaced. Millions of toilers are again being made to serve as cannon fodder in a blood bath profitable to the bankers.

In France, the country of an age old culture, the government is facilitating the destruction of all that has been restored and newly acquired in technique and culture by the peoples making up the Soviet Union. This is to the undying shame of France, the home of so many illustrious thinkers and artists. How strange is the silence of so many leaders in the cultural life of modern France. The voice of Romain Rolland should not resound alone. The voices of the creators of spiritual values not only in France but in all nations should be heard here in the Soviet Union. We are waiting for them. The USSR, as the fatherland of the world's workers is sure of support from the proletarians of those countries whose capitalists turn their death-dealing guns against us.

In every regiment in enemy countries we shall have not only enemies but also friends. We are quite sure of this. And then the names of those cultural leaders who fail to speak out will become mere bywords.

L. Seifullina

My Reasons for Defending the USSR

I shall fight for the USSR not only because I am a citizen of the USSR, not only because I shall have to join up again in the Red Army.

I shall defend the USSR because I know that every blow struck at the USSR is a blow struck at the fatherland of toiling mankind, because all that has been built by us during these great years is the basis for the future reconstruction of the whole world.

Only sterile humanism can engender abstract conceptions and vague meditations about good and evil. That section of the more advanced intellectuals of the West who will not join us in saying: "For the defence of the toilers! For the fight against the war danger! For the fight against the war which is already raging in the Far East," that section of the intellectuals is condemned by the iron logic of history to a terrible and shameful defeat.

Vladimir Lidin

Camouflage and Lies—Their Favorite Weapons

The cannons directed on Chapei, hit everyone of us, too. I cannot get rid of the thought that thousands of people—men, women, children—are just now, at this very moment, exposed to Japanese machine guns. How can one enjoy peace of mind when he has to live with this thought. Camouflage and lies—these today are capitalism's weapons. Not "fair play" but "hole and corner methods," not a declaration of war, but "creeping into war." The murmuring of diplomatic fountains in Swiss hotels—this is the most base, the most deadly, the most dangerous of the poisons manufactured in imperialism's arsenals.

We must say openly: World imperialism is waging a new world war from the East, in the hope of absorbing the millions of unemployed, in the hope of softening the crisis, and, finally, in the hope of crushing that one country where a new form of human society, socialism, is growing up by leaps and bounds. To be silent and sit with arms folded in the face of all this would be a crime.

The proletariat and the laboring masses of the USSR are laying the foundations for a new society. Throughout the length and breadth of our land the contours of the second "pyatiletka" have been outlined by a daring hand, the contours of the classless society dreamt of by humanity's best minds from Campanella and Moore. But the victory of Socialism means the end of capitalism, its moral and historical end. That is why imperialism is setting light to the smoky sulphur of war.. But we, who have already entered this new world, know what it is like. We will give it away to nobody. We will fight—just dare touch us!—for every sod of land in the country of socialism.

Kornelly Selinsky

There Is Still Time

Our attitude to war is well known. We are categorically opposed to war. We are doing everything in our power to prevent war.

Complete unreserved and immediate disarmament for all nations without exception: that is what we want. We have fought for it at all manner of peace conferences, commissions and sub-commissions.

Nobody dare deny this. Since the very inception of the Soviet government we have consistently opposed war, and not only in words but also in deeds. The first word uttered by the newly born Soviet Republic was: peace. Its first action was the Brest-Litovsk Peace.

Our infancy, childhood and youth were spent in fighting for peace. And fighting for peace our Republic has now crossed the threshold of manhood, has entered the phase of building a classless society.

War is contrary to our very nature, to our social structure, our philosophy and our ethics.

We have always been against war. We are against war now. We shall always be against war.

We have done all in our power to prevent war.

Cynically and unceremoniously, without a formal declaration (lest public opinion know) Japan has started war against China, a nation that is impoverished and backward, a nation that has been plundered right and left by the imperialists.

We have seen the heroic defence of Shanghai and its no less heroic fall under the blows of the Japanese army, which is equipped according to the very latest achievements of military science.

We have read the meagre and confused reports of bourgeois news agencies and special correspondents describing the extermination of tens of thousands of peaceful inhabitants—women, children and old people—and the conversion of Chinese towns and villages into heaps of ruins.

These reports are meagre and confused. But we, the citizens of the Soviet Union, know how to read between the lines. We know very well what intervention means. The events of 1919 and 1920 are still too fresh in our memory. During these years the armies of 14 imperialist powers destroyed our ports in their efforts to strangle the young republic.

We paid dearly for these lessons in reading between the lines. Even the most confused and meaningless phrase in bourgeois reports becomes for all of us a picture of war, terrifying in its horrors, devastating in its life-like reality.

Speaking for myself I had the pleasure of experiencing the beauties of intervention in Odessa.

How well I remember the whiz of shells flying over the horrified city.

Never can I forget the sight of workers' corpses strung up in the public squares and along railway bridges.

I know the true meaning of punitive expeditions, court martial, ramrods, the secret service ,and "attempting to escape."

Not for nothing did we receive all these lessons.

The appetite of the Japanese imperialists has grown to monstrous proportions. They have formed the so-called "Independent" Manchurian State.

But we have learnt how to read between the lines. We understand perfectly what this means.

This means that right at our very doors an "independent" parade ground has been set up where anti-soviet armed forces are being concentrated.

Not only Japanese forces.

Russian White Guard monarchist divisions, international fascist battalions, all that is most reactionary and foul in the world—all are gathering on the "independent" territory of the "Independent Manchurian State" in order at the first opportunity to burst into the Soviet Union and attempt to strangle the only proletarian state in the World, the only nation really capable of making each and every war impossible: by destroying all armaments, all military reserves, by disbanding all armies and establishing for all time peace on earth and a brotherhood of free nations.

Such are the facts. These facts are incontrovertible.

I appeal to all who are honest, all who are educated, all who work either by hand or brain. My appeal is meant for all humane and right thinking men and women.

Do not permit yourselves to de deceived!

Do not believe the reassuring reports of the kept press!

Learn how to read between the lines!

War is at every man's door.

Not a family in the world can avoid feeling its hideous, pernicious and irreparable consequences.

Remember 1914.

Remember that not those who start war will do the fighting.

The fighting will be done not by kings, presidents, dictators, bankers, industrialists, newspaper owners.

The fighting will be done by you, your brothers, your fathers, your sweethearts, your husbands.

It is you who must prevent war.

There is still time.

Valentine Kataev

I, We and they

Since the year 1914 left a frightful mark on our memory, separating all that preceded it from all that followed, war has become the ghastly but close companion of everyone of us. It has forced its way into our lives, and demands that every man should consider it as his personal affair, a matter of his own life and his own death.

Listen to the viewpoint on war expressed by Erich Maria Remarque in his *War and Myself*. "War has snatched my frail and precious body, my immeasurable consciousness away from a snug, warm, safe house; it has thrown me into the depths of mortal despair; it is about to annihilate me. And I . . . I don't even curse it; what can I do? I, a lonely suffering creature? . . ." Remarque has written marvellously of this. He depicts everything truthfully. Here it is—the tyranny of war with its longings and boredom. Such an attitude to war is comprehensible. Every man is afraid of death. But not all that is comprehensible is noble and wise. Fear for oneself even if combined with compassion for one's fellows in the trenches, such a fear is selfish, because it is sterile; it is the instinctive shuddering of a small, cogitating animal; it is the groan of a petty bourgeois which disappears into the sinister night of militarism.

Romain Rolland, that last prophet of old Europe who now stands on the threshold of a new epoch and is being illuminated by it, showed us another and higher attitude to war; a lone fight against it. Standing high above the struggle he denounced the war but also opposed to it a spiritual alliance of all Europeans, united by the possession of an old culture, thought, and art, rejecting all national hatred. "War and We," such was the teaching of Romain Rolland. Senseless is the extermination of innocent men. Senseless is barbarism and plundering; we—the many millions who work on the land, at the machines, at science, in schools or with our pens, we the creators of all life's blessings, why do we need war? Should we not turn away from it with a curse on our lips?

Rolland's voice was full of manliness and power. It echoed far and wide and helped the cause of peace. But Rolland did not reveal to us the great secret under whose cloak war was born, he did not show us its actual makers, did not call on us to restrain and destroy them. The great French artist and thinker is only now carrying out his idea to the logical end. And now, when we read daily the cables from the Far East and the military reports which are so painfully familiar to us since those terrible years, cables and reports that war has come, we see clearly the simple causes that underlie mutual extermination of the peoples. We understand its reasons and sources. We understand that War does not fall from heaven like the showers of deluge. It has its eternal fatherland—Imperialism. It is a creation of human hands. It has its legal parents: the class of loafers and exploiters in all countries. It has also a very solicitous god-father—the economic crisis all over the world. And it is then that we begin to think: War and They.

They—are all who bank their hopes on the final subjugation of the unfortunate Chinese people, they—are all those who for years have been preparing a crusade against the Soviet Union, the only hope of toiling humanity, the heir of the achievements of the dying culture of the old world. They must be exposed to the end. To view imperialist war at once with the eyes of art and the eyes of the far-seeing policy of the oppressed implies no contradiction. Just the reverse—that is the only one way to view it. We artists of the Soviet Union take upon ourselves with pride the duties of artist—politicians, the duties of fearless fighters against the capitalist system of plundering and murder.

We earnestly appeal to all our friends in other lands to follow our example.

I. Kataev

mmediate Action Wanted

A recent number of the British Naval and Military Record contained the following lines which practically sum up the Shanghai tragedy: "We are well aware now of what a Great Power can do to a weak nation." "Self-determination has apparently become a phrase completely devoid of meaning." Yes, now we know what a so-called Great Power can do. It can engage in systematic extermination of the population, it has the right to destroy cities, to raze libraries and universities to the ground, to kill old men, women and children. And it may rest assured that such brutality will call forth no protests from the professional pacifists. No protests whatsoever, except scholastic discussions on International Law at the League of Nations. Before 1932 there could still be found in Europe a species of pacifists who hummed the following lullaby: "Who will fight nowadays, anyway? The years from 1914 to 1918 are still too fresh in our memories. While the generation that fought in the Great War is alive, nobody will want to fight." But the events in Shanghai and Manchuria have shown everybody what the Imperialist Great Powers are capable of doing.

All true fighters for peace, all who have not yet buried the idea of a real fight for peace, for universal disarmament, must find such words to protest against war as will set the nations afire and expose before the world's peoples the Imperialist plotters of a new world war. But it is necessary to act at once before the voices of protest against the coming war are drowned in the rumbling of cannons, before the mouths of the fighters for peace are closed by the mailed fist of a military censorship.

L. Nikulin

Nikolai Tikhonov

War[1]

Translation from Russian

Forward

"Forward! Forward! you swine! Stir your lazy bones!"

The soldiers rose immediately from the ground, and stooping clumsily, ran in among the bushes and fell to the ground once more. There was nothing else for them to do. Orders had to be obeyed at once. So they fell. It was called "making a run for it."

Lieutenant Ruprecht Schreckfuss, known to his friends as "Rudy," was kneeling behind the firing-line. He was full of the dashing fervor of a born but as yet untried soldier. War was the only thing that Rudy Schreckfuss could be serious about. The rest of the time he was just a campaigner, a lieutenant, who played cards, ran up debts, lived beyond his means, boasted of motorcars that were not his and told stories of stables he had never owned. If it so happened that his soldiers had to lie up in the hospital from the weals he raised on their backs—that was just the fault of his quick temper, nothing more.

"In large families," he said in self-justification, "children sometimes suffer from occasional heartlessness on the part of their parents, foremen beat their apprentices in order to knock sense into them, and husbands beat their wives so as to keep them on the right path." Everything was right with the world, espeially at manoeuvres on a hot summer's day like this.

Everything looked good to him today: the hot sun, the bushes where his line of soldiers was hidden, the helmets in their protective green covers, the sky, the crisp rattle of the firing, the theatrical volleys from the big guns, the orderlies riding about against the sky-line, the shrill whistles, the rattles that took the place of machine guns—all the lively confusion of manoeuvres—they were only manoeuvres, after all, not war. He worshipped war and he had never been in one.

"The fort of the blues is quieting down. . . . Look out there, Rudy!" a friend of his shouted, waving his field-glasses.

Discipline and the army are important things. The village sows grain for the army's bread, the workshops make uniforms and boots for it; the factories provide it with arms and munitions. Long live the new trench-spades, the new dull straps on his uniform and the latest novelty—barbed wire!

He jumped up:

"Forward! Forward!" The soldiers ran clean, forgetting the regulations. They ran too openly.

"Vladek!" Rudy was almost beside himself—"Keep your head down, lower your rifle a bit! Slavonic goose! Posen Tripe! Vladek, it's you I'm talking to!"

It was rather tiring to have to behave like this for several hours at a stretch, but at any rate the fort would be taken just now. To judge from the determined, deafening noise of the cannon and the rattles imitating machine-guns, from the closeness of the line of men crawling over the grass, followed by Schreckfuss and other lieutenants, the fort was surrounded.

Exclamations kept bursting from the line of men. Suddenly, right before their eyes, arose the goal toward which they had been straining all the morning: the grey wall of the glacis, the parapets, and the loop-holes. And over all this unreal grey mass that gave the impression of a stage setting, hung a profound silence. The enemy had exhausted all the ammunition.

And then Rudy shouted a last command, without waiting to find if he was in agreement with anyone else:

"Forward! Bayonets charge!"

A battlefield danced before his eyes, a battle like the storming of Metz or Sedan. It was excusable: he had had nothing to eat since morning. When a man is hungry, his fancies become painfully clear.

Just now his men would break into this grey fort. Herr Major Holst would thank him for his services, the commandant would come out to meet him and hand over his sword.

That's something to be proud of, Rudy! What talks there would be! What reminiscences! In the meantime his great German soldiers had run to the dry moat, jumped into it and halted in bewilderment.

Instead of the flag of truce the fire-brigade appeared on the walls of the fort. The stormers glanced at each other, puzzled. The storming had been spoilt. Was it a joke or a war? Why should the firemen be here, firemen with brick-red cheeks and big eyes of northerners, in which a derisive smile seemed to lurk. But no, the smile did not come. In their hands they held fire-hose, which were directed on Rudy's victorious soldiers.

""What does this mean?" he bawled furiously. "What's all this?"

An order rang out in the fort and the fire-hose began to disgorge terrifying streams of muddy water. The water beat on helmet, face, shoulders, chest. The soldiers threw down their rifles, stumbled and fell, snorted like horses and ran from the moat. Yes, they ran, wet and humiliated, and the muddy water beat on their backs.

It was outside all the rules of the game, it was simply a joke, it would be talked about for ages in every military club from the Rhine to the Vistula. Rudy himself was wet from head to foot. Not a trace remained of the morning's elegance.

"Who's the swine that thought of bringing the fire-brigade into this?"

"The commandant will have to answer for it even if he has gone cracked!"

"Where's the mediator? Where did he get to?"

The fort glittered with as many brass helmets as if there was a real fire. The hose-pipes had run wild. The attack was clearly repulsed. Not a

[1] Abridged version of the novel *War*.

single soldier dared to approach the glacis. They crowded together at a little distance, cursing below their breath, discharging their rifles into the air, wiping them and wringing out their breeches. Rudy was almost in tears. Water was running down the proud collar. His uniform was ruined, the new dull straps were perfectly limp. He looked as if he had fallen into the river from the pontoon bridge and been dragged out by one leg on a hook. Words failed him—he could only wander about among the wet and gloomy riflemen.

Herr Major Holst could be seen striding through the bushes. The mediator was with him. The band on his sleeve rendered him almost a foreigner, he was in a special position. He was invulnerable and immortal. The mediator could neither be slain nor taken captive. At every step he brought some terrible calamity on the army. The orderly led his horse—a chestnut hunter with a white star on its forehead.

"I have the honour to report . . . " Rudy's voice failed him, he was ready for immediate arrest, he understood that in his wet state he was a disgrace to the army. It was an extraordinary case, the first time such a wild scene had occurred in the German army during the Imperial manoeuvres.

"Retire!"

The gates of the fort opened. A stoutish man with a purple face and puffy cheeks, his nose drawn down till it resembled the beak of a vulture, came out, attended by his staff. The mediator shouted to him delightedly making no attempt to conceal his malicious satisfaction:

"An excellent defence! Couldn't have thought of a better! Thanks. You've made a great discovery!"

The dripping soldiers and officers were crowded at the back. The firemen's helmets were lined up behind the commandant. People were whispering. The commandant had already been nicknamed the "Saxony clown." Why, nobody knew, but everybody liked the nickname.

The purple face was growing bluish, only the eyes, wide with agitation, stared into the face of the mediator. Maybe he was thinking of some other trick, one that no field regulations allowed for.

Herr Major Holst wanted to begin to speak. He had no chance because a word was whispered down the ranks, a word that acted like an electric shock. The wet soldiers froze in their ranks, the wet officers turned into statues. The mediator clapped his hands to his sides, his horse stopped pawing the ground. The fort held its breath. The helmets of the firemen ceased to glitter.

"The Kaiser! Attention! The Kaiser!"

The silver-grey officer's coat fitted closely the shoulders of a man approaching with measured tread. His eyes were heavy and unblinking. The bronze face, on which the flat turned-up, spear-headed moustaches of a tiger bristled, had high cheek-bones. Everything froze, lost itself and drew back before the phantom approaching with ringing spurs. He had thought it all out carefully: his gait, his life, his Germany. He wanted to think out his fate, too, but every time he swung his arm, his eyes began to blink and that was a bad sign. Each time this blinking was caused by some particular disturbance. The name of the last disturbance was Agadir. On account of this dry little African name he could move the army, but his eyes blinked.

He was not a prophet, although in his pursuit of fate he had been drawn to the East. And rightly. Fate lay in the East. She had her name written there, and the place, and the date. This fate was called *Sarajevo.* And also—Archduke. But at the present moment this Archduke was amusing himself at Ischl and was suffering from a slight cold in the head, just a touch of it. The man in the silver-grey coat was heading straight for Schreckfuss, without turning either to the right or to the left. He was really going straight to the army, because of all queer things he loved one game most. This game was the army. It was his favorite game, and it was only for the sake of this that all other things existed. If this had been taken from him, this glittering, drilled, white-breeched, blue-green-black uniformed thing with loud cannon, with snorting of horses and ranks straight as arrows—what would remain to him in life?

The silver-grey coat, high boots and little cane—he did not care for a sword, he could not control his right hand, it was a dead, withered senseless hand. The coat, then, the boots and the helmet suited him best of all. They had another name, too: war. Was it not for war that he was preparing all these animated toys, which would move some day in obedience to the red, lightning-like strokes of staff pencils over the maps of France, Belgium, Poland and England?

Was it not for him that Lieutenant Rudy Schreckfuss had crawled through the fields and bushes around that cursed fort? Was it not for him that the fire-brigade had been so generous with water for the defence? Was it not for him that the commandant had gone crazy?

The Kaiser came nearer with his enormous suite. The gold-trimmed uniform of the hussars, the black gloss of the Uhlan shakos, the black cloth of the artillery-men, the colored standards, the monumental A D C's, the green uniforms of the Foot, the multitude of swords and sabres and curious-shaped spurs accompanied him.

The commandant of the fort was blue, as if struck by lightning. He was blue right to the tips of his fingers.

The Kaiser's glance wandered over the wet helmets and uniforms. The mediator thought that the first question would be put to him, but he was mistaken.

The Kaiser went up to the commandant and halted. He stood admiring the intense blueness of the commandant's face, admiring this "loyal-subject" fear of the military machine.

"Commandant!" he trumpeted, and the bronze cheeks grow still drier—"Captain"—"Otto von Starke, Your Majesty," replied the commandant haltingly.

"It seems you have brought on rain here by some magic?"

No, Rudy could not have been in the commandant's place now for anything. This cursed military cloth, when once it got well-soaked it held the cold for ages. Rudy gave a slight shiver.

"Your Majesty"—shouted Starke, forgetting even to stutter in his frenzy of fear and wrinkling his forehead as much as possible. "As a reserve officer of the German Army, it is my duty to work constantly on the improvement of methods of fighting. Having exhausted all our ammunition and all means of defence of the fort entrusted to

me, I had recourse to a method that permitted me to resist the attack of enemy forces that outnumbered mine. Taking into consideration the conventions of manoeuver warfare . . . "

Starke lost his breath. The Kaiser tapped his glossy boot with his cane. It was just one of his many gestures, and everybody was aware that it signified displeasure.

"So, taking into consideration the conventions of manoeuvre warfare, you gave them a cold shower. You're a bad psychologist . . . "

The commandant got his voice back again. Now he simply roared, from excess of loyalty and agitation:

"Taking into consideration the conventions of manoeuvre warfare I gave the order to pour streams of burning oil on the attacking forces."

Silence fell and in that silence the hose-pipe incident expanded into something more, but there was still time to leave it an incident. Everything depended now on the position of the stick. The stick was raised, but did not strike the boot. It hung in the air, because the hand that held it was clenched and rested on the hip. This gesture denoted musing.

"Is that possible?" inquired the Kaiser. "Is it possible to destroy attacking troops with burning oil?"

The anecdote died. Bewilderment remained. It only remained to answer according to all the rules of military subordination, what was really an idiotic question. But nobody knew what to reply. The shakos and the helmets held a whispered consultation. The anecdote once more arose with full force and now it made the Kaiser look foolish as well.

And then the Kaiser, with a glance into the eyes of the commandant, gabbled "Thank you for your services," and swung about as if on hinges to his suite, before they had even time to exchange glances.

"And now let us analyse the manoeuvres, gentlemen."

The legs of folding-chairs, field-tables and desks clicked. There was a rustling of maps being drawn from portfolios and dispatch-cases. The solemn hour of general summing-up had arrived.

Starke wiped his forehead and smoothed out the wrinkles on it, trembling like a motor-bicycle that has just been started. A very tall stoutly-built officer took him by the arm and, putting his thin shaven, zinc-colored lips to Starke's ear, said distinctly:

"You will put your suggestion in writing as fully and as quickly as possible and hand it to me. Is that clear, Captain?"

A Quiet Chat

The features of the tall officer sitting in the deep armchair looked as though they were moulded of zinc. An observer would have searched in vain for any sign of human feeling in them. It was just this lack of warmth that appealed to Starke. What he was intending to say demanded above all things the coolest attention:

"Your Excellency has honored me with a personal visit. I am ready to tell you everything. How long can you spare?"

The general looked at the captain of the fire-brigade as if he was ascertaining his weight and hoped from this to gauge the weight of his story.

Then he said something in what seemed a super-human voice and a vision of a field arose before Starke's eyes. A field where troops and horses and cannon were disposed. His feet seemed to be rooted to the floor, and a shiver of servility ran down his spine. He put down his cigar and listened to the general without stirring.

"First of all I should like to know what observations led you to such an unexpected conclusion. Give me an account of the development of your ideas, without hurrying and without forgetting anything. A thing as curious as a new means of warfare, which is in itself a strict secret, should be made fully known to us and to no one else. The international situation is strained to breaking-point. I'm telling you this frankly. It may be that this spring, this summer — in a word, I am listening to you."

Starke gave the general time to settle back on the cushion of the armchair and then rose. The general made a slight motion that he might sit down again. Starke sat down. He had often told stories of the endless fires he had been called in to extinguish to his own circle of acquaintances and at official meetings but the matter in hand was not like that. The sea of the future lay before him. Its stormy waves were already lapping up to his feet. The foam of unknown day splashed to his knees. He must concentrate and make up his mind to go into it—this was more terrifying than if he had this very moment, dressed as he was in this tunic flung open the door and gone out into the frosty night to the Opera House to buy a ticket for "Siegfried." But he flung open the door.

"Your Excellency is aware that I am only the superintendent of the fire-brigade, the modest defender of property, the guardian of private property in the face of the senseless elements, a man who sees a fire every day, a man who sees more fires in a month than most people see in the whole of their lives. Fire may be of different colors, different strengths, different kinds. Fire is a great artist. I have seen how fantastically it plays with houses, with furniture, with people, before it destroys them. It sways and dances, it marches in long yellow lines, it hides, crouches and waits, lays traps for people. I know Fire's physiognomy only too well and I have always felt it to be an enemy of mine. I suppose fishermen feel like that about the sea. I know the power that I lead against Fire. I love my brave lads, how they sway up into the sky on the freshly-oiled ladders. I love the spouts of water. Once I was present when, by sheer accident, a long, thin tongue of fire leaped out and killed Ludwig Kubitsch, my best lieutenant. He left a son, Johann, a good, clever boy. I could never forget that ten-yard tongue of flame and the charred corpse of my soldier. I could not sleep that night: I sat up till dawn smoking. By morning the floor was all strewn with cigar stubs, but the idea, conceived in that smoke, was so great that it terrified me and I hid from it in smoke. Morning found me on my feet, green with exhaustion but satisfied. Why shouldn't we, I said to myself, why shouldn't we replace this costly artillery by light fire-hose that would simply burn up the enemy? Why should we not replace water by burning oil? I imagined our brave lads burning the enemy like weeds. I believe

in God, Your Excellency, and I am a proud man. It wouldn't do for me to make a fool of myself. My rank, my profession and my sense of duty preclude it. But if the Almighty has bestowed this idea on me, if He had thought fit to make me His instrument, how could I disregard such an idea, though at first, I admit, it frightened me. I had put it away from me as a temptation, as a work beyond my feeble powers, but the idea grew stronger. I myself did not suspect what a hold it had taken of me. And when, during the manoeuvers I was ordered to defend the fort by all possible means, I did not suspect that after ten hours of fighting I would be in the grip of the idea that fascinated me, that I would give the order to turn the fire-hose on the attackers. I summoned the fire-brigade to the parapet. My imagination was on fire. I behaved like a green youth. They did not understand me, I am sure that they took me for a madman. Your Excellency, you were a witness of that battle—and you exonerated me."

The general gazed transfixed at the beads of perspiration gathering on Starke's purple cheeks. His cold, grey, zinc hands lay motionless on the arms of the chair. His brows drew together a little when Starke paused. Then the latter went on:

"By your orders I got into touch with the people you had recommended to me. Of course we did not create the world in six days. It took much longer. But now I know the laws of my projector like my own prayers. Easily inflammable oil under pressure of compressed gas is shot through the fire-hose, to a distance of from 20 to 50 meters, depending on the force and size of the apparatus. When you turn on the taps of the pipe, the oil will burn of itself, issuing in big spouts, absolutely deadly to anyone they touch. We yearned for an experiment. We examined hundreds of kinds of oil and combinations of oil, hundreds of reservoirs, pipes and hose. We had long since given up the ordinary hose-pipe, we perfected models of our flame gun, a deadly thing for the enemy and very convenient for our army. What nervous tremors we had when we started the first experiment. We had made several score straw figures, about the size and weight of a human body and placed them in the position of an attacking force. When I gave the order "Fire!" I was near fainting. The strain of those sleepless nights was beginning to tell. It seemed to me that if I ordered "Fire!" and the apparatus should refuse to work, that these straw dummies would burst with horrible shrieks into the fort and smother us all, trample us under their feet and dance on our bodies. And Oh!—miracle of miracles! the streams of fire burnt them all up. They took fire, crackled. The smoke shut out the sun but the smell of it was pleasant to us. And I walked through these piles of charred straw bodies. They fell from the storming ladders, they slid down into the ditch, and I walked among them like reaper after the harvest.

"Then we repeated the experiment and called in doctors. They stared in astonishment. I asked them only one question: Would the action of this weapon be sufficient to put an enemy force out of action?"

"One of them laughed, but the other said that he had never seen anything more deadly in his life—and then we all laughed."

The general's shoulders moved slightly. "How did Moritz, the engineer recommended to you, behave?"

Starke felt an unexpected weakness. He understood that the general was dissatisfied with his bombastic, abstract account, and wished to bring him back to earth.

"Engineer Moritz," he replied, "behaved like an exemplary patriot. He advised me to use thick oil—a mixture of coal-tar and coal-oil, since it gives on ignition, a very good flame and a great deal of smoke, which would terrify the enemy..."

"What gas did you use to start the streams of fire?"

"Nitrogen. Oxygen burst three of our projectors. It's not suitable. Compressed air is also impossible to use. Our idea developed further and further. Engineer Moritz had lived in Africa. He told me that the negroes there used to set fire to the grass. The whole steppe would be in a blaze. When the fire passed over, they would pick up and eat the game that had been thus roasted in enormous quantities.

"After hearing that I invented a new method of applying the fire-projector. Before an attack, the place over which the enemy is to advance is soaked in inflammable oil and then, when the ranks of the attackers reach this zone we begin to pour fire over them from the fire-projectors. It all blazes up, it is a real fire-trap. We place the projectors in a zigzag, so that the enemy is caught on every side. The crackling of the burning bodies of enemy soldiers, like locusts, this is the martial music of the future.

"And finally, Your Excellency, when the historic hour of another Sedan strikes, we shall not forget that we may have at the rear false Germans, socialists of all shades, pacifists and revolutionaries, workers who may go out into the streets with red flags trying to take advantage of our difficult position. Just imagine, their puzzles, Your Excellency, when they are confronted with the beautiful, shining steel of my fire-projectors. After the order "Ready!" the streets would be clear."

A faint smile spread over the general's face for the first time that evening.

"What do you call the general action of the flame-projectors in battle?" he asked.

"We call it Fang—Feuerangriff—the flame attack. It is a good word—Fang, it explains our idea and holds a warning."

"Do you keep any of the plans or drawings of this projector here in your house?"

Starke spread out his hands in a gesture that was almost gay.

"Not even a drawing-ruler. Everything is being kept where you ordered, in the citadel."

"Does anyone, except yourself, know of this? Your wife, niece, servant?"

"Only two people in this house know of it, you and I."

The general rose and paced about the room.

"Does it not seem to you, my dear Starke," he said in an almost familiar tone, "that this is one of the little episodes of a new stage in the history of war?"

Starke felt an unexpected wave of joy come over him. This was not merely approval, this was praise, weighty like a medal. He stood resting his lumpy, heavily-veined hand on the table and smiled without being aware that he did so.

"My existence will be justified," he said in the tone of a school-boy, recollecting a long-forgotten text.

The general ceased pacing about the study. He went up to Starke and, looking straight into his eyes, put his hand on his shoulder and stood like that for a minute. Then he slowly drew his hand away, straightened his face so that the zinc profile shone with an arid heat and said:

"The supreme patron of the army is interested in your experiments."

They sat down once more and chatted for a whole hour.

When they went into the hall Starke helped the general on with his coat. The general stood like an iron figure that neither understood jokes nor permitted itself to joke. And after all he made a joke. He beckoned Starke to come nearer, and, as if hesitating and endeavouring to give his words the least possible weight, said almost casually:

"Oh, by the way, your niece should put an end to her friendship with Ernst Asten. We do not desire friendship. And then we have information..."

"Fang"

Starke had never, even in childhood, loved woods. He also hated all wooden structures since these during a fire burned down very quickly and rendered all his knowledge and efforts as an old enemy of fire, useless.

It was true, though, that the wood he was in just now bore slight resemblance to an ordinary wood.

First of all the trees had no tops. The tops lay on the ground. The trunks and branches splintered by shells looked so doleful, particularly at sunset, that the sight of them went to his heart. They had suffered, and for no reason. In places there were great fissures where for several hours in succession the heavy artillery shells had wrought havoc. Part of the wood had gone to the dressing of the trenches and for blindage. The shrubs and undergrowth were entangled with a mass of barbed wire. Not a bird sang, not a beast was to be heard.

Several thousand people were hiding below the surface of the ground in this wood, others never came out of their holes at all. Instead of themselves a narrow strip of paper would arrive at their homes bearing the words—"On the field of honor" but it was not a field, it was a wood.

And in this wood stood Starke, alone with his universal idea. The idea was wider than the wood, taller than the tallest grenadier. It filled Starke's soul with a peculiar flame, when from the observation point he looked into the depths of the woods, awaiting the moment when he, Starke, would become a national hero. Columbus on the deck of his good-natured tub would have seemed beside Starke a simple peasant whose business was only to fool naked savages, while at a distance of 50 yards from Starke the enemies of the Kaiser lay hidden armed to the teeth. And in a few minutes he would make them run like sheep, forgetting everything and fearing to offer the slightest resistance. Starke's America was in the road to Paris, it was the end of the War. The War would be burned to a cinder. He, Starke, would burn out the War, he and none other.

In the various Staff Headquarters they did not put much faith in him. People who were accustomed to all kinds of puzzles sat in these places. Difficult to surprise them. And then there were so many inventors whose devices had not turned out well. The only reliable weapons were honest shells, thousands of shells, mililons of shells. They were the real ploughs for tearing up the battlefields. No, they did not trust him fully.

Starke straightened himself. Oblique rays lit up the dark square of wood, melted together and then split up again. The scouts were returning.

In the narrow dip before the parapet people were working silently near the wire. They were trying hard to clear the narrow space of scrap, of piles of dry twigs and stones. They did not know themselves why they should be doing this. Besides they could be shot down any minute. They had grown accustomed during the long months of war to living like animals—crawling on all fours, lying for hours on their stomachs; they bored into the earth like rats, hid their stores in it like dogs, ran ahead like red-eyed bulls, to plunge their bayonets into anything they might meet with. Grown dull and stupid with the eternal heavy dirty work, with fright that kept out all other thoughts, they crawled now between the parapet and the wire and worked, trying at the same time to make no noise.

"The wind interferes," said Starke.

"The last report was: velocity five meters. That's nothing," replied the man at the observation post.

"See there's nothing in front of the parapet," said Starke.

"There are two corpses on the barbed wire, but that won't interfere."

Several men jumped into the trench. Earth fell in clots from their dirty shoulders. They had just been cleaning the passage by crawling between the wire. Their coats, shabby, crumpled had now been torn on the wire, and seemed to tell their own story of much suffering.

Starke took no notice of them. According to his idea people had always been like soft wax in the hands of the State. And there was a great deal or at any rate enough of this wax.

Then he went up to the projectors. Here, painted a protective color, stood the children of his heart and brain. He stroked them.

What had he except two words: Kaiser and projectors? Maybe Starke did not exist at all. In the smoky air of the trench, among shadow-people, stood something in a captain's epaulettes, a symbol of concentrated energy, a materialized idea.

Starke and his followers smoked cigars cautiously. They made them, like recruits, in their hands and covered them with their sleeves. These cigars had been given a place in the lexicon of the War. By the feeble light of their evil, red, smouldering stubs people inspected the monometers. The nitrogen bottles were grey and motionless and seemed inoffensive. Children might have found them in a rubbish-heap and played with them. Here they were in the position of supers. The slightest defect would have ruined their entire career.

"The fire-stream consists of burning oil and burning oil gases... Call up your men," said Starke.

The soldiers were standing on the second line. There were very few of them. Starke said a few words. There was really nothing to say, but according to the regulations, there had to be some

talk. For Starke's soul there was no other symbol of faith than the regulations.

"Boys," he said, "you must keep up your spirits, keep your spirits up before all things. You are the sportsmen of the War you must be the champions. Hit them between the eyes, burn their muzzles for them, see to it that there is no leakage of oil, remember the order 'Halt!' and stop at once. Don't waste yourselves, our work is an affair of honor. Carry the flame-projector through the barrage no matter what happens, no matter what happens, mind! Forward! forward! forward."

The soldiers stood like young bulls picked out for slaughter. They were fine, strong lads, they would carry the projectors through the barrage. They were sportsmen, were they? Well, let it go at that, why not? This elderly chap might say whatever came into his head. That didn't alter anything after all. The thing was that they had to get out of this trench and pour burning oil over folks, for the first time in their lives. Holiday times in the village were, of course, a bit more cheerful than this, but then you wouldn't see a sight like this at home. And then maybe they'd give you a bit of leave for doing this, or a white and black ribbon. Might as well have a shot at it, anyway!

Starke felt a wave of tenderness come over him. He searched the depths of his fund of eloquence for suitable words, and they jerked off his tongue stammeringly. He wanted to say something to these lads. It was as if he was standing before a great fire, into which his firemen were going and in which his best lieutenant had lost his life.

"Boys!" he began again—"today you were given sausage, good sausage, wasn't it? Today you got cigars and cocoa and tomorrow you will get glory, which nobody has had until now. Keep your hearts up and let's shout hurrah—in our souls—three times, for the Supreme Chief of the army."

It was forbidden to shout. Whether the soldiers shouted hurrah in their souls did not worry Starke overmuch. He believed that they did so. That they had eaten sausage, drunk cocoa and smoked cigars he knew. It was an extra ration for special occasions.

Starke put his hand to his helmet and dropped it sharply. He smoked his cigar for a long time. The watch on his wrist grew into an enormous clock-face, rocking and ticking loud enough to be heard all over the wood. The sound of the random firing of the sentries reached him through the wood like the buzzing of solitary wasps.

The hand of the watch rocked, stood still.

Time was up!

Many people might be saying that at one and the same time. A shell flew comet-like through the wood and, splintering the dark with a bluish light, went out, filling the air with smoke. And now people rushed up the steps. Through the wood, clouds passed, through these, with a whistle flew burning oil. It burned on the blindage, on the branches, on the posts, on barbed wire, on the nests of machine-guns, it blazed on coats, on rifles, on helmets—hissing and curdling.

The white-hot streams caught the enemy on the run. Flesh and skin began to burn already and eyes and veins began to burst. A howl arose in the wood, and through this howl stood Starke, a ruthless warrior from an old saga. The saga was unfolding before him. His fire had burnt everything up. The trap had worked. The blinding streams poured unceasingly on. Now their coils rose, now the target changed, and they smote the enemy from the flank. The night was alive with bursting shells and ringing blows, incomprehensible like everything else in a nocturnal battle. The enemy had fallen into the trap. The enemy was still endeavouring, however, in desperation to fire at random.

The man working the projector fell before Starke's eyes, evidently wounded in the head. He lifted his hand, but it never reached his face. Oil was leaking from the projector where it had been hit by a bullet. The burning projector writhed on the ground, disclosing its entrails. Starke stooped and shut off the tap. He had become as agile as the youngest soldier in his regiment.

The flame was burning down the wood, the people and all obstacles before it. The enemy either died, or closed his eyes and screamed with terror. People always closed their eyes, they fear to lose their sight most of all, they want to see everything up to the last.

The German infantry advanced alongside the fire-projector brigade. Starke jumped into a trench. It was a French one. People lay about under and on the parapet, but they were not people. They were those black, charred dummies, those straw figures that Starke had played with when his projector was passing through its first days of flaming youth.

The oil danced madly around Starke. It seemed as if it had been only waiting for that—all its long life alongside humanity it had been waiting for this night, when it would be able to jump, whistle, burn, destroy. The order to retire should be given. This mighty torrent should not be allowed to exhaust itself.

A man appeared above the trench. Three streams of flame knocked him over like a beetle. He spun round him, as if it was tickling him from all sides. The man hopped about on one leg and in the light of his blazing garments his burning hair and black forehead were visible. The mouth was wide open, gasping silently in his distress. He was lost. Suddenly he began to crackle like a fire-cracker. The flame reached the cartridge-pouch that he had not had time to throw away. The pouch blazed up, exploded, the flame licked the man's grey pumice-like face. The second pouch exploded and the man curled up like a butterfly that has fluttered too long around the candle to fall at last in ashes.

The grenadiers with grenades in their hands were standing at the entrance to the blindage. They suggested to those who remained alive that they would give themselves up. The battle was over. The projectors were put out one after another. French guns were bombarding the trenches and shells struck the charred bodies, lifting them, standing them on their heads, spinning them round and tearing them to pieces. And then the prisoners were brought in.

A stout French sergeant was led past Starke. He was bleeding prodigiously like a sheep. He kept on repeating: "To fight like this... This is not fighting, this is muck, this is muck, what is it called." Starke stopped him and held him by the arm.

"It is called 'fang' "—he said, but the Frenchman flung off his arm, and strode on, with his blood streaming down. Over and over he affirmed:

"This isn't fighting, this is muck, this is muck."

Balloons

In the narrow covered way the riflemen flattened themselves against the wall so as to let stumbling people pass. They were dragging some mysterious burden and breathing heavily. Evidently these people had been dragging their burden a long time and were making in the direction of the front line. At first it semeed to the riflemen as if the people were carrying corpses, but afterwards they thought it must be shells. They were astonished to think that such huge shells were being carried this way in complete darkness for no apparent reason.

Two men were dragging a mysterious metal balloon on poles. Judging by their thick, wheezy breathing and smothered coughs the load was no light one.

"What's that, eh, boys?" the riflemen asked, but the laden man hurried on ahead and disappeared, staggering into the darkness. Another couple was coming towards the riflemen. They were carrying another such shell on poles. Others followed them at a short distance. It seemed as if by some strange whim, these bearers of the unknown were being born out of the darkness.

The riflemen stood, holding their breath, while the people with balloons passed by them. They counted 24 balloons and still the end of the procession could not be seen. They had seen nothing like it in all their trench life.

"Eh, boys, what's this rubbish, anyway? What are they filled with?"

"Carrot jam," replied a mournful bearer, wiping away the sweat with his sleeve."

"How do I know, we don't know ourselves," said another, a bit brighter. "It looks as though we'll have to drag them to Paris if we don't peg out before that."

"What regiment are you?" asked the riflemen at the 43rd balloon.

"Punishment corps, we're all under arrest, machine-gun fodder," replied a soldier, almost aloud as he halted and rested the balloon against the wall of the narrow passage. The men who had made the inquiry whistled softly.

"We're gun-fodder ourselves," the others said and their indignation began to vent itself on this endless funeral procession, on this idiotic delay, on the narrow corridor that did not allow them to pass each other. Nobody wanted to get up on top. Searchlights were wandering over the sky and everyone knew what that meant.

The soldier who had called himself gun-fodder leaned up against the wall in spite of the fact that a new brace of soldiers was approaching.

"I'm not going on," he declared. Gravel was trickling down his collar, but he felt a huge satisfaction in resting, in stretching himself after that long march at a crouch like a monkey.

"Don't be a fool, Asten," said his mate. "Pick up the pole, let's go on. If the others should knock into us and our balloon should rattle, what then?"

"And if a bullet should hit this cursed balloon, do you suppose we'll get off with whole skins?"

"But what's inside it—devil take it, I'm sure it weighs a hundred pounds. If it should burst here, there'd be a smell of burnt flesh for a mile round. Well, come on, let's go then."

They moved on through the dark night life of endless passages that were sometimes broken, sometimes dipped into the depths of the earth, sometimes led out to dark buildings, sparingly lighted, where more people crouched. They went on further. It seemed to Asten that he slept. As they tramped, he fell into a kind of transparent dream. He felt the weight of the load and the poles on his shoulders, his legs moved on, but the darkness had got into his mouth, his eyes, his ears, and cut off any kind of human motion or thought. What could one think of in a gloom like this, when one was breathless from weariness with torn hands, bruised legs, and a head heavy with exhaustion?

They had stuck him away in the punishment corps, thereby reserving him the right to open hatred of everything he saw. He knew that the men of the punishment corps were, in the eyes of the staff, just so much material to be got rid of at the first opportunity, but got rid of in a clever way. He could not guess, however, the nocturnal mystery of the balloons, and no one of whom he inquired could tell him. Many thought that it was something explosive, a mine, perhaps.

His former life had been left behind somewhere in another age, in another country. Grimy, tousled, driven into the dark tunnels of the earthy labyrinths, hungry, reduced to the level of animals, he would not have been able today to argue with the bookish warmth of an enthusiastic young man, with Professor Burchardt. He would like to have taken a piece of that earth, crumbled and broken by spades and dynamite, mingled with blood and bones, and carried it as a present to the Professor on the occasion of a ceremonial dinner, when the Professor would be engaged in proving that everything was in excellent order, and that the constitutions of states were being perfected.

He stumbled over a forgotten trench spade. It tore his trousers and left a deep ridge below the knee. The pain did not seem so sharp to him now, just one scar more or less, what did that matter?

The men ahead of him halted, as if in obedience to some order that he could not hear. At the mouth of the passage, a ring of bearers had collected. The searchlight reached out towards them, its broad white saw unfolding itself mercilessly. The searchlight caught them. People froze in it. Their faces were chalk. Their hands were blue as if dipped in spirits. Their cheeks were sunken. The dim shine of the balloons took on a frosty coating. Someone burst out crying from fear. "Sh-sh!" the others said. People stood motionless. The searchlight swept over the faces, quivered a moment over the balloons and swung off sharply to the side. The men dragged the things on further. But they had hardly gone a hundred paces, when a rocket rose into the sky with a gay whistle. It mounted higher and higher, a little sharp-toothed flame. Then it stood still, burst, and ejected three white threads on which three little moons hung down, and these moons began to turn night into day. All this happened in the space of time it would take to die from heart-failure.

The moons lit up a field of the dead, for the people stood like corpses propped against the walls. No one breathed. Asten scraped the earth with his free hand, and the earth was dead, cold ungratifying.

The moons went out. The procession went on. A man squeezed past them, ordering in a hollow whisper:

"Careful, great care now, keep wider apart, the last steps now, bend down, pass the word to step softer, quieter, as quiet as possible."

The passages began to fork. At every turning people stood waiting. They pointed out the way. How could anyone see in that darkness? No one even thought of that. On they tramped without stopping. It could hardly be called tramping. They dragged their legs with such an effort and with such heavy anxiety that one might have thought they were carrying glass vases. Ernst Asten was full of wrath, up to the neck in it. He had never felt so clearly as now that death was the blowing to atoms and entire disappearance of his whole being. He could not recollect afterwards whether he had done the thing purposely or whether he had actually stumbled. The balloon clanked in the dead silence, slipped off his pole and struck some sort of a tree below with a sharp ring. Whether it was a fault in the trench, that had been ripped up by bombs, or a log lying neglected—he never knew.

The blood ebbed back from his head, because just at that moment more firing began, as it seemed alongside. Then the machine-gun started. The ricochetting bullets, springing off invisible shields, whistled in fantastic curves to their end. Explosive bullets lit up their fall.

It looked as if everything was to be swallowed up in a furious fit of firing, but the confusion ceased as suddenly as it had started. The last bullet turned a somersault and shot into the earth. A man stood before Ernst and shook him by the chest. On his mouth he felt the cold smell of a revolver. The man shouted at him in a smothered voice:

"If you—if you dare to drop this balloon again, I'll shoot you on the spot."

He followed close behind. Ernst could hear his breathing as if the man was sitting on his shoulders. Whenever he stumbled the muzzle of the revolver pressed against the back of his neck. Four men took the balloon from him and bore it away as silently as if it weighed nothing at all. Ernst breathed freely. The officer disappeared.

All the bearers held on to each other's hands. They were enveloped in complete darkness as they entered the blindage. The hot breath of several score men warmed Ernst. He vaguely recollected something about Eskimos, who spent the winter in snow hovels, lying along side their dogs. It was the first echo from the world of books, a world that had long since been destroyed like Atlantis. He lay between two invisible neighbours. The lights of cigarettes danced before him.

"Are you asleep, Asten?"

"No, Fritz. What is it?"

"I've found out now what it was we were carrying, but search me if I understand a damned thing. You're educated, maybe you can explain. Do you know what they say was in the balloons?"

'Well?" Ernst listened indifferently to the whisper.

"There's gas in them."

"Gas? What kind of gas?"

"That's what I'm asking you what gas? The same as they use to light the streets, do you think?"

"Get up!" came a hoarse voice from the invisible threshhold.

"Go out quietly, one by one. Stop smoking!"

Kency

Jean Kency had been in an excellent humour all day. He saw the fat rat come out of the same hole as yesterday. And even the rat helped to keep him in a good humour.

"So they called you up, too," he said, without moving from his place, "where's your gun?"

The rat sat there making its toilet, a fat trench rat, a loathsome, mature specimen of its tribe. It bared its small teeth covered with some kind of mould, at Jean.

"So you can laugh too," remarked Jean. "Of course you can, you feed well with us, that's clear but it's not fair. We have all the dangers and you get all the pleasures. You get fat on our blood, like a banker on the exchange. That's no way."

He shifted his rifle inadvertently and the rat ran away. Its narrow ringed tail lingered for a moment and then it also disappeared into the hole. Kency looked over the parapet. Dreary rows of barbed wire entanglements, the low trenches of the Germans, craters made by shells and now filled with water, gullies, barbed wire and poles with empty tins hung on them stood here and there. What dreariness!

"I've grown just as used to its landscape as to the banks of the Loire. If only this war would come to an end . . ." And he grew suddenly thoughtful.

He was talking to himself because all his comrades were asleep except the sentries, who were studying the armoured opening in the shield of sand-bags. The nearest sentry glanced in his direction and made a sign. Kency went up to him. It was a country lad who did not know whether to call the corporal or not.

"The corporal's shaving," said Jean. "What do you want him for?"

"There's a German plane, see how it's going whirling round and round, as if it was damaged; it'll be dropping in a minute."

They both gazed at it. The German plane had no intention of falling.

"Bagaret is lying over there," said the sentry. "Over on that wire. It's three days now. I'm going to ask the corporal to let me go for him."

"What do you want with him?"

He's got the dice we play with in his pocket. There's nothing to do without them, and they are just wasted where they are. I'll go round after them this evening. They're in such a nice little tumbler. Probably whole and sound, too, he hid them in his inside pocket."

"Look there, what that swine is doing!"

The German aeroplane threw out a black column of smoke. It had hardly touched the ground when from some distant point the guns roared, and the first shells dropped before the trench, bursting open the sand-bags, splintering the boards, making great scars on the shields. It was a bombardment. The corporal jumped out to see what was the matter. A lieutenant appeared. In 10 minutes time the landscape beyond the parapet with its dreary barbed wire, and tunnels, became unrecognizable. It was struck by all the shells that fell short of the trenches: black fountains of earth rose in rapid succession as if a whole herd of extraordinarily large whales were disporting themselves there.

All the men flung themselves down on the ground. Their faces were green. Grenades cut into

the ground like electric ploughs. It had been like that three days ago, too.

"Get ready for an attack," said the lieutenant, and the NCO's took up his order and passed it on. They were testing the hand grenades in the blindages. Behind the machine-gun screens a counter-attack was being prepared. And it had been just like this three days before.

Kency's cheerfulness did not wane, although he kept chewing a squid of tobacco to dull the tooth-ache the bombardment had started. The shower of grenades passed over, and everywhere, as if after a May thunderstorm, pale purple clouds swam, now curling, now spreading, and slipping into the tunnels. It had been like that three days ago, too.

Behind the rift in the piled clouds floated a rusty-green fog that did not mingle with the clouds of grenade-smoke. That had not been there three days ago, it had never been there before. The fog moved on like a sea, smooth, calm, showing no desire to float upwards to the sky, but as if crouching, and the battlefield was swallowed up in its green opaqueness. The parapet had vanished already. Everyone started to run. No one knew what had happened, Kency jumped into the blindage, but the thought of an attack drove him back from there. To die like a rat ripped open by a hand-grenade, or get a knock on the head—that was no good.

He climbed up to the top. He trod on the corporal lying there. The corporal lay on his belly. He was not wounded. He was convulsively rubbing his face in the ground, the dirty dark mud of the trench. The corporal had evidently gone crazy. Kency ran through the trench. People were lying about everywhere in the fog. He stumbled over them, fell several times, and scrambled to his feet again. He could not collect himself. Suddenly everything swam before his eyes. Then his senses returned to him. He was breathless. Why had he lost his breath, that was queer. He began to make movements with his hands as if swimming, but there was nowhere to swim to. He began to cough like a consumptive. He sneezed and something came from his nose, blood or water, he did not look. His head was ringing. A rubber ring began to squeeze his throat, hundred of needles pricked the roof of his mouth, he gasped, he had swallowed a lump of the yellowish-green fog.

The banks of the Loire floated past like a picture at the cinema. It was unnecessary. And what was necessary? It was necessary to search for something absolutely indispensable. To make a lightning survey of all the impressions in his memory. The ringing in his ears became unbearable. His mouth was full of wet slime as though he had eaten a lot of slush. Green meadows and trees flew past like pages out of an old, torn book, but none of that was what he wanted... The rifle dropped from his hands. He ran on to the parapet. Through the rifts in the fog he saw a vast solitude. The world was at an end. Everywhere people were running about and falling, so that was the end of the war. What a queer ending.

His heart kept skipping a beat. Must find it—quickly now, quickly! The white building of the laboratory with its tiled walls, floated past. His face was flooded with green water, but he would not give up. Test-tubes of different colors, cupboards, the tongues of spirit-stoves, white overalls. Why, yes, of course, Jean Kency remembered at last: he had been a chemist!

Standing on the parapet, swaying and waving his arms about, he breathed in the green fog, and the cheerful humor he had felt all day returned to him tenfold.

Now he did not feel the rubber ring round his throat, he no longer knew whether he had a mouth or eyes in his face, but, diving into the green gloom he shrieked—it seemed to him that he shrieked—the only words that needed to be shrieked:

"It's chlorine!—why it's just plain chlorine!"

And then the last silence in the world fell, and was shattered by a black thunder. Not of grenades or of sap, but of boots, the soldier's boots of Jean Kency, and the soldier's bones of Jean Kency striking the bottom of the trench.

The Express

Outside the thick plate glass windows of the special train nocturnal Germany fled by. The train never slowed down when it passed other trains huge towns, fire-breathing volcanoes of factories, laden with detachments of soldiers, goods trains laden with shells, tiny stations with sleepy guards, mountains of coal, peasants' carts stranded at the barriers, lighted stations, viaducts, stockades, road-beds, lonely pedestrians, tramps or deserters in the dark fields. The train was a special one, and the people in it were special people. Professor Faber was sitting in one of the compartments. His waistcoat was unbuttoned and he wore soft slippers instead of boots. Opposite him sat a man of huge proportions. Huge quantities of material had gone into the making of him. A thick, round barrel-like head was stuck on a short neck. The hoops of the barrel were hidden or rather they had become one with the flesh. When he spoke he clawed the air with hands broader than a spade, and seemed to drive it on to his companion. Therefore he always tried to move them as slowly as possible. His gold teeth that gleamed below a close-cropped moustache looked like sovereigns cut off at the edges. A great diamond stared out of his tie.

The name of this person was as great as he himself was. He did not even mention it. It was really too tremendous for this narrow compartment. Still, Professor Faber knew whom he was speaking to, and spoke sharply but with respect. The man went on with the conversation he had started, without paying the slightest attention to the speed of the train, or the lateness of the hour, or the place they happened to be in. There was nothing out of the common for him about the one, the other or the third.

"Occasionally I follow the commandments drawn up by people who are not holy. I don't accept the stuff offered by holy folk very seriously just now. I agree with the great man who has expressed my ideas in the following words: 'Empire is a question of the stomach.' World empire is a question of the world stomach. Today the stomach has had a diet prescribed for it. A blood treatment, but that's not sufficient. If you don't want a revolution you must become an imperialist. We are already imperialists and that's half the battle won. I insist that we should bring the war to an end as soon as possible. The situation is not yet catastrophic, the soldiers are still fighting, the fac-

tory-owners are making big profits, the workers are still silent — but the generals must hurry up with the victory, and I'll tell you why. It is not known yet how the Powers will divide up the world, but we have some idea of how the capitalists do it. The International Powder and Dynamite Trust, the International Rails Cartel, the International Shipping Company, the International Zinc Combine, the General Electric Company, the world Oil Trust and scores of other world trusts lived before the war like independent Powers, having divided countries and spheres of influence among themselves. Now this balance has been destroyed. Some agreements have been temporarily suspended, some are broken. If you understand our affairs a little, you must know what the 'Mother Society' is. It is a world trust, the chief enterprise. If it happens that it does not seek new paths, it allows its daughter-societies to grow, but only up to a point where their fixed capital does not exceed the joint-stock capital of the 'Mother Society.' It will be clear to you then that whether there is a military victory or not, capital will be regrouped in a new way without any regard to patriotic considerations. If you find all this boring I can speak about something else, about women. I can even introduce you to a few and you will never have cause to regret it..."

Faber said:

"Go on, I'll tell you something afterwards."

"Very well, I'll go on. I am not a real German. I am a cosmopolitan, but all my roots are here in Germany, and to cut down a strong tree at one blow is not a habit of mine. People of my sort are cosmopolitans. We are more powerful than the diplomats and the generals; if we so desire the most powerful army can be left without arms. We are in open conflict with sociologists, with philosophers and socialists, because we have a different conception of the universe. Besides this, in our position the conception of neutrality is an entirely conventional one. I admit that just now Krupp supplies France with shells and England with dynamite. I know that the British Navy is equipped with optical instruments made by the German firms of Zeiss and Herz, that the barbed wire for the forts of Verdun was sent over the Swiss frontier by the firm of Magdeburger Draht und Kabelwerke. When there is a surplus this is really nothing to worry about. It is much worse to think that your big ocean steamers stranded in America barely escaped being turned into auxiliary cruisers. That means that the situation was not realized. That was a mistake.

"The present military difficulties of France are very great. England's financial affairs are in disorder. It is just the moment to strike a blow. The transference of vast colonial possessions in German hands, the change in the financial and commercial position of Europe will make it possible for us, in the case of complete although improbable victory, to seize the principal things that will turn Germany into the only mother-country and place all the other countries in the position of daughters. I think that in the event of the complete breakdown of the Allies, it will not be so difficult to come to an understanding with people like Sir Basil Zakharoff and Armstrong in England or Schneider in France. The money market is very disturbed at present and the desire for peace is only being kept at bay by the growth of armaments, that is, the rise of new and tremendous industry in a fresh place. I assure you that they will breathe more freely in Bährenstrasse when they know the war is coming to an end sooner than if they heard it was to be an endless one with many military trophies. I have been in Rotterdam and Copenhagen, and I saw that cotton was very difficult to obtain. The same with rubber. There is a project to bring rubber from America in submarines, but it sounds a bit too romantic. I heard about your experiments with poison gases. They will be wonderful only if we justify their application by a speedy victory. Is that right?"

"You are quite right," replied Faber. "Those at the top, I shall not mention their names, make one mistake after another. And when I tell them what to do, they laugh respectfully and tell me that I haven't a military mind. Well, I have the brain of a scientist, I suppose I don't know which weighs more; although—yes, perhaps I do know. Our enemies are nearer to the truth than our commanders. They say molten coal runs in the veins of the war, coal is the first marshal in the field. It bends, it moulds, it fills guns. Coal means trains. What are machine-guns and cannons? Coal! Shells —are coal, they are made from coal and are filled with it. Coal makes them what they are. War is a duel between the miners of Westphalia and of Cardiff. Coal—is life and death. Coal—is victory. They appreciate the forces acting today but they don't know yet the forces that I have called out; gas against the fever of naked patriotism, gas against the sweating butchers who love hand-to-hand fighting, gas which means a democratic death robbed of any kind of pathos. Gas—is victory. And these idiots don't understand that if they had trusted me to the end, our guardsmen would be now boarding the boats in the ports of the English Channel and be in Dover tomorrow. Instead of that they are playing about with amateur methods. I don't deny the personal courage of Emden, Königsberg, Möhve, wonderful little adventure-stories for youth, immortal shadow-cruisers that are here today, there tomorrow, beating the enemy on the shores of Peru today, and drowning them tomorrow off the Falklands. But it is all sensation-mongering. The raids on the English health resorts, the smashing-up of some tiles and blowing-up of the baths, this looks more like a picnic with cheap drinks and a few broken glasses. Zeppelins over London and Paris—these are just an advertisement of the war, no more. Some sort of perspiring little inventors sit and think out variations of mines, blindages, camouflages, one man got the idea of pouring burning oil over the trenches. I caught a glimpse of him at the front, he was pointed out to me. A stupid face, a low brow, the moustaches of a shopman, you can imagine—fries Frenchmen in oil and serves them up to the tables of the higher command. A brilliant idea, worthy of the brain of a provincial. You might water Yellowstone Park out of a soup ladle with about as much success. They are crazy about little home-made inventions, as if the war was going to last 30 years.

"I put an end to that when I asked them to believe in me, to believe in gas. England produces a ton of chlorine a day, our chemical works produce 40. They would not believe in gas at first. Even when 6,000 men were laid low at one swoop, they occupied the trenches in a bewildering way, they could not understand that this was a revolution,

that a weapon had been discovered for which there was no equal. In the same way stupid knights of old refused to part with their armour even when they been shot at by cannon. I had the greatest difficulty in persuading them to use gas on all fronts. They won't hurry, just when it's necessary to hurry. They must hurry now because I am not alone in the world, unfortunately. There are other chemists. My friends in England and France will take up the challenge with pleasure. We must work day and night. We should prepare our defences against enemy gas. The race has begun and we have the lead yet but it is not for long. We shall soon be running neck to neck. And then, we shall have to answer each gas with a super-gas, and each anti-gas with a super-anti-gas. The mask of war will change month by month. But maybe you cannot imagine what gas is like. Gas can be thrown out in clouds, waves, or gas curtains. Shells can be filled with it, and it can be poured into mines. Every ruin, every trench, wood or street can be turned into a gas-trap, people can be made to cry or laugh with gas, to scratch themselves all over like monkeys, to bellow like bulls, writhe like snakes. It will seem to them that they are breathing ozone, — but that will be simply a smoke-curtain of yellow phosphorus. They will go into a garden, that will smell of spring sap but it will be ethylene ether of bromide-acetic acid. Chlorine nitro-benzol will seem to them like the long-forgotten smell of their own country, of quiet cozy places, whole towns will exude the odors of geraniums, violets and mint, and the entire garrisons of them will consist of corpses. We shall create chemical gardening. I am not crazy. My brain is not a military one, though they are right. I am a scientist, tired of looking on at this prehistoric shamble where dull heads are split with sharp axes. But one thing only I stick to: we must hurry. While the enemy is still saying: the main thing is coal, we can live. But if tomorrow he says: the chief thing is gas — you understand what the consequences will be? And our command still goes on transferring thousands and thousands of men from the west to the east and from the east to the west, as if the whole point was to keep driving them like rats from one hole to another."

"These are serious things you are saying now," said the giant. "But that is going to turn the armaments industry of the whole world upside down. Does the world know to whom it is indebted for this?"

"It must not know, of course. I am only a pseudonym. Professor Faber does not exist, science exists, and science has made a little experiment that has found its application outside the walls of the laboratory. At Ypres I was called the man in the green spectacles — and that is enough. It is true that the amateur who invented burning oil is called the Prince of Darkness, and that serves him right: cheap showmen always have names to suit."

"Are you going to Berlin just now?" asked the giant.

"No, I'm going home. I'm rather tired and have been longing for my laboratory again, my wife, too, and all my friends. And then it's so dirty at the front. I actually found a louse on myself yesterday. I threw away all my underwear and took a hot bath."

First-aid

The columns supporting the thatched pent-house were covered with blood, there were pools of blood all about on the ground, blood had soaked through a heap of neglected bandages, through the straw, through the filthy boards on which the wounded lay, blood dripped from the hands of people working with sleeves rolled up, blood might have been ladled up in mugs, in bottles. Rifles and sticks covered with blood stood in a corner, blood lay in pools on the empty stretchers, blood poured from each of the men who were standing, lying or half-lying under two bright lights. Bloody tracks led from the pent-house in various directions. There was indeed so much blood that no one even noticed it. The first-aid station was the first place free from serfdom of war. Here one could cry, howl, bite one's fingers, swear and curse without fear of the officers.

The doctor, like a powerful boxer, threw himself on each of the wounded and laid him flat on his back. His assistants sorted the men out like goods. To the left the shell-shocked ones dangled their numb heads, and uttered no sound. On the right the dying opened wide, staring eyes and clutched convulsively at the earth, trying to hold on to something as they fell into the abyss.

The doctor knealed, pinched, cut and tore at flesh. He needed no spirits, nor morphia to keep his nerves in order. The snort of a motor-cycle came to his ears, but it meant nothing new to him.

The figure of a soldier towered before the doctor in the moonlight. It stood with its legs apart, much wider apart than is usual when a man stands at his full height. A short cough, like the cough of an inveterate smoker, came unintermittently from his throat. He uttered only one word and nobody understood it.

"Rakhaza," he said. The greenish, shining bronze of the soldier's face grew black like the globe of a lamp when it is covered with smoke. He fell face downwards. The ambulance man bent over him and called his comrade. Between them they bore the body to the right. The dead Hindu's head lay on the breast of a travelling companion on this, the longest journey of all.

"The third case," said the ambulance man as two men came up to him. They knelt down by the Hindu, turned an electric torch on him and got out their note-books. They felt the swollen veins under the skin of the neck. The open mouth was full of a foamy, green slime. The men turned the corpse over, took off his uniform and belt, stretched out the thin, blue arms; the cheeks and nose sharpened and went blue now. They wrote down all the details in their note-books.

"Look at that," one said, "gassed — very badly gassed, too. I saw him yesterday. He was carrying a report and seemed a lively chap. They don't die at once. What do you think about it? I suppose it's some new kind of gas!"

"You remember, the one this morning who complained of his eyes. He went blind during dinner and spilt the soup over his knees. He was still blind when he died and just before that he started singing."

"I can't stand it any longer, I can't, I can't!" shrieked a man lying in the darkest corner. "You can all go to hell, you and your bloody first-aid station!"

"Next!" shouted the doctor. He was chewing a bit of rubber. He did not feel the need of either spirit or cocaine.

A man leaning against his unconscious comrade, shouted in the darkness like a Baptist preacher making a public repentance.

"I was a doctor, I was a vivisectionist, I took dogs, and shaved off their hair, stretched them out, strained them on frames, operated on them alive!"

"Shut up! Put a bullet through his head, some one, make him shut up!"

"I dug about in their entrails, I tormented them with hunger!"

"Look here, you, take yourself in hand. You dirty devil of a doctor, what is there to boast about?"

"I poured acids, boiling water, poison—into their stomachs. I sent electric currents through them..."

Hollow groans and curses greeted this speech.

"I poured kerosene over them and lighted it. I burned out their eyes with acetic acid."

"That'll do, stop this fellow, somebody!"

"Doctor, stop his mug with your boot!"

"I gave them emetics. I stopped up their gullets. I'm like these dogs myself now, that's why everything has come back to me. We are all . . ."

A ghastly cough threw the speaker on to the floor. The doctor put down his scalpel and went over to him, accompanied by the two men with note-books.

"I am afraid he's going to be the fourth," said one with his pencil poised ready.

The man who had been making his unpopular confession lay with his mouth open. His reddish-brown eyes were fixed on the straw hanging from the ceiling as if he was afraid the roof was about to fall on his head. There was foam on his lips.

The lantern lit up a man with a bandaged arm and a bleeding lip. The man had bitten his lip through. He stood as if frozen, holding the bandages of the wounded left arm with the right.

"Well, Hitchens? how's everything," asked the doctor. "What brought you back from England?"

"There was just one detail lacking, and I've got it now. I've been working on the flame-projector. Oh, I can tell you it's not so bad."

Again his teeth caught in his lower lip.

"What can I do for you, Hitchens. Hope you haven't swallowed any gas? You won't start to sneeze and stretch out your legs on me, will you? Want morphia?"

The man shook his head. His teeth slackened their grip slowly.

"No, I don't want any. I'd like to know... Oh!" he grasped his arm again. "I'd like to know the name of the fellow who started this flame-projector for the benefit of humanity. Wouldn't I!"

"You're just the same as always," said the doctor.

"Cheer up, old man. I'll get you off before daylight. The road's under fire just now. I'd give a lot myself to know what they're dying of. Three days ago I had a benefit performance here. People went off to the next world in the most varied situations: one fell down with a spoon at his lips during dinner, another went blind as soon as he lay down in bed, a few chaps coughed until bile and blood came up and then died, one pegged out during an inquiry at headquarters. Evidently the hospital for wounds and blood will soon be a thing of the past. People will die off decently, without messing up the furniture; we'll be able to put in velvet couches. It's all the result of the new German gas, Hitchens. New cases reach us without the slightest delay. An officer told me that as he marched with his battery he inhaled the most wonderful fresh morning air. And then suddenly he felt as though he'd been hit over the head—his eyes went red and by the evening he was blind. In a fortnight's time his sight returned to him, but his heart was no good at all. He had got into what they call a gas pocket—a little thick cloud of gas that been standing a long time. Well, buck up! So you don't want any morphia?"

A swaying man with foam on his lips held the doctor by his sleeve.

"So that's that," said the doctor, "number five. Ralph, give him a chair, will you. Let the poor beggar die in comfort, at least."

The Smoking Room

The room was full of smoke. It was not the acrid smoke of battle, though, nor was it gas. It was the ordinary smoke of cigars, cigarettes and pipes, for this was a smoking-room. Young, that is, comparatively young people, sat about in armchairs and on wicker chairs, and some simply on the tables. Every newcomer was greeted in a friendly, almost school-boyish manner. They were chemists and physicists who had just returned from all fronts from wherever they had been toiling and sweating in the laboratories of the Gas Service. They regarded men like Lord Reilly, William Ramsay, Colonel Harrison and Oliver Lodge as gods. Now each was trying to go one better than his colleague in accounts of his achievements, of the failure and vicissitudes of the war.

"Who saw Atwood last?" asked a dark-faced chemist.

"Atwood was killed four months ago. His head was torn off, we had to bury him like that, without his head, we couldn't find it anywhere," someone answered from the cloud of smoke hanging over the divan.

"Old Dewar said even then that it was chlorine, and so it proved to be."

"Who could have thought that indigo would play such a big part."

"We tested thousands of dyes. We experimented with nitrogeneous anhydride. Cooper got pneumonia and had to leave the job. Copper shavings dipped in nitric acid outdo the finest draught in the world in giving you pneumonia. But we went over to bromide afterwards, and iodised benzol, and methylated ether."

"We're working like mad. If I take longer than an hour for a rest and a smoke, it's a crime. Of course — our work's a matter of life and death. We follow everything that goes on at the front like detectives—every casual cloud of gas, every unexpected gas shell. We dig into the steaming manure-heap of the war to get the hottest excrement out of it. I think not less than two thousand of us have been mobilized and still—we're too few."

"I've already forgotten the color of my girl's hair. I stink like a corpse that's lain a week in chlorine. I've lost all taste for life."

"The old man said once, I remember that Germany was an opera of the Wagner type in which good and evil spirits struggled for supremacy—I heard him say that with my own ears in Bangor—and that he had at one time believed that the good spirits would eventually tear the soul of Germany out of thrall—and nothing has come of it. The soul has dived, as he said, into a sea of blood, and we are dealing with a military caste. That is the reason for the flood of shells, 40 days and 40 nights, the rain of grenades which we have been allowed to pour over the enemy, filled with whatever we might find necessary."

"The old man? that's Lloyd George, I suppose?"

"Well, who else could mention Wagner?"

"The Germans should have been forestalled, we should be the people to begin the chemical war. Now we have to watch every shell of theirs so as to scent out the next one. Although—I don't know what's worse to sit in a trench or to be alone with phosgene every day. How many of our fellows have gone West before their time."

"I was only in Dublin and lost my arm, thanks to Sir Roger Casement. They say he had to be shot lying on a stretcher, he was too badly wounded to stand on his feet."

"Nothing of the kind. He spoke in his own defence for three hours but they hanged him all the same. Someone was shot on a stretcher though, that's true."

"My Irish friend—I don't know where he is now, by the way—often used to repeat the Fenian's prayer to me. I remember it well.

A man in leather leggings stood up.

"If Ireland joins hands with Germany it is treachery. There can be no two opinions about that. Tomorrow they will stir up India, as they stirred up that old fool Devet in Africa. Let us put the question clearly and answer it clearly. Every nation has its mission. The mission of Englishmen is to consolidate the world empire that is created not by the hand in the kid glove, but by force. We must free ourselves of schoolboy nonsense and understand that if all the nations practice robbery in one way or another, it means that pirates are the best empire builders. In the founding and defence of an empire there can be no question of whether an action is just or whether it is criminal. There is only one right — the right of the stronger and fitter. The strong must rule without considering whether the weak desire it or not. The crucible of war claims the nations and on the adamant anvil of fate they have been hammered into the shape required by the Lord. In this war we feel, as never before, that it is not the military art of manoeuvres and blows that matters, but the nation's power of endurance, of prolonged resistance. Are not the generals depending on us, on what we say—we who sit in laboratories—for their supplies of anti-gas for defence and gases for attack? Lloyd George talks about a flood of shells. Who fills them? We—and no one else."

"It's terrible that it should have fallen to our share," exclaimed a pale-faced man with scars. "After all, these gases were discovered long ago, and yet scientists never dreamed of offering them as means of destruction. Bayer, Carrot, Laut and Witte were well aware of their properties as far back as the eighties. If they were alive now I am certain they would have hesitated to use them. Don't you agree with everybody that this war was forced on us?"

"That's what Sir Edward Grey said?"

"That's clear to everyone."

"It's not clear to me."

"When you get a whiff of the new phosgene, you'll think differently."

"Stop this silly talk, for goodness sake, here comes colonel Harrison. If he hears anything like this, he'll be highly insulted."

The Spot

As soon as Professor Faber stepped over the threshold of his institute, the rest of the world ceased to exist for him. Let the aims for which he came to the institute have a direct relation to the world outside the walls — here they were subject to the laws of secret processes, over which he and his assistants alone held sway. Friends, lovers, and—tell it not in Gath! — even the state itself, vanished from Faber's mind, as soon as he put on his thick overall, noiseless slippers and rubber gloves.

The place resembled a monastery of some peculiar order. Shut up behind these walls hermits sat in solitary cells, in unbroken silence and concentration. Their silence was only rarely disturbed.

One morning there was a roar that shook the whole house. The glass shivered down like autumn leaves, the reactives got mixed up, some of the research workers fell off their stools, and a crack appeared in one wall.

A red-brown fog was floating about in a distant dark, well-curtained room.

No one was allowed to examine anything. None of the newspapers nor even the most curious of the busybodies could learn what had happened in that warm, curtained, terrible room. When the fog cleared the small charred corpse of Professor Wester lay on the floor. He had been Faber's right hand man. The room was put to right, and a new man came to continue the work of the dead, but all day, no matter where Faber looked, he saw it; when he was heating sulphur in a Wurtz retort, on the edge of the chlorine tube, on the neck of the retort, on the glass of the pipe, on the ribs of the funnel, on the mercury column in the thermometer—an elusive black spot. It followed him for several days in succession. The spot could not possibly denote the gnawings of conscience. It had nothing to do with forebodings. Faber was entirely free from all prejudices. And yet—when he discovered the spot on the end of his cigarette, he grew thoughtful.

Maybe, after all, he had been working too hard?

He walked through all the laboratories. On the ground floor the assistants sat working out new kinds of gas combinations for war purposes. The gases were conducted to the upper floor where other assistants sat working out new kinds of respirators against the gas-combinations newly discovered on the ground floor. This counterplan was undoubtedly the acme of convenience. It had not been achieved at once.

The whirlwind of the gases and liquids, the rustling disquietude of the tables, the piled asbestos, the warm calm of mercury lamps, the cold Hampson liquid air apparatus, the faint crackling of oil-pumps, the watchful eyes of the chemists, all turned like the hands of a compass in one direc-

tion—all these helped to reduce the black spot a little until it grew pale and almost unnoticeable, but tomorrow it might appear again. Professor Faber could not tolerate that his life should depend upon an insignificant spot.

Then he tried to find fault with everything. The gas, the water, the electricity—the trinity of balance in a laboratory—were all in order. The gas came through the pipes and burnt in high, thin columns that a fire-worshipper would have envied, the water ran in the pumps, hissed merrily in the wash basins, and the electric light burned day and night.

Then he turned to things of minor importance. Two tables were deserted. They had the usual weekday look, but like the upas tree would punish any who came near them. Mustard gas had been spilt over them, it had penetrated the wood, had taken possession of the tables and threatened all who dared to approach. The tables stood soaking in chloride of lime, and the invisible danger lurking in them was slowly dying.

One could find fault with these tables, then. One could find fault with the assistant Vogel for going about with a bandaged hand, injured by chloric arsenic, and with the two rabbits that had been intended for experiments with mustard gas, but had died. Still, the grey spot glimmered and would not disappear.

Then Faber sat down and glanced over the notes of the latest experiments. He knew them well, he had already examined the results, but his thoughts wandered away from the long note-books, covered with formulas incomprehensible to simple ordinary folk.

And then, as if out of that world from which he was divided by walls, by his own will, his devotion to his work and his work alone, from the world of the state, friends, lovers, came the idea that was the grey spot. Supposing, his institute was to be destroyed, no matter how—bombed from an enemy aeroplane, burnt up like Professor Wester, by newly-discovered gas betrayed by some evil conspiracy, struck by lightning, by fire, or simply destroyed by accident—what would be left for Professor Faber to take away from the ruins to those other people who had nothing to do with him?

And then he understood why it was so easy for him to hear of the thousands he destroyed daily. He would have sooner agreed to live in friendship with cats and monkeys than with people. Professor Faber was one of the few in the world who had a right to loneliness. He understood, furthermore, that he lied in every public speech, in articles, and in conversation. Sometimes his indifference would break out with particular strength. When Professor Burchhardt asked him: "Who is going to answer for this war?" he replied hotly: "Those who lose it!"

He would not have changed places with the most famous of commanders, writers or engineers. He was carrying on his vast, deadly struggle on all fronts. He respected only the few world-famous chemists on a level with himself, who in the silence of similar enemy laboratories parried his blows among similar deadly-poisonous tables, soaked in mustard gas, among crippled assistants, among the explosions of oxides of cacodyl and phosgene.

He had preferred Flaubert of all writers, because it was Flaubert who said: "The world should be ruled by learned mandarins, this is the only just power." On account of this one phrase, Faber forgave him his French origin and also that he had given such a prominent place to women in his novels. Women were not worth it. They were either boring or lewd. They had nothing in common with the lofty solitude of science.

So thought Professor Faber, but still the grey spot did not disappear. It stood there like the eye of an unseen observer. Then he called Vogel and went into the little study with him. It was the room where they usually held conferences, where trifling misunderstandings were smoothed out, where he received representatives of the staff, where Professor Wester had joked for the last time, before his death. Faber glanced at his companion. The grey spot was glimmering in the centre of Vogel's forehead, where the bald spot commenced that shone under the electric light.

There had been one scientist, a little, second-rate scientist, a bad scientist, who had refused to work in his institute on the production of poison gases. He must have been either an idiot or a socialist. He could have been shut up in a fortress for that, it would not have made the slightest difference to the world or to science either, for that matter.

And Faber smiled. The gray spot resembled that scientist or a top, a child's spinning-top, let spin under the feet of a grown up. It would have been easy to stamp it underfoot, but the top was too little and agile. A grown-up would be ashamed to run after it. His assistant was looking at him with the eyes of a rabbit that had run into some mustard gas.

"Hydrocyanic acid won't do, Vogel, you know—not in its present form. The percentage of deaths is insignificant. We're throwing valuable material away on the battlefields. It is not concentrated enough to kill a man. Instead of sending him to the grave it sends him to the sanatorium. That makes all the difference."

Vogel drew himself up. The obedient, attentive Vogel could only analyze scientific facts, not human emotions. Graves and sanatoriums were of no interest to him. The poison had not worked as it should and he, Vogel, was at fault. But he resolved to show fight. "The room was filled with the gas concentrated to the required degree, I tested it on rabbits and cats."

"What happened?" asked Faber. "Death followed rapidly after injections, too."

"How long can we carry on these experiments before the results are apparent?"

"We receive information from the front every week. It's the 15th today and the first trial party will get into the district where the attack is supposed to be..."

"You make the experiment dependent on the whims of the staff. That means an eternity."

"Herr Professor, there is no other method..."

"There is!"

Vogel stared into a corner, a slight shiver passed down his legs. An idea like that was simply absurd. Faber was making worse jokes than usual.

The telephone rang. Vogel picked up the receiver and then covered it with his hand, saying:

"Major von Starke wants to see you on urgent private business."

"Who's that, Vogel?"

"I think it's the inventor of the flame-projector."

"Ah! the fellow who fried the Frenchmen! The cook-in-waiting of his Majesty's kitchen. Tell him that Professor Faber has gone to the front!"

"Very well... Are you listening: Professor Faber has gone away to the front. What? you have information to the contrary? Well, it's wrong. Yes.... yes... I don't know. Just as you like!"

"Herr Professor, I know a way, but it doesn't mean that it can be carried out."

"And your way is...?"

"For a man to go into that room."

"You're quite right!"

The telephone receiver remained hanging on its cord. Vogel had forgotten to put it back on the hook.

The Cabinet

"Herr Professor, are you listening to me?"

"Yes, Vogel."

The long corridor paved with white slabs, seemed to go on and on endlessly.

"But no one should go into that room."

"Why, Vogel?"

Sweat broke out on Vogel's brow. He was going along the corridor almost at a run, and then he was much smaller than Faber. He had to rise on tiptoes when he spoke.

"In the room a man would die. The concentration is deadly."

"And I say no, Vogel. And I shall prove it!"

For the first time in his long experience in the institute Vogel looked vacantly at the walls for help.

The walls were smooth and sympathized with him in an official way. He raised himself on tiptoes. His Adam's apple popped out of his collar. Vogel became a monster with a big head and a lizard's body.

"We could get a war-prisoner, Herr Professor."

Faber stood still.

"I mean a fellow who has nothing to lose. A man sentenced to death or an idiot, or a cripple ...A fellow to whom life is a burden..."

They went on down one corridor after another.

"I have nothing to lose," said Faber, "and then —you know me. Vogel, what is hydrocyanic acid?"

"Aha, so Professor Faber is joking again . . . Oh, well," Vogel took his hands out of his pockets, like a school-boy getting ready to repeat his lesson.

"Hydrocyanic acid? Hydrocyanic acid has always been the name given to a solution of cyanic hydrogen. Cyanic salts give..."

"Thank you, Vogel. Now count up to a hundred, and you'll have quietened down for good. We're there now."

What was it that Professor Faber wished to prove by entering a room filled with the emanations of hydrocyanic acid of a concentration, the actual degree of which was unknown, but, according to Vogel, sufficient to instantly kill all living things that come into contact with it? But that was only what Vogel thought. As a matter of fact Professor Faber was not going to prove anything. He simply wanted to get rid of a small grey spot, that never left him alone, and to get rid of all responsibility. In a case like this a Russian would have picked up a revolver, loaded it with one bullet, and turned the drum at random. Then he would have stuck the barrel in his mouth and pulled the trigger. If it did not go off, the man would get up from his place, swaying a little, and the metallic taste in his mouth would be remembered by him for many a day. A Japanese, in this case, would throw down his weapons and cast off some of his garments and with his bare arms stretched out before him, climb the rocky forts of Port Arthur.

Professor Faber stood in the cabinet filled with the emanations of hydrocyanic acid. He knew how death would come, if he had been mistaken. It would press on the centre of the brain, the body would cease to absorb oxygen from the blood. He would sway on his feet, yawn. Then he would lose the use of his legs. Breathing would cease before the heart failed. The heart would continue to beat in a terrible pool of blood that would glow bright red like cinnabar, long after the last convulsion had ceased in the throat.

And Professor Faber's corpse would be covered with bright red spots like a clown's costume. Poor Faber! Death might have painted a corpse of such importance in a more dignified, tragic way, not merely like one of the "landsturm" men.

He stood there and lost all count of time. Time had vanished when he had crossed the threshold over which only rabbits, dogs and cats were permitted.

He was waiting for the end. Waiting, for the relief of the last twitching of the muscles before death. He could not hear his heart, he watched for wheeziness, the first sign of ruin. A vast noise as of heavy waves swept into his consciousness. Professor Faber had only a few seconds left to live and they dragged on so slowly that one could live through the whole of world history, catch up with the Great War, seek out the institute, find this isolated, dark room, and fetch Professor Faber back from his coma.

People say that there have been cases when people affected by poison-gas were able to cross the yard, embrace their wives and get into the tram, only to die among people. But he, Faber, had said that the hydrocyanic acid offered by Vogel only sent people to the sanatorium.

He felt how the claws of his clenched fists bit into his palms, how his ears trembled, how dry his stomach was and how it rolled about like a leather bucket let down on a rope inside him, how the end of that rope began to swell in his mouth. His tongue grew, and its wooliness filled his whole mouth. He imagined that the veins on his legs must be like blue cords. His close-clipped moustache, broad and flat, became moist. Sensations passed through him like those of pedestrians returning to a hotel where they have once stayed, to search for something forgotten. These sensations distracted him and caused him pain where he least expected it.

Would these seconds never end? Or was that what people called death? Then Wester was able to verify his mortal mistake, to make out a little formula, when his corpse had already been carried out of the red-brown fog. It was true that the heart and brain went on living after breathing had ceased. He recollected the formula for hydrocyanic acid like a spell: tri-chlorine arsenic does not allow it to decompose. A hollow roar passed under the ceiling as if a wind was tearing at a tent. Chloroform would not allow it to decompose. The noise came again. A hurricane started in the room. Chlorine-tin, tin reduces volatility. The hurricane threw Faber against the wall. His heart ceased to beat. His tongue grew smaller. His

knees bent as if under a weight. There was a ringing in his ears. For a moment Professor Faber lost consciousness. He found himself over against the wall. It was as sticky as treacle. No, it was not the wall that was sticky, it was his hand. Grey-green lightning shot through the air. How the writers and artists lied when they painted death in the form of a complete figure, in the place of exact movements. There was nothing definite, just gloom, weakness, the slow, quiet fading of consciousness. He shook. He stretched out a hand, and someone caught the hand and pulled it sharply upwards. Faber opened his eyes. Vogel was standing before him. The light shone on his broad brow where the bald spot was beginning. No grey spot disturbed the powerful whiteness of Vogel's brow anymore.

Vogel was dragging him down the corridor emitting faint exclamations, as he went. Vogel was as cheerful as a bear sucking his paw. He dragged Faber into a room, put him on a couch, and sat down opposite, his back to the open medicine chest with its bottles, packets and phials. But he had not time to cover the bandages and scissors, and thus they were the first things on which Faber's eyes lighted when he returned from the other world.

Faber drank hot water with brandy in it. He sat with his collar and jacket and trousers unbuttoned. Vogel was fussing about over him and kept stepping on the laces of Faber's boots that were undone.

A little kettle was boiling merrily. Vogel took up the brandy to add some to Faber's boiling water, stood still and exclaimed sorrowfully:

"You've disgraced me for life!"

Small Misfortunes

The Iron Cross, the rank of a major, a "dead head" on his left sleeve—the sign of a deathless pioneer, the clumsy title of the Prince of Darkness and the clear conviction that his flame-projector had not justified itself. He had not burnt up the war. One came easily to that conclusion in the fourth year. How many vain expectations! The flame-projector could mean anything: high spirits, bravery, manliness, contempt for death, but not the final victory yet. It would be better not to return from the front until the end of the war! Until the end, and when would the end be?

Like Fieldmarshal Schliffen, who in the delirium before death kept repeating:

"Strengthen the right flank!" so would he cry out, when dying! "Flame-projectors, nothing but flame-projectors!" But now everything had been settled otherwise. Some other fortunate person, if he could be called fortunate, had robbed him of his laurels, if laurels they could be called, and that man was Professor Faber. Once—it was a long time ago—Starke had gone to see him, to test the strength of his adversary face to face, but Faber had refused to see him. Then he had tackled a new project, simple, attractive and useful. It had been discussed in numberless departments of the staff and when he had received the reply, the blood throbbed in Starke's old heart.

They had thrown over his brilliant new idea. You see, there was not enough oil in all Germany for that. The aeroplane was not such an all-powerful weapon as he thought. To pour over the enemy burning oil from aeroplanes—that was a complicated business. Well, and had they not raised similar objections to the flame-projectors at one time?

"Ye have no stocks of materials," said a brilliant chatterer who evidently admired the sound of his own voice. "You have no idea how much cotton, for instance, the German army is consuming. It burns more than a thousand tons daily. Just think of that: 30 shots from a 12 centimeter gun swallow up 400 pounds of cotton. 600 tons of arsenic are used up every month on the million shells that we let off at the front. We can't change the whole system of cannon and rifles. Shells are easiest of all to alter and then only their contents. Your flame-projector is all right in local trench warfare, in shock attacks, but nothing more can be expected of it, especially since it has lost its novelty.

"You waste a great deal of material," continued this malicious, envious fellow. "You put 100 litres of oil in one big Grof apparatus, from a medium Wexa you fire only 12 shots that are effective at 25 meters. What good is that? I was on the top of Eparge—you know it, you remember what concrete machine-gun nests and the blindages stood there. I had not been in those parts for a long time, and last month I happened to go. There were no heights any more, they had been razed to the ground. There were just tangles of barbed wire, lumps of concrete cement crumbs and rubble, and any amount of bones. That was the work of Hitchens' mine-projectors and mortars. That was a bit of good work! 3000 mine-projectors fire at once. He had perfected them. The mines are loaded with gas. A man dies after the first sniff of it. That's one thing. The second is that gas waves and shells have replaced everything. Every day, every hour we are sustaining terrible losses. People go blind and deaf and die. There is no longer any safety anywhere. Gas waves penetrate for ten kilometres. And we answer in the same way, gas for gas. The trees and grass are burnt up for miles back of the trenches, and all around there is only desert and slaughter."

"Do you know", said Starke, "that Professor Faber refused to receive me when I went to him. It's a long time ago, of course."

"I don't know the reason for his refusing to see you, but I know that he is the only man after whom the whole army keeps repeating the word: gas, gas, gas. It is he who can make whole divisions drop like bulls under the knife. Men sleep now in gas-masks. The gas-alarm is sounded four times a day. Excuse me, but I'm afraid I must interrupt our conversation just now, someone is waiting for me."

And he left the room, a calm self-satisfied, staff-officer. Starke went home. He stood for a long time in thought, with his back toward the window. It was a broad back and incomprehensible, as a closed door. His grey head did not move. Thus would Starke stand on his monument. Thus would he be represented in marble or in bronze.

Great Misfortunes

"Do you know, I once said to a certain officer, that you are the only man after whom the whole army repeats but one word: gas, gas, gas. The artillery has gone through a regular course in chemistry. And it's so simple, too, isn't it? The immobile barrage, the yellow cross mustard gas. The

green cross—phosgene. The blue cross—arsenic. Only from the constant strain and excitement the men grew exhausted. The western front became a nightmare. The men say no one can keep a whole skin there. You are wounded, gassed or killed. You can give yourself up to the enemy, it's true, but you don't always have time to do that. There have been cases of desertion during the transference of some regiments from the eastern front. It's mostly Alsatians and Poles who run away. It's easy to see everyone's worn out with fatigue."

Faber was sitting in the conference room with the staff-officer. They were sipping coffee with English rusks,—trophies. It was almost winter. The streets were cold and slippery. The room was warmed by an electric stove.

The officer sat there with one leg crossed over the other, careless and at ease, as usual, although they were speaking of very important things.

"What is fatigue?" asked Faber. "It is simply self poisoning of the system by a peculiar poison, and happens during dissolution of albuminous substances. You can inoculate fatigue like small-pox. It isn't the fatigue that worries me, it's the gas-masks. I tried the new leather one not long ago, all three models . . .!"

The staff-officer put down his cup. A lively recollection of his own experiences at the front arose before his mind's eye. Faber whistled. It was astonishing that such an important person could whistle like a small boy.

"Should the British begin to use the Blue Cross —fatigue will vanish. The gas-masks let in the Blue Cross gas."

The officer paled. Faber put down his cup and went on:

"If the British introduce combinations of arsenic we shall have to make our gas-masks on the British pattern. The British employ woollen filters and cotton-wool against our colored crosses, but a gas-mask of that type presses on the throat and soon smothers. We shall use another type of gas-mask. It will be a large box to hang on the chest—with a rubber tube attached. We have no rubber. We'll use leather. But it's a complicated business to make tubes like that from leather. And we need millions of them. What shall we do? I have made inquiries. The stocks of rubber are negligible. How does the line of the front run now?"

"Taken as a whole, the front runs from Arras to Lafère-Rheims-Verdun. Unfortunately we lost Soissons long ago. The line of Siegfried is cracking. All our hopes are staked on the positions of Crimhilde and Hundiga. The struggle is in no wise weakening."

"I am also in doubt about another point," Faber said in the quiet tone he used at his lectures. "Just try to verify the stocks of *helleboin*, these boxes with chloride of lime that we apply against mustard gas. What quantity of mustard gas is there at the disposal of the army? I have a suspicion that there is not enough of that, either."

The staff-officer rose.

"I have to go away tomorrow. I shall give your report in person. You will be informed of the result in three days' time, and you will receive a copy of the instructions."

Faber rang for Vogel. Vogel came in with his bald spot shining as usual. It grew larger every day, but Vogel himself lost nothing of his gloss or his weight.

In three days' time Faber was handed a telegram, already deciphered and strictly confidential. He studied it for a long time and made no response to Vogel's coughs. Then Faber stuffed the telegram into his pocket, drew it out again after a minute, and looked over his spectacles at Vogel.

"Excuse me, did you say something, Vogel?"

"No, I didn't say anything, Herr Professor."

Faber held out the telegram to him. Vogel was astonished to see that Faber had been reading three short lines for ten minutes. They were as follows:

"This is to inform you that all the chloride of lime has already been given out to the troops of the third, first, seventh, seventeenth and sixth armies. There are no further supplies in stock."

Vogel read out the telegram in an undertone. The Professor fixed Vogel with a penetrating gaze, but with that touch of rapaciousness that Vogel was aware always preceded either the Professor's rage or a pointless joke. And he was right.

"Vogel, what country do you choose when you are going for a holiday? Or no—what country attracts you most?"

"Siam," replied Vogel. "White elephants, bayaderes and tigers." He was ready for the joke this time.

"Then you might as well pack your trunks and go to Siam, Vogel, and gallop about with a bayadere on a white elephant. That'll be much quieter for you . . ."

The joke didn't come off, as usual. Vogel did not even smile.

Schreckfuss Comes out Dry

Rudy Schreckfuss led the unenviable existence of a mechanical insect. He crawled about the smoky fields and the communicating corridors of ruined trenches, but the worst of all were the shell holes. He hated these most of all. He had lived two days in one of these holes, surrounded by heavy clouds of smoke and the lightning of explosions. He changed gas-masks, weapons, and sometimes lost his comrades, but the main thing was that he crawled like a wound-up beetle. From time to time he gave orders, whistled, shot, nudged the fallen with the mouth of his revolver but he could seldom decide to rise to his feet.

From time to time visions of the past floated before his eyes: green fields, a vast blue sky, a broad white road, he was going out to the war, marching gaily down the road like a young god, no danger terrified him. He did not lower his head when the bullets flew around, the screaming choir of shells only inspired him with an exalted assurance. Then he had begun to duck like a recruit when the bullets came, to hide behind the shields, to seek for shelter. Now he was only a wound-up mechanical beetle, crawling about in the roaring rot, in the dry, threshed meal into which everything was turned. Now he slept without fearing that he might be taken prisoner, that an explosion might mingle his body with the ground, that gas might overcome him in his sleep,—he slept soundly from a great exhaustion.

When he awoke, he found no change. Only the gases changed their color or form. He saw gassed men with mauve skins, with silvery faces, with

rose-red spots on hands and face. The howls of the wounded came from the shell-holes. They sounded like the howls of ventilators out of order. Thus six or seven days would pass. Then he would be sent back to the base for a rest, to some ruined village, to a new position, where he would lie on some one's broken-down bed and eat without noticing what he ate.

Then once more he would have to crawl about the smoky field. He did not even know what kind of a landscape lay all round. It seemed to him that all the time ponderous walls kept rising and falling into ruin so that the earth buzzed of its own accord.

The green muzzle of a chameleon grew on him. The gas-mask was a permanent curse. Everybody was shouting about gas-discipline. Shreckfuss crawled like a wound-up insect among the walls of barbed wire, stared stupidly at the floating smoke behind which the enemy was advancing.

The sky opened suddenly. It became filled with droning. Scores of aeroplanes were humming. They came with incredible swiftness as if they had been shot from some other planet and had to drive through the earth. Their wings came nearer. Schreckfuss fell face downwards. The aeroplanes threw down arrows. The arrows struck dully on the helmets, on the gun-shields, struck the boards and pierced the men softly. The aeroplanes poured a rain of bullets over the lilac clumps of smoke. They threw down bombs that exploded with a ravenous, choking sound. They passed—and after them came a new barrage.

Schreckfuss grew devilishly bored among all these days and nights that made everything look like butchers' shops where the carcasses lay about and the butchers were always drunk with weariness and the smell of blood; among hills that looked like rubbish-heaps, where extraordinary kinds of refuse lay rotting in the sun, among dull-looking animals and people in green masks with fixed, fishy eyes, among these heaps of coal, ashes, cinders and bones, over which a few damp rags called banners fluttered in the wind. When despair came over him, he could not shoot, and his voice failed him from sheer nervous strain. Wherever he looked he saw big red or green spots. The cannon sweated as they worked. Only the shell holes would be left of all the countries, like the valleys in the moon. A pretty landscape for the next generation. But Schreckfuss did not want to yield even shell-holes that he hated to the enemy. He vomited every time he crawled lower and lower by the rotting walls of the craters, and the earth crumbled away, and there was a ringing in the ears and at the edge of the crater a dark-reddish fog stood, which drove the blood to the head and made the legs tremble.

On the sixth or the eighth day he was resting at the base. The smoke curtain rippled far before him. Suddenly shooting began alongside. Isolated shots are much more terrifying than the many-voiced roar of battle. What had happened? Schreckfuss stepped out on to the road, shading his eyes with his hand. People were hiding all around, half-dressed, bewildered people, resting at the base where they had been sent to rest. No one had any right to shoot at them, they were resting, they had left the battle-field, they only wanted to breathe pure air again and walk on two legs.

And then he saw a tank. The black, ribby, droning machine came crawling on and from time to time was surrounded with smoke. It fired deliberate shots. White puffs from explosive bullets struck her sides. But why was this mad tank alone? Where were the others? Its driver must have gone crazy to come out so far, lost his sense of direction perhaps. He must have gone clean off his head from sheer weariness. The tank turned towards Schreckfuss. It stood among the broken bushes and seemed to snort. It was shot at like an elephant at a hunt. Only the trunk was missing.

Schreckfuss threw himself on the ground, because the tank was throwing out a white cloud in his direction. Somewhere behind the houses gravel was flying up and roofs were splintering. Fury overcame Schreckfuss. He was ready to run after this black tower, beat it with his fists, scratch it with his nails, spit on it. He saw a row of benzine cans tied to the roof of the tank. The tank was evidently intending to make a long journey if it took such a supply of benzine with it. Schreckfuss snatched a rifle from a soldier nearby. He shouted: "Bullets, inflammable bullets!"

No one had any inflammable bullets. Then he shouted again: "Shoot at the cans, shoot at the cans!"

An endless hail of bullets followed. Schreckfuss could see through his binoculars how the benzine was running out over the shoulders of the monster. It would probably trickle through to the inside. What were the people inside doing? The tank began to spin round. Now the benzine was streaming out in rivulets. At last they brought the inflammable bullets.

A light, transparent, dove-colored flame shot up from the tank. The tank bounded forwards, ran into a heap of bricks and stuck there. The large benzine can exploded. A flame without sparks enveloped the black sides of the machine. The firing went on without interruption. Three men jumped out of the tank and raised their hands. Benzine dripped from their faces, their cheeks were purple and streaked with smoke and grime, from choking fumes. Their lips were cracked. They wore dirty, sweaty clothes. Evidently, the man in front was an officer. He had lost almost all power of control. He could hardly stand. If he had been able to speak he would have said that there is a limit to human endurance. Overtaxed metal freaks like a lead pencil. How many hours had they spent in that creeping box that was as hot as a stove and from which they dared not even put out their heads?

Men ran up with their bayonets ready. Someone attempted to get into the tank and somebody else struck one of its late occupants, the smallest one, with the butt of his rifle. Then the officer who had been in charge of the tank whispered: "Water!"

Schreckfuss saw that the man was wounded. His arm was bandaged. He noticed that the prisoner's watch had stopped, and without knowing why, he said aloud: "A quarter past 5."

The officer passed his hand over his hair and wiped off the scum or smoke.

"Water!" he repeated and then added: "and sleep."

It Seems So

Mustard gas ran in rivers through the streets of the towns, chloride of tin enfolded the horizon in smoke curtains, ethylene ether accompanied broken bits of hand-grenades, chloropicrine exploded together with trench mines through the gaps in the blindage, chlorine brought on pneumonia at lightning speed.

Gases like grapes went through a ghastly press, and were poured in a compressed liquid state into shells: it sometimes happened that not only the enemy died of them but also those engaged in their preparation.

Gases that corroded steel and iron, that ate wood, leather and cloth, that retained their poisonous qualities for weeks, forced people to cling convulsively to precarious gas-masks and wait for the hour of death with eyes starting from their heads with fear and distended hearts. Then came aiphenylchlorarsin in the form of spouts of finest sand. The sand-grains found their way in easily through the black pores of the coal-boxes. The soldiers began to vomit, hellish sneezing tore at the nose and throat. The men pulled off their gas-masks and were greeted by the faint, garlicky smell of mustard gas or the mournful breath of phosgene.

Six million men fought for 135 days in white, green, red-brown, black, blue and yellow smoke. The sand hills of the desert are driven from place to place by sandstorm. It changed the whole of nature, the actual composition of the earth, it altered even the flight of the birds. The birds flew away far to the side. They left their age-old route. And the earth, broken, loaded with corpses, soaked with blood, and barren, refused to yield anything.

The enemies were fighting now on unequal terms. One side was gradually going to pieces. It began to retreat. Thousands of aeroplanes of different makes, bearing war-like nicknames, circled above then. There were Shorts, Havilands, Liberties, Effranges, Pumas. They were trying to strike from above at the retiring enemy, convulsively defending itself.

Winter was already covering the battle-fields with a cold wet coating. 30 divisions were already preparing for a fresh advance on Mainz, the 12 allied armies were already preparing to send in advance a gas-stream of unheard-of strength, directed at the last position the Germans held. One foggy evening, in a little town far from the firing line and the sounds of the great cannon—a grey-headed man, green from weariness said as he leaned over a map, to another worn-out man with a leaden face:

"It seems we've lost the war?"

And the man with the leaden face replied:

"It seems so."

At 8 o'clock on the evening of the 7th of November the grimy, frozen sentinels stationed two kilometres to the north-east of La Chapelle, in the French Army, saw a German car with the white flag of truce. They ordered the motor-car to halt.

The Conquerors

When Napoleon was deposed and the Treaty of Vienna had been concluded, everyone danced. The historians tell us that the emperor danced, the kings danced, Metternick and Lord Castlereagh danced. Only prince Talleyrand did not dance and that was because he was lame.

In the big room of which we are now speaking, a warm, private room with historic mahogany furniture and gold ornaments, full of historic relics of different colors, only two people were trying to dance a rather lively dance, a strange dance. They kept running round a red-legged table, past cupboards that gazed on them with astonishment. They ran, these two heavy stout, short men and rattled like two turkey-cocks.

"Don't you understand, Marshal?" rattled the one in the dresscoat. "The war is over, over. You must go to Spa, to the Germans, to talk over the terms of the armistice."

The Marshal waved him away.

"I shall not go to Spa. How many times have I to tell you? I don't want peace. Whoever likes can go there. The war is not over. Who told you it was over? It's all an intrigue. They have stolen my victory from me. When I was holding back a hundred divisions for the last blow, when I was to have crossed the Rhine, entered Berlin, crossed Germany and gone to Poland, wiped out the Bolsheviks, the nest that is making all Europe stink, driven the Germans out of Russia and Rumania—instead of fighting they start their peace-parleys. It is all trickery, and you say: "go to Spa!" I don't even want to listen to you. It's too disgusting!"

"Marshal, if we follow you we shall plunge Europe in another war, in chaos, in horror. The war is over. Everyone wants a rest. From today on we, the people in frock-coats, will stand on guard for justice. Marshal, justice will be meted out to everyone. The lowest peasant from whom the Boches have taken a cow, will be given two. We shall make the Germans rebuild all the houses they destroyed. They shall be rebuilt on the same place as they were constructed originally. We shall strip the Germans naked, we shall leave them nothing but the air . . . But still the war is over. The roar of guns has already—since yesterday become history. You will go to Spa and you will take our written terms with you."

"I'm not a postman to carry your terms for you."

"Marshal don't behave like a hysterical woman. I do not forget that I am speaking to the hero of France. You sacrificed your life out there at the front, but do you think we at the rear did so little? Why, I remember myself how I pinned the medal ribbons on the chests of workers blinded by mustard gas... Yes... yes, indeed."

"Ha! You pinned on ribbons while I—how many years have I been wearing myself out trembling for every battle, every hour, couldn't sleep, couldn't eat for weeks. Where would you be now if it hadn't been for me, when six divisions turned their bayonets towards Paris? And you want me to go to the Germans! I tell you I can't look at them, I can only destroy them. Understand, destroy them!"

"I understand your feelings, Marshal, but the war is over. We are not alone. The Allies regard the war as finished. The guns must be silent now. They can only be permitted a last salute in honor of the peace that we shall be able to conclude. This is the day of miracles: the paper stands at par with gold. We statesmen understand something of all this, but it is you who must go to Spa. The honor of receiving the sword of the

vanquished belongs to the victor. You will go to Spa, you will sit at the table with the German representatives..."

"I'll sit down, oh yes, I'll sit down, but they shall not. I shall keep them standing at attention. I shall speak, and they shall listen and be silent—not a word, I won't allow them a single word. And then I shall order the adjutant to hand them the pen to sign my terms without delay. I must get my own back for the tortures they have made me suffer all these years..."

"Quite right, Marshal, quite right! They should of course remain standing and they should keep silence. Do whatever you like with them, but go to Spa at once. We beg you to do this, Marshal. The country will never forget this. And as to the Germans, keep them standing for hours if you like. That's not important. The chief thing is that the war has been won and that we are the victors."

The Ham

It was really a magnificent window. Yellow oval cheeses exuded delicate, transparent tears; luncheon sausages lay in their silver skins, their sinuous fat carcases surrounded by green trimmings; sausages hung in festoons; barrels surorunded by ice overflowed with red and black caviar; yellow and red leaves symbolic of autumn, lay on ice; columns of butter formed an arch, from under which crawled huge lobsters, their bristling nippers full of soft, rose-colored meat. Ducks, geese, chickens, meat pastes, Strasbourg pie, pickles, mushrooms, and lemons crowded in lovely confusion, but the president of this gastronomical republic, was, of course, the ham.

The ham was such as even the most ambitious housewife could not imagine. The ham was an offering to the gourmets. The ham and only the ham brought passers-by to a halt. It occupied the very center. The center, in fact, seemed to belong to it by right.

Clothed in a thin freckled coating of lard, a wonderfully soft, brown skin, surrounded by a narrow, snow-white ring of velvety fat, it lay moist, ready to melt in the mouth, rosy as a flamingo—the only ham in the world.

White veins as delicate as if drawn by one of the finest masters, emphasized the freshness and charm of the pink flesh. It seemed as if a spell-binding heat and odor was wafted through the thick plateglass to the nostrils of the passers-by drawing their faces to the window at once. And as a matter of fact only a rare passer-by did not stop caught in involuntary admiration of the tempting sight. But it was rarely the case that someone opened the door of that shop and entered it, for the price of the ham was as striking as the ham itself.

The man in the tight coat and a felt hat pulled well down over his eyes had been standing gazing fixedly at the ham. He was transfixed. Passers-by stopped and glanced in at the window and went on their way again, but he just stood there, gazing. He even licked his dry lips from time to time, made some sort of movements with his hands and shifted his feet as if he was going to Charleston in honor of that splendid vision and then he would hide his tongue again, the hands would go back again into the pockets, the feet would be still. People came and glanced in and went on, but he still stood there with fixed gaze.

He suddenly caught a surprised, ill-natured glance on himself and returned it with undisguised hostility. He took in at a glance the newcomer's face, his gay, cheap scarf, defiant look and working man's clothes and gathered that the other had noticed his morbid interest in the ham and was preparing to make fun of him.

He did not desire to have anything to with people who wore scarves of such a crazy color. He turned away and took out a cigarette. The other man went close up and stood near him. And when he turned his eyes on the ham once more, the man in the scarf remarked:

"You can look your fill, but it won't be very filling."

Then the man in the felt hat turned on his heel and, although he was reluctant to do so, left the window and walked slowly away, thrusting his hands deep into his pockets.

"You can keep your hands in your pockets as long as you like now," the worker called out after him.

The man in the felt hat returned. Well, he was free to stand and look, wasn't he? They could not put you in prison or take money off you for that. He stood beside the worker once more, and his eyes sparkled again. And the worker gazed at the ham too; the pink flesh showed him its very white vein; every scrap of fat. He spat significantly.

"So that's what crisis is! It's not for either you or me, comrade! Who's it for, then?"

The man in the felt hat decided that this was really too much. He left the window for good and walked off quickly, to return no more. The man in the scarf stepped back three paces and began to root in his pockets. His stomach was very empty. At last he found what he sought. It was a bolt, long since useless for its purpose. The edges were a bit worn down but it was heavy. He tossed it in his hand to try its weight, stepped into the road and glanced about. The stream of cars had just halted to let the pedestrians pass and was already swishing on over the asphalt. The bolt struck the center of the plateglass window with a short piercing scream. Perhaps the man had been a grenade-thrower at the front. The sureness of his aim with the bolt revealed an experienced hand—a hand that remembered heavier things than brass nuts. The glass was instantly covered with a huge network of cracks, whose edges caught the light from the colored lamps and sparkled.

The shop-assistants stood in the street in front of the window and gesticulated with arms encased in skiny black cuffs. In their snowy overalls they resembled conjurors from whom the spirit had fled. No one knew how it had happened.

"The same thing occurred last week."

"They raided a shop in the north of the town last week."

"Something should be done about it."

The shiny caps of the police began to appear through the crowd.

The man in the scarf was already far away. He walked quickly and without looking round. The shiny caps of the police became more and more frequent. They were coming in the opposite direction. Sometimes groups of them halted and conferred together. It was clear that there was some-

thing out of the ordinary going on. The man in the scarf stopped behind a corner of a little square. A demonstration had taken possession of it. The man looked at the ranks of the people. They were birds of his own feather. The unemployed were marching with posters held aloft. He paid no attention to the slogans. It was not the first time he had seen them and he knew well enough what was written on them. He knew, too, how the poles on which the posters were raised, would crack when the police broke them, he knew the bruises that a rubber baton left on the back and shoulders. The police hemmed in the procession from the sides. The unemployed marched quietly and gloomily, as if reserving their strength. Hunger had left its mark on all their faces. In the white glare of the electric light some of them closed their eyes with fatigue.

The police marched alongside like a convoy as if they had taken this hostile army prisoner and dragged it along to the farthest rear. Few of the passers-by stopped. They were used to it already. Some of the women in the ranks led children by the hands. A man in the middle of the procession shouted, it was impossible to hear what.

Then the crowd stirred as if a stone had been thrown amongst them. The people were asking each other where it had fallen. Then a few voices rang out. They were husky but assured. The man in the scarf listened, as if it pleased him:

In der Welt muss das Proletenheer
Dienen nur dem Profit.

"That sounds like it," said the man. The police raised and lowered their batons. The song was caught up by the rest of the demonstration. It rang out over the crowd and seemed to make the posters quiver. The posters paled before the words of the song that struck them from above:

Doch in unserer UdSSR
Klingt uns ein neues Lied,
Klingt von unserer gewaltigen Kraft
Der sozialistischen Planwirtschaft.

Suddenly the front ranks broke through the police cordon. A shout arose. The crowd resembled thick porridge stirred roughly with a spoon. Among the shouts and noise of disorder several strong throats continued the flaming line of the song.

Von unserem Willen zum Sieg!
Zum Sieg...

The front ranks tore into whatever street they had wanted to enter. The shiny caps conferred together again. Now the posters waved like banners. Now one could fight for these poles and this calico, to prevent them from being touched.

"They are going to shoot!" shrieked a woman.

"Well," said the man in the scarf. "That's all they can do."

Mögen die Kapitalisten auch schrein
Das soll unsere Parole sein.
In der Sowjetrepublik...

A single voice was singing now. He had hardly finished when scores of other voices took up the refrain:

Ran! Ran! Alle Mann ran!
Mit dem Traktor, ran mit Bahn und Krahn!
Ran! Ran! Alle Mann ran!
An dem Fünfjahrsplan! [1]

[1] Throughout the whole world the proletarian army must serve only for profit, but in our USSR a new song rings out, a song of the power of our planned socialist economy, of our will for victory! Let the capitalists shout, but one pass-word in the Soviet Republic should be "Forward, forward, forward all, with tractors, with roads, with cranes. Forward, forward to the Five Year Plan."

Whistles shot through the streets with the speed of bullets. The banners swayed and dropped. The police dashed at the crowd.

The man with the scarf knocked down the nearest shiny cap with a shout of "Ran! Ran! Alle Mann ran!..." The square became a heap of writhing bodies.

People looked on from the windows. The shops were shut with unheard-of rapidity.

The rubber batons beat tattoos on the backs. The poles of the banners crackled. Passers-by hid in gateways. A broad-shouldered, elderly man with purplish cheeks tapped his stick contemptuously on the pavement.

"Did you hear that song?" he said. "Yes, in our time Germany had different songs."

"Our Germany, Otto," replied a tall old man with side-whiskers, "our Germany was the Germany of law and order. But let's see if we can get through here. We'll be late for the meeting. Surely we're not going to wait until it finishes?"

"It'll finish sooner than you think. Just let our old fellow up there collect his wits."

Johann Kubisch

Otto von Starke returned home late in the evening, leaning on his black stick. They did not occur very often now, but it had been a wonderful evening, an evening of reminiscences, a gathering of his closest friends, of the veterans of the war.

Sixteen years before they had gone in their prime into the sea of fire, and it had cast them up on a desolate shore, burnt, mutilated, insulted, irascible cripples. Of course, the corpses could be hidden, some in the ground simply, others in rich, florid mausoleums. And of course, the streets could be cleared of invalids, they could be stuck away in some workshops, in corners where it would be impossible to find them. Then, one could, of course, write one's memoirs, endeavoring to prove that one was not really beaten, that it was all a mistake, that if the navy had not revolted, if the rear, where those swine, the civilians, and socialists were, had not gone to pieces, if America had not interfered so inopportunely and so on—everything would have been quite different. But where was one to hide those masses in the streets, those hungry workers, who crept out of their pits, and mines, cellars and factories, and howled day and night of their want. Where was one to hide the beggars that stared with great eyes from every corner and held out skeleton hands. The evening had really been full of glorious reminiscences. The portraits of the great leaders of the army had listened to fine speeches, even the toast had resembled those of the best times of the Imperial regime, but in Major Schreckfuss narrow coffin-like room only the Germany of yesterday was represented, the Germany ignored and hated by those crowds that sang wild songs about a barbarous country called Russia, lying away somewhere on the edge of the world.

This was most incomprehensible of all to him. How could one not feel oneself a German before

all things — and these people were shouting about brotherhood, before all things, brotherhood with the workers of all countries.

Every day there were street-fights and conflicts with the police, every day someone was killed, and nothing said. The unions said nothing—not their own secret Red unions, but Starke's unions: the German Officers Union, the Union of Fascist students, the "Steel Helmet," the Pan-German Union, the Union of German Agrarians, the Union of the German Nobility, the Colonial Union, the Union of War Comrades. Only Hitler was not silent. He shouted: "Arise, Germans!" But his voice was like a thunder without lightning.

Starke was turning all this over in his mind as he went along the boulevard, tapping his stick, to his quiet flat in a distant street. It was by no means easy for a war prisoner to live in these stormy times. Well, he had something put by, of course, but still, Starke had never been a beggar.

A man was lying asleep on a bench under a tree. Starke halted. He stood over the sleeper and looked down at him. What was it he wanted to read in that wild and weary face? The closed eyes looked like hollows in which you might place pennies and the pennies would be lost in the depths of them. What did the scarf tell him? It was wound round the thin neck and tucked into the worn-out jacket, held together with one huge button. What could those trodden-down boots which the man might have found on a rubbish heap tell him? As yet they held together without the aid of string but it was evident that the string would be needed in a few days' time.

The sleeper did not even notice that the light of the lamp fell on his face. But he could sleep without anxiety about his pockets, since they were free of trifles like money.

Starke sighed and pressed the knob of his stick to his forehead. He stood like that for some time, studying the sleeping man and turning something over in his mind. One of the man's hands was thrust into his pocket, the other hung down from the bench and the sleeve was pushed up above the elbow. Starke looked round. All was quiet. He bent over the arm. There was a scar near the elbow, that looked as if two hooks had been dragged down through the flesh, leaving a mark like the horns of an ox. It was an old scar, purple now. The skin around it was limp and grey. The lamp lit up the sleeper like a scene on the stage.

Starke touched him with his stick. The man did not stir. Then Starke struck him lightly on the shoulder with his stick. The man sat up suddenly and opened his eyes, but he could make out nothing at first. He rubbed his eyes for a whole minute, then let down his legs from the bench, pulled his cap straight and spat out.

"And I was thinking it was a cop," he said. Starke stepped back a pace.

"What the devil do you want coming into my bedroom without knocking?"

"I woke you up," said Starke, paying no attention to his words, "to ask you what you think about spending the night under a roof?"

"Oh, that'd take some thinking about," said the man with a sigh, twisting his scarf in his fingers. "I'm not a Christmas baby to be collected from under a fir-tree."

"I'm seriously offering you supper and a night's lodging."

The man stood up and began to pull down his sleeves. He wheezed loudly. He coughed violently for a few moments, then sat down again and took a good look at Starke, as if he doubted his existence.

"Who're you wanting to take in, old fellow?" he asked. "Maybe you'd manage it with a young kid, but I'm a bit too old and I can use my fists still."

"I don't understand that sort of low talk. For the last time — I'm offering you supper and a night's lodging. We'll have a talk at supper."

"You want to give me something to eat?" said the man. "All right, if it's not far. You aren't afraid to go with me, are you?"

"I'm an old soldier," Starke replied.

"It's devilish cold," muttered the man in the scarf. "Hope you've got something to warm ourselves with?"

Starke made no reply. He walked on tapping his stick, and the tall man tramped beside him with his hands thrust into his pockets.

They entered Starke's flat, Starke brought out some cold meat, potato salad and tea and opened a bottle of red wine standing on the table. The man in the scarf did not wait to be invited. The meat slipped down his throat as if it had fallen into a barrel. When he had finished all the salad he wiped his plate with bread and washed his food down with a drink of wine. He refused tea. He sat looking at Starke, and did not take the slightest interest in the room. He only watched Starke as if waiting to see what tricks he would play next.

Starke waited for his guest to thank him for the supper. The guest said nothing. He wiped his fingers on his trousers and yawned. Then he started to clean his teeth with a match-stalk.

Starke opened a box of cigars, and offered it to his guest. The man took off his scarf and laid it across his knees, so that the ends hung down to the floor. He drew at the cigar and his eyes disappeared in the blue smoke. He rolled the smoke round in his mouth. Then Starke said calmly, in a more familiar tone than he had used up to then:

"And now Johann Kubisch, tell me how it is you've come down to that bench I raised you from just now?"

The man put down the cigar and gave an unpleasant laugh.

"Well, I didn't think I'd be having supper in a police station tonight."

"This is not the police station," replied Starke, irritated by the man's laugh. "But if you take a better look at me, you may remember something pleasanter than tonight. I am Starke. I was Captain of the fire-brigade at one time and you are the son of my lieutenant, Ludwig Kubisch, who was killed in a fire. I held you in my arms before you were able to creep. When you were bigger you were fond of climbing a big extension ladder and you fell from it once. You were marked for life with a scar below your right elbow. Isn't that true?"

"If you hadn't told me all this just now, I'd have taken you for a ventriloquist or whatever those folk are called who guess things from a distance. Yes, I'm Johann Kubisch, that's right. I believe there are even some papers somewhere."

"You were in the war, I suppose?"

"You bet I was. Who wasn't? The whole army consisted of people like me but while the vic-

tories were on they didn't count us as people even. We were just some sort of machinery, like guns. 'Get up, dig, shoot, lie down! Don't dare to think! Get up! dig, lie down!'

"It was only in 1918 that we became people. It probably never occurred to you that your soldiers had boxes inside their heads and that there was something human inside the boxes. We were unlucky all along. Especially my generation. I've had a bad time since I was child, first that ladder business, I broke my head and so on. Then I had typhus: the doctor said 'Don't overburden his brain, don't try to teach him too much, he won't be able to stand it.' So they apprenticed me to a fitter. At the front I smelt all sorts of different gases — I should think they thought of a new one, every week, like turns at a circus. All sorts of dirt and filth were poured over me and once I even got a tin can with an Australian monkey on it, out of a mine-thrower."

He puffed at the cigar, looked at Starke and shook his head.

"I'd never have recognised you!"

"How you've changed, old chap!"

"Aged a lot. It's easy to see the war doesn't improve everybody."

"Just talk about yourself, please, and don't call me 'old chap.'"

"Well, I can go on about myself, then. During the war I got to know the reason for lots of things. Got a broad education, you might call it. And then during the revolution someone worked on me a bit."

"Good teachers, no doubt! Who was it enlightened you?"

"My first teacher was a smith—Peter Breier—a good smith he was, a fine smith, if only everyone could be like him. He explained to me the difference between the master and the worker, between the state and the revolution, between the labor and exploitation. Scientific explanations, they were."

"Hope they found a good rope for your smith?"

A fit of coughing interrupted Kubisch. He had swallowed too much cigar smoke. He lay back in his armchair and the scarf on his knees quivered.

"Breier's a communist now. My second teacher was a fitter, Tombe, who was killed the last day of the war. What a pity! He was a regular hero. He would light his fag by the fuse of a hand-grenade before he threw it. He could crack two chaps' heads together like nuts. The third was a very fine chap. Got killed in the revolution in Bavaria—Paul Zelt—someone told me how he died. He was coming out of the Council of the People's Commissars, loaded with bombs, when he slipped on the stairs, fell and all the bombs burst; it was such a terrible explosion that all the shops in the district closed up at once. And so these were the people that showed me what was what in life. There was another, Ernst Asten, a student who got stuck into the punishment corps, he was always making trouble in the corps. I was with him longest of any. We got to Berlin and occupied the Reichstag. Just as we were—filthy—straight from the front. They called us the 'lousy brigade.' True enough we had plenty of lice on us."

Starke stopped him. The old man's purple cheeks puffed out, his eyes glanced hither and thither over the ceiling. He was remembering something.

"Asten, Ernst Asten—I remember now—how was that? Yes, yes, he was my niece's lover. We took him for an English spy who was trying to get at the secret of my flame-projector through Alida. He was seen once in conversation with an Englishman who was in the intelligence service, so we put him away in the punishment corps. I remember well now, yes, of course. Where is he now?"

"We were in the Spartak Union together, we fought on the barricades. He's in prison now. He beat up some major or other, what the devil was his name now, an idiotic name! Srank-Shrunk-Schreckfuss I believe—while the major was executing his duties! so they made short work of Ernst."

"What are you thinking of doing with yourself, you unfortunate creature?"

"I don't know which of us is more unfortunate. I'm indifferent myself to riches and those who are not indifferent will soon regret it. As someone in Sunday School once told us: riches are like sea water, the more you drink of it the thirstier you get. I'm driven out from everywhere, no one will give me work because of my political views. Now even engineers are out of work, they say. One of my friends thought things over and made a dash for the Soviet Union and the bolsheviks. He writes that they are good chaps."

Starke rose and paced the room. And only now Kubisch began to look about him, but indifferently enough.

"Kubisch," said Starke, "workers must work and rulers must rule. The mind of the statesman, of a merchant, of a strategist and the mind of a craftsman are entirely different. Now look at me, Kubisch. I've lived an honest life, I have enough to live on and I can hold my head up among people. I don't have to sleep in any hole like a dog. No one threatens me with jail. Is it possible that the sight of my quiet, modest flat wakes no desire in you, no secret idea, maybe of having a quiet corner like this? Don't you even envy me that I sleep on a soft bed, in a good house, where it's warm and cosy?"

Kubisch whistled.

"No, I don't feel any sort of envy. Soon we'll all be sleeping in warm beds and in warm houses."

"Who do you mean by we?"

"All the men who are sleeping now on benches, in night lodging houses, in old sewers, in cellars, all the ragged folks who have nothing to eat for three days together."

"What sort of a miracle is that you're dreaming of, Johann Kubisch?"

"It's no miracle. It'll be a revolution. Not like that one we bungled, but a real, red revolution. Things can't go on like this without end. I'm no fool and I've rubbed shoulders with communists enough. I manage to read the papers sometimes and I know that there are 6,000,000 of us unemployed in Germany now, and our wealth is remarkable. They say that each of us owes the Allies 2,000 dollars. Well, if they price me at a sum like that, can I be lost? Of course not. They won't give us work. There's even a saying now that every minute one policeman and two unemployed are born. Sure enough the two unemployed will get the better of one policeman someday."

Starke sat down and folded his arms.

"Well Johann Kubisch, I'm listening attentively to all you say. Then, old Germany, your own old country—means nothing to you?"

"It's like the pictures in the books they gave us at school," said Kubisch, helping himself to a second cigar. "But we never read them, they were all about the same thing and the flag was always the same and the eagle was always the same. Red Germany would be all right. Johann Kubisch would try to do something for her, but old Germany—it's just something like a ham. I saw a fine ham today. Couldn't buy it, though. No money, crisis. You'd have to ride in a motor-car to be able to get a ham like that."

Starke's brows drew together anxiously. He rubbed his knee with his warm palm and stared at the empty salad dish as if he wanted to read Germany's future in it.

"You've forgotten one thing, Kubisch, and that is that the government still has strength to crush such as you."

"Maybe you're hinting at gases, and tanks. But we've seen all that at the front. At the end of this street stands Kurtz's works, that big tower there. There are rumors that the newest poison gas is being made there. There won't be enough gas to go round. I was gassed at the front, but I'm still alive. Of course, we'll thin out the population of Germany, some will have to be cleared off. That's certain. Someone has had to hang about like a dog for years on end, in dirt and filth and he's been kicked here and there all his life. They give us lukewarm slops to eat and eat ham themselves. I'll remember that ham for a long time yet. Well, never mind, I smashed their window with a good old brass bolt today."

Starke rose noisily from his chair. Kubisch rose as well and began to twist his scarf about his neck.

"So you're red, are you, you're one of those that hate an ordered state, social order, for whom nothing is sacred..."

"That's about it," said Kubisch still occupied with his scarf.

"Then how did you dare to come here and eat my bread?"

"It isn't your bread, old fellow. What do you mean by your bread? The only bread in the world is the bread that's earned. It was made by a worker. Did you bake it? You didn't make one single thing here, did you?"

"You're a dowright rascal," shouted Starke. "And you've got all you'll get from me. I hope you don't expect to sleep in this house after all you have said!"

"I knew it would be like that," said Kubisch. "I know you'd chuck me out. It would be funny if you gave your bed to me."

Starke was already in the hall. Kubisch helped himself to another cigar and went out without shutting the door or turning.

Professor Faber Shrugs His Shoulders

Professor Faber was sitting before a Japanese screen. A pile of newspapers lay at his feet. A big blue-grey dog was yawning in the corner. On the table stood a photograph of Irma in a new spring costume with a hat like an aviator's helmet.

The photograph had been taken in Italy on *Lago di Gardi*, among quiet gardens and quiet waters.

A slim maid who looked like a super in a film, brought in a visit card on a silver salver. Irma read it in an absent-minded way: Major Otto von Starke, retired.

She shrugged her shoulders:

"Who's this Starke, do you know, Karl?"

"It's the first time I've ever heard the name."

"He wishes to see you, Herr Professor," said the maid.

"Show him into the study, I'll be there in a minute."

Faber got up, stepping on the papers as he did so. He stroked the dog between its ears, put his spectacles back in their case and went into the study. There they sat and looked at each other and the atmosphere in the room gradually became one of extreme caution.

Starke put his gouty purple hand on his knee and began to cough. Having cleared his throat, he touched his chest where the black and white ribbon hung. That was to give himself courage.

"I am called Otto von Starke. Now I am an old man. In my prime, before the war, I invented a flame-projector. I perfected it during the war and was able to do the enemy a good deal, of harm. People called me the Prince of Darkness. I thought that my flame-projector would settle the war, but then you appeared on the scene. You were the man who revealed to humanity the power of gas. You created a gas war and vanquished me. If I may say so you are like an artist, full of experience, who painted the face of the war in whatever way you desired while I remained a failure. But the sea of war has its high tides and low tides. The high tide ruined me and you. It ruined Germany. I have not come to you to say just this. You are a man who will come more than once yet to the assistance of your country."

Here Faber interrupted him:

"Don't forget that the hundred and first article of the Treaty of Versailles is still in existence. According to that article, the production of gases is forbidden in Germany forever. We use chemical grenades, but only the mildest sort, in dispersing workers' manifestations. But that is all. Absolutely all."

Starke clenched his gouty fists.

"Herr Professor, treaties are signed by people. Treaties are destroyed by people. What do we see in Germany today? Chaos. We are on the brink of revolution. I am an old soldier, I know what war is and what followed it. A hint is enough for me, I understand many things. I have come to ask you just one thing: tell me, Herr Professor, this, this cannot be all? . . ."

Faber blew out his cheeks.

"What do you mean—this cannot be all? What are you thinking of when you say: 'can it be all?'"

"I am thinking of your reply. I repeat: I envied you once, there were moments when I hated you, you robbed me of my glory, but your victory was so great that even the vanquished began to respect you, to be proud of you. I will put it like this—old Germany, that beats in me still, asks you, will she rise from the dead again or not?"

"Herr Major! I came out of my laboratory once to prove the real power of science to people. To judge by your words, I did prove it. Whether

there will ever be another such occasion—I cannot tell, I also am not young."

"Herr Professor, I cannot believe you. The tower of Kurtz's works event today . . ."

Faber threw himself back in his chair. He was displeased.

"Herr Professor thinks that he is above politics. But his science has been at Germany's service, it has helped in the victories of the German army. You cannot prove to me that you are not a German. I only wish to know what kind of a German are you, a German of the Third Empire or... you wash your hands of it all?"

Faber shrugged his shoulders.

"You refuse to answer me? Then tell me at least—who are the people that the tower of Kurtz's works is threatening?"

Fine Prospects

"They told me that you were very ill, that it was difficult for you to speak. I shall not permit myself to tire you. But I have searched the length and breadth of the country for you, and so I could not go away today without telling you why I am here."

He spoke with a pronounced accent. The grey suit, grey hair, grey face with its thin lips, and grey eyes made a perfect disguise. It was impossible to guess either his profession or his intentions. He did not take off the gray glove from his left hand. He thrust the hand into his pocket. Starke sank into his high, soft armchair. He did not utter a word. He only nodded, and the unknown visitor sat down.

'My name is of no importance. It would tell you nothing. If I tell you that I was once known as Hitchens and afterwards as Stoke, and afterwards as Lavois and then as Catarini and then again as Hitchens, it is only a few pages of my biography that I am turning over. It is enough for you to know that I have been looking for you, and you only."

The unknown leaned forward and gazed for a long time at the dark, heavy figure that gave the impression of being walled in to the chair.

"So this is the Prince of Darkness? This is the man! The famous Prince of Darkness whom I presented with my left hand." Here he drew his hand out of his pocket and struck the table.

The slightest ring of the artificial limp was smothered by the grey cloth.

"In 1915 your flame-projector and poison gases sent us into a panic. People went crazy with fear. You did not take advantage of the unexpected possibilities before you and allowed our heads to cool. I had never applied myself to the craft of war before, but from the day I learned of your flame-projector I became possessed with the spirit of war. Hate buoys me up like a life-belt buoys up a drowning man. I was submerged in difficulties, but still my first inventions met with success. It's funny to think of them now—I buried kerosene-cans in the ground and fired with water-cans, filled with gas. From that time on I worked like one possessed. I shall not speak of that which you already know. Hitchens' flame-and-gas-projectors have given you many a bad quarter of an hour. In the beginning of my work I learned a lot from experience at the front. I was treated quite considerately by your flame-projectors. I got off with the loss of one arm. Then I vowed I would find out the name of the man to whom I owed my war-fever; a mad fever that burned me up for years. I learned first that you were called Prince of Darkness, but that was nothing more than a poetic definition. Then I found out that you were called Otto von Starke and I said to myself: I shall seek out this man, not for the purpose of insulting him or killing him but to tell him that he is a hero."

Starke was silent

"I lost the woman I loved and war became my mistress. I had been a sportsman and since all sports were denied to a sportsman without an arm — war became my sport. I was a doctor of philosophy and now that philosophy is dead, I indulge in the philosophy of war. Our times are times of uninterrupted military conflicts. I tell you that for ten years after the war in France, I have rarely left the fighting line and if I did so, it was only to go to my laboratory and from there back to war again. Where did I fight? Take the wars of the last few years—you will find there were not so few of them. But all these wars are a midsummer night's dream compared with the new war that is coming. Gun-fodder has been growing up for the new war, in every country. The capitalists and scientists will go to war, because the former are frightened by the growth of the proletariat, the others from mixed feelings. The trade-union officials will mix the sauce of propaganda. The war will solve the problems of the crisis, will do away with unemployment, the war will demand iron and steel, copper and coal, oil, nitrogen, paper, leather, tinned food, butter, animals, and people ready for anything."

Starke was silent.

"We shall throw out smoke, different colored smoke will drape the earth in fantastic clothing. And tremendous conflicts will take place in this smoke, the blood of heroes will enliven once more the golden veins of the world's body and shed an unrivalled glory over the victors. Gases will be used that will turn whole armies into collections of laughing idiots. They will laugh for hours and hours. No theater in the world can offer a sight more tragic and more perfect. Machines will be used that will surmount all obstacles, machines without drivers: they will be piloted from a distance. But while we fight we are not going to lose sight of the fact that the enemy of today is the customer of tomorrow—we shall not forget that. Our poison gases will penetrate through any mask, phosphorous bombs that cannot be extinguished, will burn flesh to the bone, we shall pour, if necessary, burning phosphor over towns and roads, poison the water-supply and the wells. A rain of bullets from long-distance artillery will patter down under heavens that are darkened by thousands of aeroplanes."

Starke sat silent.

"If you only knew how many people in the world are hankering after a new world war. The increasing energy of the ruling classes seeks an outlet and so does the abundant energy of youth that does not yet know what war is. It has been fed on memoirs and stories from the recent past. Even the women are dreaming of war — women love blood, the bloodiest stories told by a dashing officer will always make their hearts beat faster. But we would all be sitting in a dark trench waiting for the casual bullet of a sniper or a lump of

a primitive mine if it had not been for the people that invented new methods of warfare. I have been to see Professor Faber, to thank him for a discovery that has made a revolution in the history of humanity. But he did not understand me or maybe did not want to understand. You are an old soldier, a strong simple warrior, my teacher in the business of flame-projectors and I am glad that I am able to see you after searching for you with so much difficulty."

Starke was silent.

"With whom, you may ask, are we going to fight? Where is the field worthy of such a great struggle to be found? I shall tell you—it will be the whole world wherever there is a proletariat. Not that proletariat that toils for us, that will swallow the sauce of our propaganda, not the proletariat that we shall be able to buy over, that will show the white feather and be neutral and load military cargoes—but that proletariat that is armed with hatred for us and looks with expectation in one direction only, in the direction of Soviet Russia.

"The world has known wars with the dragon, with the crescent, with the lions and eagles of empires, now it will have to fight with the hammer and sickle. Everywhere this sign appears there will be war, every man who raises a hand for it is our enemy. That is why our great campaign should unite the warriors of the whole world. We have learned much these last few years. It seems that we are still young, that the blood of pirates, as my friend puts it, still flows through our veins, but empires are not built by hands in white gloves. Your country is on the eve of revolution; we shall come to your aid. We must tell you one thing, dear Herr Otto—and that is, that we are no longer enemies. We are blood brothers, linked by the war that created a new civilization."

Starke was silent.

"I have told you now why I came. I am heartily glad to meet and greet you. The world stands in need once more of people who are strong in mind and body and soul. I am ready to repeat like your Noske—'I am proud they call me that blood-thirsty dog Noske,' and I should be glad to hear you say —'I am proud that they call me the Prince of Darkness."

But Starke was silent.

"Not long ago I was at a banquet in London, at which the great German and defender of East Africa, General Lettor-Forbeck and the Great Englishman and conqueror of East Africa, General Smuts—people who had spent years in fighting against each other—shook hands and concluded a union. This is what I want from you. I ask for permission to shake your hand."

The visitor rose and went up to Starke. The blood rushed to Starke's face. His forehead was darker than bronze. But he remained immobile in his high armchair that resembled a coffin standing on end. The visitor bit his thin lips and bent over to Starke's face. Then his eyes turned towards Starke's arms and he touched them with his right hand. He started and stepped back from the armchair.

"Paralysed!" he exclaimed, unable to conceal his horror. "Curse those people, why didn't they warn me? But what a misfortune, sir! It's impossible, I can't believe it—how can that be? But it's undoubtedly paralysis, yes?" he said, bending over Starke again. "Did you hear all I said?"

Starke nodded in affiirmative.

'And it's really paralysis?"

Starke nodded again. The Englishman gripped the table for support and the artificial limb cracked querulously in the silent room.

What have we done today?

Professor Faber walked across the room as lightly as a young man.

"What have we done today, Irma?"

Irma stood before him fresh and happy. She knew that he admired her, that every movement of hers was a delight to him, that it could not be otherwise.

"Today we listened to good, honest Beethoven," she said, "I'm sick of jazz. Tomorrow Katy is going to Meran, and I'm going to see her off. What news have you, dear?"

"I met Burchardt. Haven't seen him for a long time. He's just the same. He's going crazy with his zeal for fascism. At the beginning of next year they intend to celebrate the 16th anniversary of the German Empire."

Irma put her hands together in an attitude of prayer before the Japanese screen, as if praying the embroidered peacock to fly.

"The German Empire—is there such a thing?"

Faber smiled and patted her cheek lightly.

"Talk to Burchardt about it. He only knows that there will be a celebration of the first Versailles, Versailles of 1871. The cannon will roar and speeches will be made. He will curse France and Russia, since traditions do not die, and there will be an atmosphere of the Third Empire, crinolines will be worn..."

"This is very sudden!" cried Irma, taking out a perfumed cigarette. But whether her words related to Faber's news or to Vogel, who entered just at that moment and began bowing on the threshold—it would be hard to tell.

Vogel stepped up a little as if he was dancing, and a number of expressions flitted over his diplomatic countenance before he reached the Japanese screen.

"Ah, Professor Vogel," said Faber. "Glad to see you. Sit down. Where did you get to?"

"I've been to Mainz and Laverkusen and over to Höhrst; everything was in order, only" he glanced mysteriously in Irma's direction, "there are rumors about the tower of Kurtz's works. It looks as though something will have to be rearranged there."

"You could pave the streets with the rumors here," said Faber, whose jokes had fallen flat all his life. Vogel gazed at him with profound, devoted eyes. The dog trotted up and laid his pointed muzzle on Vogel's knees. The dog liked diplomats, they had a special smell, not the same smell as ordinary people.

"I came in on business, Professor," began Vogel, "these bolsheviks again..."

"Vogel, you've become such a Fascist lately that you talk about bolsheviks at every end and turn. Bolshevism is no more than Jacobinism, multiplied by chartism and diluted with German-Jewish philosophy. For an uncivilized people it is the key to culture, for us it is evidently the writing on the wall and food for the newspapers. But their scientists are real scholars. I have met some of them. They were excellent scientists. What was it you wanted to say, Vogel?"

"Well, this is why I've come, Herr Professor. No more than three days ago, the papers published a communication from Moscow, stating that

several score of so-called wreckers or spoilers have been executed and that there were some scientists among them."

"My dear Vogel, science cannot be shot. The whole of European culture rests on the scientists and scholars. Only savages could shoot them."

"Alas, that is just it. They shoot down their scholars as if they were mere cobblers."

"Irma darling, just think, what will you do when the Cheka gets the upper hand here and comes to kill Vogel and me? They will spare you, of course, because you are beautiful."

Faber adjusted his spectacles on his nose. He looked like a Chinese when he wore them.

"Well, what's the matter, Vogel?"

Vogel went to the door and picked up the red satchel he had left on a chair as he came in. He carefully drew out a large sheet of paper folded in four, and spread it out before Faber.

"This is a protest against the shooting," he said. We must protest in the name of humanity. I'm collecting the names of German scientists and I've got a few already."

Faber read the signatures. He frowned as he read the protest itself.

"Several score people killed, just think of that, Irma, my child, several score people killed—the executioners must have the souls of devils to do a thing like that. They are really as hard as flints, those people. People with one-sided ideas. History has many examples of savage persistence of that kind. Take Gambetta, for instance. When he was a youth his father sent him to stay with his aunt in some remote country place. He wrote to his father: 'Take me away, I don't want to live here.' His father wrote back: 'Stay where you are and be silent.' The boy wrote again: 'Take me away or else I'll put out my eyes.' His father replied: 'Don't act the fool and stay where you are.' Then Gambetta wrote: 'I have already put out one of my eyes and will put out the other if you don't take me away.' He had to be taken away. All Russia is just one Gambetta, and they have already lost one of their eyes, evidently. Give me the list, Vogel, I'll sign. Have you a pen? Thanks, Vogel. It'll dry in a second."

Translated from the Russian
by Anthony Wixley

Antal Hidas

The Earth Moves

Dramatic Sketch

Stephan Bene
Erzsi, his wife
Ilona, his daughter, 8 years of age
Gero Komondi
Imre Kreizer
} Agricultural laborers from the village Marton

Mihaly Somar, 20 years of age
Ianos Torma, 65 years of age
} Agricultural laborers from the village Rovazd

Lajos Lakos
Peter Kesse
} Agricultural laborers from the village Pazmand

Ferenc Beke
Andras Nagy
Bence Payta
} Agricultural laborers from the village Sarkad

Hungary, December 1931

A miserable room, old bed, a table, two chairs, a cradle. The house is situated on the bank of the river Tisa. Snow covers the ground everywhere. Evening: 8 p. m. Outside a blizzard. From time to time the howling of the wind becomes audible. A miserable oil lamp flickers faintly in the room.

SCENE I

Bene, Erzsi and Ilona. Erzsi fetches some baked potatoes and salt, and puts them on the table. Sits down silently between Bene and Ilona.

Bene—*(Slowly, takes a potato, breaks it, salts it and then lays it aside).*

Bene—*(thoughtfully)* Heard nothing more about Bence Payta?

Erzsi—Not a word.

Bene—And yet we won't sign the old contract. We'll sign a new one.

Erzsi—I've heard that before. I've been hearing it for the last two weeks. Lajos Kozar already signed it. They signed it on his back before.

Bene—What else could you expect from the likes of Lajos Kozar?

Erzsi—What else I'd expect? *(To Ilona)* Don't hurry, you'll burn your tongue. Better blow.

Ilona—I'm blowing, mamma, I'm only afraid it'll get cold. It tastes better hot.

Erzsi—...What I'd expect of Lajos Kozar? What could you expect of him? The Sarkad folk say he yelled as if they were skinning him. And the police station in Sarkad has thick walls... What'd I expect? What can you expect anyway?

Bene—*(through his teeth)* Bence Payta... Benzi—the wolf—Payta.

Erzsi—Such a famine... Such misery... If you agree to the old conditions and sign the contract, you get at least a couple of handfuls in advance and a little money too. I suppose I'll have to watch at the police station like Kozar's old woman. And then they'll give me a dozen kicks with the rifle butt, and my poor girl, too... What else can you expect?

Bene—I only want you to get done and clear out from here.

Erzsi—But where?

Bene—Wherever you like. You'll have to go away for a couple of hours. They'll come here.

Erzsi—Who?

Bene—You know very well who. T'would be better you didn't... We'll draw up a new contract. That's what I expect. Do you understand? Now finish eating and go.

Erzsi—But where?

Bene—That's none of my business. Go to grocer Klein's wife and ask her when to do the washing. That it may get white as foam! As snow! *(ironically)*. Is there another laundress in the village like Stephan Bene's old woman. Is there? Take the daughter with you... and then you can talk with the grocer's wife about this and that... Well, you know yourself how. Well, make yourself scarce for a couple of hours.

Erzsi—*(friendly)*. Bene... Stephan... listen... I'd better stay. The child is already sleeping... I'll put her to bed. Aren't you sorry to throw us out at such an hour... out into the cold, such a blizzard. Even the dogs are kept in in such weather. I'll sit in the corner, I won't bother you. Perhaps, I'll be able to help you.

Bene—You help! It looks like it. (Pause). If the grocer's wife asks why you take the girl with you so late, you can show her how pale she is... Tell her she needs fresh air... But you can't stay here. We've no use for women's tears. Understand?

Erzsi—Stephan, darling... honestly... I think...

Bene—Not a word. Fetch the girl and go.

SCENE II

Enter Gero Komondi and Imre Kreizer

Komondi and Kreizer—*(together)* Good evening.

Bene—Good evening.

Komondi—My, but this is an awful storm. Why the hell did you put your house at the end of the village, Bene?

Kreizer—*(Shakes the snow from his boots)* Look here, we're the first... And we thought everybody was here already.

Bene—They'll . . . . *(To his wife)* Don't fuss around, go.

Erzsi—Komondi, Kreizer. Won't you stick up for me. There he's chasing me from the house to Klein. In such cold weather, such a blizzard . . .

Komondi—Why couldn't they stay, Bene?

Bene—Don't interfere, Komondi. Women's tears'll only quench our wrath.

Erzsi—How can I... Quench the lightning with tears, I only want...

Bene—*(Looks at her sternly).*

Erzsi—*(pleadingly)* I don't know—where to go to . . .

Bene—Go to your deaf aunt Kralik, ask her what her son is doing. Whether he writes. By the time she understands a couple of your questions—two hours will have passed.

Erzsi—Impossible, aunt Kralik is asleep by now...

Bene—Go, while you're being asked. They'll be here now. You can't stay here. Go wherever you like—to the field, to the church—to the graveyard if you like... you can visit your mother—you haven't seen her for a long time anyway...

Erzsi—All right, I'll go. Let us go, daughter. Take your hanky. You see what kind of a father you have... My, the trouble we'll have. You'll start this mess and then what?... Wait... You'll get where Lajos Kozar got to. (*Leaves with the girl.)*

SCENE III

Bene—*(After a pause).* Well, sit down. Did you meet anyone on the road?

Kreizer—Not a soul.

Bene—Well comrades, I have already documentary evidence that Bene Payta betrayed Lajos Kozar.

Komondi—Payta...

Bene—Yes, Payta.

Kreizer—Payta!...

Bene—I know for sure that Bence Payta is at home in the police station and that he draws pay from them.

Kreizer—The devil... Now I understand why he came yesterday, why he's been poking about.

Bene—I hope you didn't tell him what we have in mind.

Kreizer—Of course not, I only said the old contract is bad. This interested him too.

Bene—Is that all, Comrade Kreizer? Better tell us everything—we'll be better able to guard ourselves.

Kreizer—No, Bene.... Even though I did'nt know with whom I was talking. God damn it. So, Bence's turned a police dog.

SCENE IV

Enter Peter Kesse and Lajos Lakos

Kesse and Lakos—Good evening...

All—Good evening...

Lakos—God damn it—some weather this, I almost froze my soul . . . What a wind.

Kesse—*(Takes off his jacket. Stamps his feet)* And where are the others?

Bene—They'll be here. Sit down. Which way did you come? Did you meet anybody?

Lakos—No, we hid from the moon. The Tisa is frozen, we crept along the bank where the shrubs are.

Bene—Meet anybody?

Lakos—Not a soul. Old Andras Bodyl was standing on the river. He's made a hole in the ice and is waiting for pikes. The wind's blowing him off his feet... some job that is.

Bene—Look here, fellows. We've already cought the police dog. Bence Payta is a spy.

Lakos—Payta?

Bene—Yes, Payta, he betrayed Lajos Kozar.

SCENE V

Enter Ferenc Beke and Andras Nagy

Beke and Nagy—Hallo.

All—Hallo.

Beke—Damn it—what a cold. Let me dance a little. I've more holes in my shoes than in my belt. The devil take this weather. There is enough trouble without it.

SCENE VI

Enter Indos Torma and Mihaly Somar

Torma—I've frozen my soul... My, what a night... I walked on the Tisa so as to meet nobody...

Bene—Sit down, father.

Kreizer—Did you meet any gendarmes?

Nagy—No.

Lakos—This means, the wolf's got into a sheep skin.

Kesse—Listen Bene: Payta, it seems, is a police spy.

Beke—Payta?

Bene—Yes, Payta. He betrayed Kozar to them.

Torma—Payta...

Bene—Tell us, Andras Nagy... Sit down on the bed. Heard anything new about Lajos Kozar?

Nagy—I only wish I hadn't . . . They killed him at the police station.

All—Killed him!

Nagy—Just as we're talking his wife is standing in front of the guard house with her four children... She is in an awful state. The kids are yelling... The gendarmes keep on chasing them but they won't go. You can hear them all over the whole village.

Pause

Bene—They killed Lajos Kozar.

Kreizer—Lajos...

Bene—The swine...

Torma—Payta...

Lakos—Christ, what swine.

Pause

Bene—*(Slowly).* The swine... Yes, regular swine . . . I remember a night like this in Krasnoyarsk . . . A blizzard. The wolfs were howling, crawling to the very barracks, their eyes glowing like green lanterns, and they gnashed their white teeth. My friend Lajos couldn't sleep. He moaned like a child: 'Oh, they'll kill me, these wolves. How I want to be back home, just to be back home again... A bit of land I'd like to have. After all, it is different than here." True, Lajos, you returned home, Lajos Kozar. Home into the

earth. Not on the land but beneath it... Yes... The wolves devoured you . . .

Pause

T o r m a—Comrades. Here come Payta and Kozar. How much longer! *(approaches the window)* Look, there. There they are: Rovazd, Razmand, Sarkad . . . Everything has been eaten all over. The people devour manure, soon there will be none of that. By spring we shall all be in the graveyard. What does it all mean, eh?

K r e i z e r—...The January bread is eaten, now we are in the landlord's hands. He expects us to sign the old contract. Drain our blood for a bit of advance payment... But he's wrong in his calculations: we endure it. Now it is all the same: to drop into the grave in turn, or all together. But what will be in spring?

B e n e—Calm yourselves, comrades. It is late already... And we wanted to talk just about this future.

K r e i z e r and B e k e—Let us begin then.

B e n e—I don't think I need tell you why we come together. We all know that.

A l l—Of course, we know.

B e n e—We won't be long. The old contract we don't want. We'll draft it right away and take it through the village. This new contract of ours. *(The words follow one upon the other like so many hammer blows).*

K e s s e—We wont let him exploit us...

T o r m a—Enough... We've heard enough... loads of promises... We want a new contract.

K o m o n d i—We won't do any more night work.

K e s s e—We saw enough of it. The last harvest lots dropped down from the heat... This they call earning a "living."

B e k e—The old contract is our ruin...

K r e i z e r—The cattle are better off than we—they're at least fed daily.

L a k o s—No bread for ten days. We don't want any red wheat, the white will do as well.

K e s s e—Shall we color it with our own blood?

N a g y—And now we have to come together: secretly. Creep over the Tisa like murderers...

T o r m a—Don't worry, soon...

K o m o n d i—The police chase us like wild boars.

B e k e—And then the priests with their sermons, damn them.

K r e i z e r—It's an old trick of thieves to shout "thief" when they're making off.

B e k e—We need a new contract.

L a k o s—Pazmand folk won't stand it.

K r e i z e r—We won't sell ourselves for a matter of three bushels of wheat.

K e s s e—We'd sooner chew bark...

K r e i z e r—They killed Lajos Kozar...

L a k o s—They paid the traitors well, I'll say.

N a g y—In Sarkad they're ready to starve all winter to get a new contract.

T o r m a—And the Rovazd folk too.

L a k o s—The same at Pazmand.

K r e i z e r—And at Nulov, too.

B e n e—And at Sartona also.

T o r m a—The Sedar gang sold us out.

K r e i z e r—Yes, like Bence Payta.

L a k o s—Only for more money.

K e s s e—They won't touch a hair of your head if you're with the social democrats.

T o r m a—My old head will live to see the gendarmes drive us into their organization...

K r e i z e r—True for you.

T o r m a—They make out we want to tear everything down, to burn and destroy... It's land we want. Look, the moon is shining over the fields. The snow covers it. Five thousand hectares. In spring they drive us there and in autumn chase us away like a lot of mangy dogs. Look at my head, it is pure and white as this snow . . . It says to you: the Rovazd peasants had enough of it.

L a k o s—The Pazmand folk—also.

N a g y—The Sarkad—also.

T o r m a—The Bible says: "Knock and it shall be opened unto you." We've been knocking in vain: nothing opened. So we'll have to break it open by force...

K r e i z e r—If not today then tomorrow we'll have to pay for those five thousand hectare lots.

L a k o s—Now about the pay...

K e s s e—The reaper gathers the grain only once...

K r e i z e r—Let the landlord get the water himself, let's not send our women there, any more.

L a k o s—You know a penga isn't worth much nowadays. You can hardly buy two kilos of bread for it.

T o r m a—What about our daily wages?

B e n e—Comrades, don't talk all at once. That'll get us nowhere. That comrade came to see me a few days ago. You know who I mean. His name doesn't matter. He comes from Budapest. I talked it over with him. There's a movement for a new contract all over. Only we must act together. This is your affair. And keep things to yourself. Let's begin right away. Let us start with the daily wage.

T o r m a—That's right. With the daily wage.

B e n e—December, January, February—at two pengas. July and August—four pengas. September, October, November—three pengas.

T o r m a—Just a moment. Let me calculate. One prewar penga—eight kilos of bread. Two prewar penga 16 kilos. For a penga today only two... Well, that's about right.

K r e i z e r—We've got to be firm about this.

A l l—Right for you.

B e n e—Not so loud, comrades. There is pen and paper. Let's write everything down. Who is going to write?

T o r m a—Mihaly Somar.

B e n e—Very good.

Pause

K e s s e—...Now write... We beg... just a minute... We beg that Count Fesjtetics... because...

T o r m a—*(jumps to his feet and shouts)* The devil begs him, but no we...

B e n e—Uncle Torma. This won't get us anywhere. Let me dictate and then you can make any suggestions you find necessary. *(Dictates)* In view of the fact that last years receipts did not last even till December, and in view of the fact that we are living in misery, the Pazmand, Sarkad, Rovazd, Nulov and Marton peasant population...

S o m a r—...population...

B e n e—...will not renew the old contract. In view of the fact that the landlord gives advances only on condition we sign the contract, we indicate herewith the conditions of the new contract.

Somar—...contract.

Torma—This is the way to begin.

Bene—Firstly: seven centners wheat, two centners barley and one centner buckwheat. Secondly: for these ten centners of grain each pair of reapers will harvest six and a half hectares...

Somar—...hectares.

Bene—...Either wheat, barley or some other kind of grain.

Somar—...kind of grain...

Bene—Is that right, comrades?

All—Quite right, go on.

Bene—Now then. Thirdly: the transport of the grain the workers do for three penga. Fourthly: at harvest time the landlord must give each pair of reapers...

Somar—...reapers...

Bene—...give the following.

Torma—Look out now.

Bene—22 liters of wheat, half a kilo of salt, 2 kilo bacon, 5 liters beans, and 5 penga in money for current expenses. Is this correct, comrades?

All—It's all right, go on.

Bene—If the ears of grain is good, the threshers receive for each 100 centners—4 centners, either of wheat or...

SCENE VII

Enter Erzsi with her child, who sleeps in her arms

Erzsi—*(Whispering)* Bene... Stephan... I... the wife of Klein...

Bene—What do you want?

Erzsi—*(Laying down the child)* Hush... hush... Don't yell. Bence Payta is standing in front of the house... He's got such eyes—they just bulge, he's watching closely.

All—Payta?

Bene—*(Shouts)* Be quiet, the hell with you. What are you yelling for?

Kreizer—*(whispering)* Payta.

Somar—We'll have to get away through the garden.

Torma—*(through his teeth)* Hell. Do you think that will help?

Pause

Bene—*(to his wife)* Lower the wick. A little more. Father Torma, what do you think?

Torma—*(takes a breath)* The same, Bene, the same . . . For Lajos Kozar, for the land, for the advance pay, for everything...

Kreizer—Either he, or we.

Lakos—The wolf.

Kesse—The traitor.

Long pause

Bene—Listen, Erzsi, darling. Go out quietly, as though you're after eggs, as though you're afraid to blow at a feather . . .

Erzsi—*(determined)* Stephan, now I'll stay with you.

Bene—*(after a pause)* All right.

Pause

Bene—*(Slowly)* Lajos Lakos, Peter Kesse, here are the picks, go in front. On the Tisa, near the garden, make an ice hole. Not too big, you understand. In one piece, so that we can put it back again. Not too big. Erzsi dear, show them the way. Go, dear. Well, that's right.

Torma—That's it, Bene, that's it.

Bene—And you, Kreizer, Nagy, Komondi, Beke—you go with me. I'll take the axe. Komondi, you go through the court. He'll probably stop you. Talk with him about something. You can tell him about the new contract. You can tell him that a comrade from Budapest comes here quite often. Let him have this pleasure, too. Tell him we are all communists. Tell him anything that comes into your mind. Go now. Father Torma, and you Somar, stay here... Sit quietly, like pikes. *(Lowering his voice)* Did you follow?

All—Righto.

Bene—Let's go, then.

Exit

Bene—*(at the door)* Now, Lajos Kozar, my friend, my brother in captivity—now something will happen. Now you will be satisfied, friend Lajos. *(Exit).*

SCENE VIII

Pause. Torma and Somar are seated, they don't look at each other and talk but little.

Somar—Is it far from here to the Tisa?

Torma—About 80 steps.

Pause

Somar—But if he starts yelling . . . The whole village will gather round.

Torma—Then things will be bad. There'll be draining of blood at the guardhouse tomorrow.

Pause, howling of the wind.

Somar—Is the ice thick?

Torma—Four inches

Pause

Somar—Father Idnos . . . Do you hear . . . Somebody is crying . . .

Torma—No, my son. It is only the wind... Bad times...

Pause

Somar—If there'd be more bread, everything would be different.

Torma—There is enough bread even now.

Pause

Somar—Why does Bene look at me that way?

Torma—He does'nt know you yet, my son.

Pause

Somar—Father Idnos... Did you hear...

Torma—Nothing, my son. Sit still... Like with Mary. Are you thinking of getting married?

Somar—*(Stuttering)* Who, Mary, father Idnos?

Torma—Yes, Mary.

Somar—Father Idnos... I can hear a yell...

Torma—Keep still, I tell you... Well, then, you want to get married?

Somar—Well, father, I'd like to... but how can I? No home, no bread.

Pause

Torma—How is that... No home, no bread.

Pause

Somar—What a storm!

Torma—Who is hungry also feels cold.

Somar—The wind is blowing through the reeds. Father Idnos, did you hear anything?

Torma—No, my son, the moon is shining. The wind howls. Let it blow... This is a fierce storm.

Pause

Somar—Why aren't they back yet?

Torma—They're still busy, probably. Mary, you know, she told me: "Never," she says, "can I live with Mihaly. He's a beggar and I am another—this makes two beggars."

Somar—This is unbearable... Two beggars... too true.

Pause

Somar—The wind's blowing in, they shut the door badly...

Torma—Well, go and shut it.

Somar—*(continues to sit)*. Two beggars...

SCENE IX

Lakos and Kesse return, lay down the picks, they are pale, sit down

Torma—Finished?

Lakos—Finished.

Bene and the others return

Bene—*(Greatly excited)*. Stand in a row. Get a move on. One—two. *(All rise to the command)*

Bene—*(Passing in front of the line, and stopping before each)* Erzsi, my wife... My dear...

Erzsi—Stephan...

Bene—Komondi, I know you... Well, Kreizer, of Nulov, I know you. Well, Lakos of Pazmand, I know you... Well, Comrade Kesse, of Pazmand, brother-in-law to Lajos Kozar, I know you, well, Ferenc Beke, Andras Nagy, I know, well. Idnos Torma, my father *(embraces him)* I know you too, father. Mihaly Somar, I don't know you, but look out: on the Tisa there are some more ice holes.

Somar—Comrade Bene, you may tear out my tongue...

Bene—All right. *(turns back)* All right, peasants. Well, comrades. *(Takes a breath)* Very well.

Pause

Bene—*(Puts his hand on Torma's shoulder, quietly, in a different tone)* Why do we stand, comrades. Sit down. Why, has something happened? Nothing has happened. Sit down. Erzsi, dear, you too sit down. Here at the head. *(He breathes deeply and wipes his forehead)* Mihaly Somar, read, where did we stop.

Somar—*(Reads)* If the ears of grain are good, the threshers receive for each 100 centners—4 centners, either wheat or...

Bene—... or barley, or some other harvest.

Somar—... harvest.

CURTAIN

Translated from the Russian Version by Julius Hecker

Ed. Falkowski

Coal Mountain

Short Story

1

Evening. The town's an old man dreaming on his pipe. Purple shadows cling to October-stripped chestnuts and elms. The west simmers down to an easy-going blaze.

Along Jardin, Oak and West streets smug well-to-do houses blink vertical oblongs of yellow light. Lights crinkle over mahogany of pianos, play amid chandelier-crystals, curve along dishes in smirking china closets. Odors of suppers. The town's cultured families will soon gather to their evening ritual of food amid clatter of knives and forks, passing of plates, repeating the day's platitudes in lardy gurgles.

The cool evening hurls lumps of shadow into the alleys too. Kerosene lamps sputter on oil-cloth covered tables, their glass chimneys throwing rings on the ceiling. Stoves burn red, and behind the stoves smirchy mine clothes hang from thick spikes to dry. They emit a sour sweat pungence. Limply suspended, they fill the room with their phantom presence. These clothes go to work every day. The mud-crusted boots plop through gooey mine-slush. Wrapped feet inside them pick their way across mud-covered ties, down long gangway tracks.

A raw faced woman cuts bread, smears it with lard, makes a bed for slices of bacon. She packs them into a round can, clamps the lid over the top.

"Well, that's ready." Her thread of song weaves in with the droning coffee-pot tossing up miniature geysers of vapor. Practiced fingers pluck off the lid, releasing a parasol of steam. She throws a few pinches of coffee into the boil. Then feels the smeary clothes behind the stove. Their muggy dampness gone. Pat can crawl inside them when the mine whistle calls next morning.

Pat is upstairs in bed, asleep. Maybe just thinking. Everyday when he comes from work he does this. At first he always complains. Life, he tells bitterly, isn't what it was when he was young. The rock-hole is next door to hell. The job gets harder, meaner every day.

Hot water is poured into the tub and enough cold to temper it. Pat, bare of breast, kneels before it. His soggy pants slip down below his hairy navel. He scrubs his coal-grained hands, makes circles over his breast with yellow soap. Calls Marty to wash his back. Then stands, having peeled off his pants, in the middle of the tub, soaps the rest of himself having first carefully dug out the dirt from his ears, nostrils and the little valleys above and beneath his lips.

A thin chorus of pots sing on the stove. From them Mary composes her day's achievement—supper. Cabbage soup is followed by stringy soup-meat and hunks of bone out of which Pat sucks dabs of marrow with prodigious efforts, knocking the bone against the table-ledge to loosen its treasure.

Dessert consists of a pipeful of Penn tobacco. Outside, houses stretch shadows across the street and telegraph poles stripe roads with black bars.

Pat yawns, hammers his pipe against the stove-door. "Goin' for a nap, Mary. Every bone inside me hurts. Wake me in two hours. Just dog-tired."

This is the story of every day.

2

Saturday evokes Mainstreet's razzledazzle. Soda parlors, clothing shops, hardware stores, five and ten cent emporiums flare luminous identities against sidewalks that are endless conveyors of crowds. Saturday turns on the lights in men too. Lit cigars spread havana incense. Everybody saunters leisurely up and down, wife hooked on arm, or maybe a pert factory girl.

Packed are the A. and P. stores. Dripping mackerel are wrapped for Sunday breakfasts, baskets fill with groceries. Five-and-ten-cent stores swirl with ringing cash-registers, sweating girls dancing prompt service behind counters, amiable crowds pouring through.

Main street is a gorge of automobiles purring between red and green traffic lights. Stodgy policemen roll stogies in their mouths, spit at the gutter.

Promise of rest infuses new life into the blood. Aching bones try to forget their ache. Weary brains stir to the tune of street-lamps, answer the lure of the movie palace where immense cowboys and chevaliers horse across flickering miles of celluloid in the interests of the inevitable pansy-faced goddess. Huge mastermen sit behind desks, scowl titanically at the world outside the windows, spit voluminous spats into brass cuspidors. They meditate new dreams of profit. "Success." Everybody is—or should be—achieving it. Lassoing the golden geese.

The obscurer alleys where the hunkeys of the town dwell, down the flats where Italians revel in garlic and home-made wines, the "sump" where Lithuanians and Polacks stew in common misery, here also Saturday night tosses its unrest. Accordion music oozes out of the houses. Women covered with woolen shawls smuggle cans of beer from the saloon for the men.

"Why don't you go out, Pat? You've been sittin' around the house all week. It's Saturday night tonight. Your friends don't see you anywhere any more. They will forget about you altogether."

"Who are me friends, Mary? Any one'll drink with a fellow. Most of it stops there. There's no one in this town I could call a real friend. To tell you the truth, I'm just weary of this hole and everybody in it! I'm sorry I ever spent my best years in this sump!"

"Don't talk that way, Pat. You know we've got to stay here. Where else can we go now?"

Pat was silent. He laid his cold pipe in the tin ash-tray.

"You're right Mary,—maybe I'm just gettin' to be an old fool on top of everything else! I think I'll dress up and stroll out tonight. It's a long time since I met any of the boys. It's Saturday night anyhow!"

3

Prohibition may be prohibition but a drink's a drink. In the home town one can always get as much as one desires—plus!

Jiggy's "cafe" at Center and West is a frequented haunt. It parades a cool exclusiveness. Its side-rooms are filled with travelling salesmen and bootleggers with painted prostitutes, out for "a good time."

The mine foremen and fire-bosses drink at Paskey's, down on Coal street. Big contract-miners go there to load their bosses with liquor and food. Don't care what they spend. Bosses like good spenders. Anyhow, if you know the ropes, spending properly is an investment. If a fireboss likes you it means high rates for timbering, yardage, loading, laying of sheet-iron.

Many miners work themselves to shoestrings trying to make a living in a rock-tunnel where they dig rock and are paid only for coal. Don't they know Paskey's place? Poor fellows! How long does it take for a hunkey in America to become really intelligent?

Alone Patty walks up Mainstreet. He knows every crack in its pavements, every pole and building, yet feels strange amid its cold glitter. The murmur of throngs and shriek of autos and clang of trolleys warm no dead dreams in him. He looks down the south end of the street where it runs into a railroad, toward the Pennsylvania station now prinked with expectant lamps. The 8 o'clock Pottsville train will soon arrive. Pottsville is the county seat and jail. The train always brings many politicians and court officials back to their homes in town.

Pat felt alone as he walked up the street. His bones ached. The prosperous lawyers and doctors walking along seemed of a different world. Their faces were pudgy and beaming with self-satisfaction. Feeling the good-humored crowds drift by intensified Pat's sense of his own isolation. He belonged to the Draper Mine—the rock hole in the Holmes lift. His ticket number was 1665. He felt this number branded into the depths of himself. He would always be 1665—even amid the jostling Saturday night crowds. The mine followed him where he went. He carried large chunks of its darkness within himself.

The Majestic pool room is aglitter. Thronged on raised shoe-shine chairs derby-hatted members of the town's younger generation were having their shoes shined by polish-smeared youngsters whose wages consisted of "tips." The air tingled with debates about baseball scores and the merits of boxers. Dice cups rattled in back rooms and the smooth click of pool balls stole through the swinging door of the partition.

Pat studied the cigars in the case. Selecting his favorite, he bit off the end, thrust it into the alcohol burner, lighting it. Its expansive fragrance crept down his lungs, rose ingratiatingly about his nostrils, his mouth warm with pleasant tang. A cigar made him feel less lonesome. His feelings seemed to unfold themselves within him—he felt himself becoming "human."

4

Main street is a river of flame dissecting the town through its center. It is a feast for the avid eyes of workers after their six days of underground darkness, and the stores are full of tantalizing promises. "Take me home," says the suit of clothes dripping about the wooden throat and shinbones of a display-window dummy. The epilogue to this mite of poesy is "$36.75. Easy terms."

Store windows plead hard for the cash of workers in days of waning goodtimes. The alleys are darker but less teasing. They respect poverty, understand it. Their mute darkness is illumined by the ghostly flares of corner lamps. Pat turns down Cherry Street, passes the arid tabernacle of the local temperance society, and the dignity of the Irish Church always reminding him of roast turkey and tooth picks. Beyond this point the street grows rocky and proletarian. Houses wobble in response to underground mutterings of the mines. Paint has come off in huge scabs, and here and there a deserted porch swing creaks in the cold wind.

Where the street comes to an abrupt end in boulders that emerge from the earth like mammoth teeth of departed monsters, the final house leans to the right with an air of tragic bravado. Thumping piano music spills drunkenly through its doors. "Casey Jones." Beery voices mingle in determined chorus, accompanying the poor engineer to his doom. The large square of window bore the half-melted legend. "Bartel's."

Pat opened the door and went in. The saloon was filled with noise. Men were lined up along the bar, sipping beer, smoking, talking loudly. A dozen arguments seemed to be raging simultaneously. The merits of John Lewis as leader of the United Mine Workers were being dragged over the coals in one corner. In another an old blue-streaked miner was recounting the heroism of the big anthracite strike of 1902. His talk was largely inspired by the fly-specked portrait of John Mitchell, bishop of the miners' union. Mitchell, on this portrait, wore a reversed collar and had the greasy appearance of a priest. Some were complaining about low rates for their work. Old miners were wondering when their jobs would become lighter. A tangle of human talk releasing itself after a week of silence and sweat. Pat felt at home, taking his place at the bar. Johnny Goodbeer — as Bartel was known — produced an overflowing shell of beer for Pat.

Johnny Goodbeer was popular among the miners. Not because of his good beer alone—John always boasted that unless he could get the boys real beer, he would handle nothing—but Johnny was an all-around human man. He trusted his former mine buddies, granted them credit, loaned them money when they needed it badly. He mined coal himself in the old days. But now John grew a bank account which reflected itself in his stomach. His head gleamed like a pool ball. He owned an automobile, went out hunting. His son was in college studying to become a lawyer. Another would be a priest. Johnny Goodbeer was

rising in life, taking his place among those who overtake success in America.

Pat fingered the slippery glass. The beer was tangycold. About him a dozen arguments raged and stormed. "John Lewis is nothin' but a goddam crook! Look at the last agreement—a sell-out! What do you think of a labor leader demandin' a thousand dollars a month for a salary? Believe me, somethin's got to happen soon!"

"Yes," some miner opposite was saying. "Poor McLoskey was laid low today. Fall of rock. Leaves a wife and three kids. Christ, a pity, isn't it! A damn nice man, Walter was. Who'd think it? Just had drink with him a few nights ago!"

"One never knows today what'll happen tomorrow!"

"How are things, Patty, old boy?" cried a hoarse voice through the smoke from the other end of the bar.

Pat looked. It was Moran—Ed Moran. He had known Ed for years. They had roamed around the mines looking for work together in younger years. Ed was lean and worn. Gray streaks were visible in his hair, and his red face was burred with prickly beard.

"How are you, Pat?" Moran cried, slapping him on the shoulders. "I know you, you old bastard, since you were a punk runnin' about with your nose full of snotters!"

"Yes," replied Patty gloomily. "But things haven't gone too well with either of us, Ed. There's nothin' like bein' young in this world! There ain't much room for a fellow after he gets to be about 50. Yes, they ought to take an old man then an' shoot 'im. They don't want you around the mines any more—and the poor house ain't particularly invitin'—"

"Ah, pipe down, old man!" cried Moran. "Have a drink on me! Complainin' don't do a feller much good anyway! Drink! And to hell with it all!"

"You seem to take things easy, Ed. But I ain't built that way."

"Easy hell! But thinkin' too much isn't goin' to do a feller much good that I know of. Life's a lot of crap, that's what it is, and I don't give a goddam for anything! I'm just an old bum, Pat—that's me! Here's lookin' at you." He raised his glass to Pat's.

"What's a man to do when he's about 50 an' his job gets into his bones? My job's a killer, I tell you—every day it's just plain murder. I don't know how long I'll last. But when I'll hang down at the pants an' won't be able to do it any more, I wonder what'll happen then?" said Pat.

"We're all in the same mud, Pat! Goddamit, if one only had thought of it when one was younger! One thinks then one will be a young buck all the time. Many a good job I flung away knowin' I'd get somethin' better. Well, it's too late now to start much again."

"But your family'll be a big help to you some day."

"Big help nothin'! Children ain't what they used to be either. You remember how me and you worked every day and gave up our pays to our mothers. An' when mother gave us 50 cents to spend out of our envelopes it was so much we didn't know how to spend it. I saved five dollars by puttin' odd dimes in a savings bank my mother got me. . . . But the kids now are different. They want their share of the money they earn. They open the pay envelopes before they come home. And no sooner they're out of their diapers but they want to get married and leave the house—leave the old folks to plug for themselves as they used to all their lives! The world isn't what it used to be!"

"It's just the years gettin' into our bones, Ed. We're just a pair of tired-out mules. Pretty soon we'll be good for nothin' but the fertilizer!" Pat gazed at the bubbles rising in his glass.

"Got to be rich to enjoy life. Or your name's Mud. I never knew this before as I know it now. I was young and huskey once—a young bull. That wasn't so long ago, either. It's all a joke, all of it! . . . Let's have another beer and to hell with it all! We'll never amount to anything any more anyhow!"

The player-piano gorged with five-cent pieces galloped on, filling the smoke-hung bar-room with rollicking jazz. Men fastened arms around each other, danced across the floor in clumsy bear-like couples, wobbling sideways, cigars dangling in their mouths.

When the pounding rhythms ceased the men burst out into homely songs of their own.

"John Shilinsky, he got drunk,
Went to fight old Johnny Bunk.
John Bunk laid him on the floor
Jesus Christ his bones were sore—
Every two weeks we get pay
And begosh no work next day . . . "

5

Monday is a carload of bricks crashing over the town. Monday, the mines explode into a fury of brazen cries echoing over mountain and valley. Monday shakes weary miners out of their beds, gets them into gumboots and out into the streets on the way to the mines.

The drinks, smokes, songs, saturdaynights and sundays, the struggles and hopes, money earned and money spent, the endless writhing in the bogs of poverty, the rent-paying and the coming of babies into the world, the men killed and injured in the mines and the old miners doddling about the house wondering what to do with themselves to earn their meals—all this found ultimate meaning in the blare of the collieries on Monday mornings. Their menacing trumpets called the thousands of miners to the shafts. Life rolls on. There must be coal and more coal. There must be profits and more profits.

Do what you like. Sing. Get drunk. Curse. Fill the night with shouts of desolate laughter. The loneliness of your intimate dream, the waning consolations of the marital bed, swift-riding youth and the yowl of children in the gloomy kitchen—the mine molds all into one relentless and horrible finality.

Blue mondays inspired little talking. The tongue was a sliver of wood in the mouth. Another week of weary toil, impatient collectors, flat rib and bean soup, rebellious growlings in the pit of one's belly. Foremen scream for coal while papers bemoan vanishing markets. "No Demand"—the new ominous slogan. Already it had paralysed collieries over the hills. Now this grim palsy was spreading. The day of the lay-off had come. The miners shuddered with uncertainty, not knowing when their last day would be worked.

But the drive for coal went merrily forward.

Vicious bosses kept up a continual hounding, sweating the miners to dishrags in the maddening urge for coal and ever more tons of coal!

Grimly ten men stepped on the dripping cage of the shaft. They felt the dark winds blowing from the nether darkness, quivering flame-tongues jutting out of carbide lamps. They listened to the liquid fall of waters. Beyond the sharp tips of the breaker a cold blue morning sky loomed. Hoarfrost silvered track-ties, corrugated sheet-iron of the dynamite shanty, oil house, the ticket-shanty where miners assuming the identity of numbers checked themselves "inside." It gleamed along sloping roofs of the breaker. A tense stillness reigned—the meditative pause preluding starting time.

Pat stood on the mudspattered cage, looking at faces of comrades etched sharp and lean in wavering lampflare. Bells clanged; the cage rose nervously, trembled, plunged madly down the shaft, a swishing sound rolling into ears, tightening heads. Creak of chains, gratings of the cage against slushy rafters. Plunging down, down, to the sunless universe of danger and damp and untold wealth whose gangways were dark tentacles beneath the smug town. . . .

Loaded coal cars waited on the bottom. The miners rushed through curtains of falling water into gangways smelling of rotting timber and mule manure. Dead winds exhaled from the mine's black lungs. Pat trudged down, following a trail of flickering lamps picking the long, straight way. A surly mule meditated the track before him, chained to a car. A youthful driver smudged with drip of mud, munched a sandwich, standing beside his zoological motor.

Passing a ventilation door where powerful air currents crossed, Pat reached the steep manway. The men clung to ghostly timberlegs as they descended the incline. Loosened stones rattled morosely; gray rocks threatening to burst through overhead cribbing resented the intrusion of lamps into their secrets. Sharp slate bit at the hand; splintery timberlegs snapped at coats. An indefinable menace impended in this profound gloom. The darkness has its own life—its own sinister dreams, sorrows, laughters. It has its plans and moods, its malicious intentions and its poisonous affections. It cajoles, teases, fondles, drugs, destroys. It is forever silent, save for mysterious rock-thunders rolling deep in its intestines, and the muffled quake of dynamite blasts jarring loose veins of rich, gleamy coal.

Pat reached the gangway at the bottom.

It was clogged with sloggy cars that seemed to have emerged from some dismal contact with unmentionable filth. Water spurted through cracks and crevices in the doors. Ditch water murmured a restless song; the mud leaving sucked at the boots deep tracks where they chanced between forming instant puddles. The carbide lamp flung revealing gleams through this silent world waiting for the miners to bring it to its daily life. Miners—accoucheurs of coal—familiar with the virginal passages of Nature's womb!

Pat squeezed himself through the narrow space between coupled cars to the "high side" of the gangway, and stumbled his way over a pile of oaken timber to a slight opening in the wall littered with tool-chests, the improvised plank serving as a seat was protected from falling raindrops by a canopy of sheet-iron. The all-powerful silence crept between interstices of pattering raindrops; the lamp hurled back the darkness that left enormous gargoyles of shadow cowering in its retreat.

He sat on the bench beneath the canopy, deposited his can and bottle, to rest while waiting for his buddies. Lamps passing up the gangway hailed him glumly. Glancing at the massive silver watch chained to his vest which beat tumultuously in the silence, he began to chew into a sandwich.

When Petusky and Windish came, they joined Pat for a bit of rest, munching sandwiches, loading their lamps with chalky poisonous-smelling carbide, filling them with water by immersing them in the ditch. Pat, not risking this manner of clogging the delicate tubes of the lamp with dirt, stood his directly under a thread of dripping water until it spattered over.

The trio sat for a few moments in Monday introspection, contemplating their lamps out of which white clean flames hissed.

Petusky then arose, a short, broad-shouldered Pole with a broad sweep of mustache beneath a fleshy nose—unlocked the tool chest, brought out shovels, bars, picks. Identifying his own, he scooped at the air for a few seconds trying its handle and length, then wriggled out of his sweat-putrid shirt. Curly hairs gleamed like fine springs over his breast, gathering in denser patches around his sunken navel where soggy trousers commenced.

Windish, the other buddy, had reached that border-line at which youth impercepitbly merges into the more melancholy period of life. Raw-face, clean-muscled, his saturday wit invariably gave way to monday invective as he reached for his 12-pound sledge hammer. Everything felt uselessly heavy; Pat felt his bones impact with the aches of endless years of toil. He was full of a dull, remote pain. He removed his shirt, passed his hands over his rudimentary teats, hitched up his trousers and walked wearily to the ditch where he urinated.

"Let's go," said Windish, starting for the rock-hole.

"Ain't got a penny's worth of ambition today," commented Pat hoarsely.

"What the hell are you waiting for." A huge voice boomed out of a large man whose stomach protuberated like a steel corporation dividend in wartime. "Don't you know it's startin' time an hour ago." A thick red hand dragged a watch out of a black vest pocket.

The man was Mr. Cooney, the foreman.

"You're havin' the time o' your life here sittin' flat on your stumps on company time. Hell, you should've started work a half hour ago. Do you think the company's runnin' this joint for your health."

"Why, Mr. Cooney . . ." stammered Windish, his hand tightening about the sledge-hammer handle, "We're startin' now."

"I'll get you lads fired for this if you don't watch out," the official roared furiously. "The company can't afford loafers on its pay roll. Better wise up, boys, an' take the rag out o' your ass or you'll be takin' your tinware home—an' you know there's lots of good men can't get jobs nowadays."

"Jesus, can't a guy stop for a bite in the mornin'," growled Windish.

"Home is the place to eat. You come here to work, not to eat! You lads is always blowin' about the company—but you don't think of what

the company's up against these days. We're damn lucky the colliery ain't shut down altogether—an' it may be if such monkey business keeps up!"

"It wasn't this way before . . ." Pat dared, a lump in his throat.

"What was, was, but now is now. Your crazy union's busted up the business, an' now you want a picnic down here besides—well, wise up boys. . . . I'll be keepin' my eye on yous, so watch out!"

With this the corpulent man in spotless overalls vanished down the gangway, swinging a safety lamp.

"Christ, man, that ain't the way he talked before he got bossin'," said Windish.

"Yes, I knew 'im when he was a snot runnin' after mules in these same gangways," Pat mused, "maybe he's forgot those days. Well, the union says cooperation an' efficiency—I guess that's part of it. . . ."

Petusky, whose wife and five children hung more threateningly over him than the overhanging rocks, had already crawled down the rock-hole.

"Well, let's dig in," said Pat. Resigned to their fate, bones and muscles protesting, they crawled bendingly down the slope, rockholeward.

6

From aloof front porches of comfort Jardin and Oak Streets looked down on a race of perspiring miners whose lives passed between blowings of colliery whistles—who were sucked into mysterious holes underneath the town each morning and pumped out again at night, whose dirt-tatooed faces and smelly clothes suggested deep and inscrutable crevices and haunts in dark and gruesome underground caverns where civilized people fortunately did not have to enter.

The miner was something less than a full-blossomed, roseate town citizen. The social strata of the community easily found its dividing line in the colliery whistles: there were those to whom the 6 a. m. whistles meant only another hour's sleep; and those to whom this meant a hike over the mountain to man-hungry pits, to struggle for coal and bread.

The town felt secure within its circle of breach-pocked hills that guarded it against the ruder encroachments of the outer world. Far off cities—New York, Philadelphia, Boston—were hectic vertigoes of madmen scrambling for economic straws, but here slept peace in a cup of hills, and the smoke twisting from house chimneys in purple autumn evenings boded content.

While the town lurched through the years like a smiling somnambulist, its endless trains of coal went forth to battle in distant markets against other fuels. Recent strikes had given soft coal and oil advantage over the "famous smokeless anthracite." Its hitherto assured markets were no longer assured as energetic salesment of substitutes for anthracite struggled for the supremacy of their products. Huge advertisements now clashed in newspapers puzzling the fuel-buying public. In the eye of the anthracite region, the Oil Burner had grown into the dimension of a cyclopean monster smirking a horrifying smirk over the town. Soft coal—hitherto not touching the sedate saleability of anthracite, now scrambled actively for coal cellars once filled exclusively by the harder, more aristocratic fuel.

The United Mine Workers Union had agreed to a millenium of "cooperation and efficiency" in the anthracite. The Union leaders had in the past myopically kept the soft coal miners and hard coal miners in two distinct branches of the same union. When hard coal miners declared a strike, soft coal miners worked the harder to satisfy the increased demand for coal. Similarly, when soft coal miners laid down their tools for better conditions, hard coal miners felt unconcerned, and while contributing an extra dollar or two monthly to support the fight, toiled meanwhile on, exultant in the sudden demand for this coal. The Union had thus consistently played one group of miners against the other justifying this practice on the traditional ground that each coal had a special function that could not be superseded by the other.

But the fuel war that now raged in New England, New York and other anthracite-buying centers had its immediate repercussions here. The collieries now limped along on three or four days' work a week. Washeries and strippings closed down for want of "orders." Steam-shovel crews were laid off to await better times. Hundreds of miners found no better employment than mushroom hunting, or chipping wood in the backyard or hauling coal from nearby rockbanks.

At the same time fire-bosses and mine-foremen grew more acidulous and haughty. Every day came new orders from Pottsville—where the company's head offices were located—to lay off men, to cut down on the amount of timber used, lengthening the list of "dead work" for which miners would receive no remuneration. Old laws, seldom rigidly enforced, now took on vindictive meaning. Smoking about the mine was punished with instant dismissal; likewise, taking a day off after payday, or answering a boss if he got snooty.

The cry was "cheap coal." "We must now compete against oil and soft coal," the operators declared. "The miners must learn to cooperate with us in waging this battle to regain lost markets. It is our common fight—let us carry out fully our program of cooperation and efficiency as stated in the recent agreement—every man do his bit to save Old King Anthracite. . . ."

Meetings were staged in coal towns where mine superintendents and Union representatives agreed on the need for cutting down expenses. Suave coal company representatives—high-collared, voluminous tied gentlemen whose white-piped vests suggested hotels replete with comfort—exuded melodious words prophetic of the long era of peace that had set over the anthracite empire. "We must never strike again—we must guard our markets — miners and operators must see the identity of their interests. . . ."

To which the puzzled district board members of the Union—whose proletarian origin still manifested itself in a soiled collar or a desire for a good pinochle game in the Moose Lodge rooms—replied affirmatively, meanwhile in slyish undertones assuring the miners that "there is something fishy about the whole business."

7

Crisp winds chortle down Main Street moving the corner street lamps with invisible hands. Against a black sky-carpet metallic stars glisten like steel crumbs from some tremendous lathe.

A keen hint of winter in that shudder of cold stirring streets to livelier pace.

Pat, shivering slightly inside a wilted raincoat, mounted the four granite steps prefacing the basement of the Lithuanian church. Passing a sourish odor of a nearby toilet, he knocked against a ponderous door through which oozed muffled sounds of debate.

In the center of the door was a closed port-hole whose dise swung open revealing a mesmeric eye which changed instantly into a questioning ear resembling some grotesque bit of foliage in the gloom.

Pat's brain rushed for the password: "Be firm," he said to the ear in raucous whisper.

The lock snapped, Pat found himself in a large murmurous hall dimly lit by a few yellowish bulbs whose light fought against dense tobacco clouds rising in leisurely billows towards the raftered ceiling, twirling around brown pillars supporting the religious edifice above.

Pat's eye swam over shadowy rows of backs, over ripples of heads to the rugged embattled figure on the platform which, against a background of a flyspecked John Mitchell, sered charters with stamps of faded gold beside ornate signatures, and a black-board flowered with the heiroglyphics of a school-room, emitted cadent and luscious vituperations.

"Those bastards," he cried, rage and contempt packed into every word, "They'll be wantin' us to work for nothin'—yes, an' pay 'em for the privilege! This dead work business is somethin' we've got to put our backs up against. We ain't a bunch of mush-heads and chocolate men to put up with such nonsense. We can't let the company crap all over us. We've got to show 'em where we stand, or we'll be shoved back to the old days again. . . .

"When Kevlock came to me yesterday an' said he was fired for refusin' to lay sheet iron for nothin', I made a bee-line for superintendent Reilly. 'You know,' I says to that half pint of banana oil, 'If you fellows here imagin' we're pluggin' off our heads for the sakes of our constitution, you're goddam well mistaken. Where do you get this dope about men havin' to lay the sheet iron an' cleanin' rock for nothin'. That's somethin' ain't in the agreement!'

"That squirt looks up at me blinkin' his monkey eyes an' spurts up: 'Them's orders from the big lads. What 'ave we got to do with it?'

" 'Well, says I, feelin' like I'd like to puck 'im, I know that dirty skunk—'That may be all right, but we've got a say in this too.

" 'What do you think we went on strike for?'

"That rotter looks at me—'Didn't the United Mine Workers sign up for cooperation an' efficiency. And if this order means efficiency, you're obliged by the terms of your contract to cooperate with the company. Hard coal 'as been hard hit by the strike. If you fellows want work, you'd better wise up an' do a better day's work than you did formerly, or all of us'll be left with nothin' but tongues hangin' out of our mouths.'

"Ah yes, says I to 'im, 'Cooperatin' sounds nice, but how much cooperatin' does the company ever do. The lazy swine livin' off our backs are damn glad to let us starve if we wait for them to do some cooperatin' toward improvin' our conditions of labor.'

" 'When we work, we've gotta get paid for it!'

" 'You can't violate the agreement made by the Union with the coal company,' says that weasel. 'We'll see about that,' says I, feelin' like wrappin' my hands aroun' his neck—'We'll see whether we've got to the point o' workin' free o' charge to make the company rich . . . So I say, brothers, let's discuss the matter. There ain't no question but things is growin' worse an' worse. The poor company 'll be comin' aroun our houses for a meal, one o' these days. . . .' "

Brother Peck sat behind his chairman's table, relighting his pipe.

A stooping, asthmatic man arose in the gloom, gnarled fingers woven around a worn pipe-stem. "Brothers," a profound voice, "There's somethin' radically wrong with the last agreement. It sounds all right on paper, but it's in the mines one feels it. Last week three fellows on our slope in West six were laid off. The two left must do all the work. Every day some one's knocked off, an' the others must do the extra work.

"Then about dead work. Rock ain't paid for any more. The rates on timber 've gone down. An' the bosses gettin' fresher every day. To my mind, the agreement's nothin' but a sell-out, brothers. We've been peddled out to the coal company over a fine dinner in New York where President Lewis an' the officers from the anthracite districts pulled a fine stunt with the coal operators. They thought they'd pull the wool over our eyes. But it ain't gonna work. We've got some say in this too. We've got to fight for our rights. We've got to declare a colliery strike if necessary!" he shouted.

In mid-discussion the back door creaked open. Brother Strambo entered. Strambo was a member of the district Executive Board Committee. A tall, raw Hungarian, sparse mustache clinging to upper lip, his slicked hair brushed defiantly back like a pugilist's, pipe stuck between clamped teeth, his whole bearing was intent with menacing ferocity. Inside a well-tailored suit, a modest pearl punctuating his silken lavender tie, he exuded official authoritativeness. His youthful militancy had won him a well-paid office which his thorough knowledge of political maneuvres had enabled him to hold for more than 20 years even against more youthful and radical opponents. Known in his redder days for adherence to violent methods of adjusting conflicts at the mine, he had attained an "American standard" of security, lived now on Jardin street in a neighborhood of doctors and lawyers. His wife mingled in the best bridge-playing circles, his son studied medicine in a catholic university.

Through all this upward evolution of his family toward respectability Strambo contrived to hold his position of executive importance.

Strambo mounted the platform with a possessive air. Slinking into a chair, his fingers busied themselves stuffing tobacco into his pipe which he then lit with gargantuan puffs that rose in vapory domes ceilingward. Setting his bulldog jaws, he leaned forward, nodding slightly to known faces, cupping his right ear toward the speaker—a strapping young fellow in the rear whose eyes were miniature torches.

"If things are to go on this way," he was saying, "our jobs won't be worth a pinch of snuff. The bosses stand over us all day, givin' us orders, hustlin' us up. We can't stand for such nonsense.

We know our work. It ain't the boss does the job. . . . I think it's time to kick."

One after another the Union members took the floor. Rugged mine-worn figures with blue-streaked faces, coal-speckled hands whose palms had developed natural gloves of thick, yellow skin. Gangsways, rockholes, timberlegs, mules, motors, sheet-iron, tons, mingled in the swirl of talk. Hard, bitter words crackled shrapnel-like through nicotine-mist.

"Brother Chairman and brothers," another voice wound out of the fumes.

"Brother Demmy," the Chairman nodded the floor to the speaker.

"It is time for us to make a few decisions ourselves," said the speaker, a leonine man, his earnest face cloudy with thoughts. "Either we are human bein's or we aren't. Either we let the coal company ride all over us, or we don't. We've got to take action. Not only for our mine, but we must call on our brothers from every mine to act with us. Yes, there is a contract, an agreement that hands us over to the operators on a platter. Our union leaders signed it. Well, Lewis gets 1000 dollars a month out of our pockets. He lives all right. He should worry! The same with the rest. But we're the suckers, we've got to put up with the music. It's time for action, men—I say, we organize a strike—shut down the goddam collieries until we get better conditions!"

"Strike!" shouted feverish voices from the rear. "Strike! Strike!"

The chairman rose, banging his gavel against the table.

"Order! Brother Strambo wants to speak," he shouted.

The Union official placed his pipe on the table, leering ferociously, waiting for the noise-tide to recede.

"Brothers," he commenced in a sheet-iron voice, "It's all right for you to holler 'Strike!' That's the way the Communists do it. Well, we're no Communists. The place for Reds is in Russia. You don't know how much trouble you're making for us fellows on the executive board. It's easy enough to strike. But it's we who've got to settle it.

"The contract states specifically that we've got to cooperate with the coal company in introducing efficiency measures throughout the mines. Anthracite coal must put up a hard battle for markets. We have promised our assistance in this fight. This means we cannot strike. We've got to live up to our part of the agreement. You men are roarin' for a strike as if you didn't get your bellies full of the last one!

"I want to tell you that our executive board will not support any violation of the contract. Maybe you want to go on strike—but we'll see to it for our part that such strike won't be supported. There'll be no funds for such an outlaw strike. If you think you can strike, you've got another think coming. You ought to be glad you've got work, and can keep yourselves from starvation.

"I want to say some words about the last speaker. I know him. He's nothing but a red agitator—an agent of the National Miners' Union—that's bustin' up our old United Mine Workers of America. I'm going to take it up with our executive board—we've got to expel such radical elements from the Union. Take it from me, what he said here tonight is his funeral. . . ."

The men grew unrestful. Cries of "Shut up!" "Throw 'im out!" "Strike!" rang out.

Strambo stabbed at them with vicious stares, seeking to discern the guilty culprits.

"I want to make a motion!" some one shouted, out of the tangle of sounds.

"Order, brothers—" the chairman shrieked into the storm, "A motion!"

"Starting tomorrow we declare a strike at the mine. An' send out committees to stop the other mines from startin' up—until we get a better understandin' about our conditions. . . "

"Second the motion!"

"The motion is out of order!" roared the district board member, flushed and perspiring, fists clenched.

"Question! Question!" came a whirlwind of shouts.

"All in favor say 'Aye!'" the chairman roared into the pandemonium.

The hall exploded into a tremendous "Aye" that shook the stolid portrait of the Union's father whose face sticking out of its priestly collar regarded the commotion with remote unconcern.

"I'm through with this!" vociferated Strambo, who with hat and pipe ploughed with angry steps through the hall exitward. "Wait—you'll see what you'll get for this!" he snarled as he vanished.

His napoleonic retreat was cynically regarded by the miners who now left their seats, too excited to continue the meeting. Now that he was gone, they felt united and strong, welded into comradeship by the struggle looming ahead.

Pat who participated in the background felt the blood roll and plunge through him. With deep hate he looked at the face of John Mitchell, the greasy sphinx who had sold himself to the masters for a price, and thus begun a tradition that had since continued unbroken.

Pat's voice swelled into a deafening demand for "strike!" Did he know why! Deep in himself he felt the aches and hurts of gathered centuries, his chain of memories losing itself in the breaker-dust that was in the beginning of time.

"Some of us'll be expelled from the Union for this!" said Demmy.

"They can expell the rest of us too."

"That's it. An' we'll have a new union—one that can fight an' isn't afraid. A union without officials fearin' to lose their soft jobs!"

"Brothers—we've got to elect committees to go to the other collieries tomorrow."

Outside, a red crack lay like a fiery hair across a dark sky. Chill winds swung the lamps at street corners. Main street was deserted. The town's better people probably slumbered, blissfully unconcerned. In the stillness pulsed the throb of mine-pumps through squish of steam. Pat, shuddering in his thin coat, wondered what his wife would say about it all. Would he wake her from her sleep to tell her. . . . No, tomorrow will be time enough. Unless she hears him coming . . . . she always waits to hear him come, waits to hear the assuring ping of the lock that fortifies the house against the world. . . .

Yes. The times require guts. It's good to be alive when one has guts. Pat filled his lungs with cold night-air. . . . Tomorrow big things would be starting in the old diggings. . . . Tomorrow. Hell, they've started right now! . . .

M. Chumandrin

White Stone

Translation from Russian

1

Opochinsky was an excellent workman. He was master of all trades. He had been rewarded three times for his inventions. If you remember, it was his device for winding up tractors they described in the papers.

How many dislocated arms and broken fingers, how many sprains and strains there were before Opochinsky came along with his "guitar"—as he called his device—and all these things were forgotten. Now a child could start the most obstinate motor without an effort.

Or take, for instance, the business of stamping the small pinions of the differential. Lathes were freed, the workshops were cleared of rubbish, clippings were put to use and the forge found it could turn out masses of pinions easily. That was how things stood now. Opochinsky knew his own value. He was rather stuck-up, though. He did not care to hobnob with everyone, and if it had not been for the long journey, likely enough he would not have got into conversation with that Sidelkin chap.

Opochinsky began to recollect his own life, right to the smallest detail. He could not complain of monotony or dullness. No, he might wish anyone a life like that—only that not every one would be able to stand it. Even now he carried in his note case a cutting from *The Voice of the Fighter*, in which the army commander had announced in a dispatch that he, Andrei Opochinsky, was a hero of the proletarian revolution.

It was true. He had been caught when scouting. He had held back the enemy until such time as his comrades were cut to pieces. He had been shot and thrown from the steep banks of the Khoper. The river was unusually stormy at this unlucky spot and the enemy returned in high spirits to the village.

"It's not so easy to finish me off. Can't get rid of me so easily . . . . "

He had never joined the Party. "I fought no worse than any of them. I never grudged my blood—what do I want with a membership card—a card that sometimes lies in a scoundrel's pocket?" So he thought and so he said, pretending not to notice that his friends shrugged their shoulders in astonishment and drummed lightly on the table.

Opochinsky supposed, and as he thought, rightly, that with his blood he had bought an inalienable right to live differently to others. It seemed to him that it should be quite a simple trick to live easily, without bothering about what was going on around him. Therefore, he carried his life like a rifle, never lowering his bayonet, never slackening the strap. He would only account for what he had accepted himself.

When he heard that he was to be sent to the Stalingrad Tractor Works, Opochinsky went to the Works' committee immediately.

"Maybe you think I'm a corpse already, that you begin to dispose of me behind my back."

He asked this as though he had a perfect right to demand a reply from others. He looked closely at the chairman of the Works' committee—it was not the first time he had seen him. This time, however, he saw at once that the chairman was tired, worn out, and that it was really unfair to torment him with idle questions just now. Still, Opochinsky would not give in.

"I work as well as the rest. I've got some respect for myself. I don't see any reason why people should be sent here, there, and everywhere."

And off he went, wiping his hands importantly with his well ironed handkerchief.

He did not go to Stalingrad.

And now, when Opochinsky tried to find the reason for this, he could not. What had driven him to refuse?

The fact of having to leave Leningrad, family ties, uncertainty of what lay before him—no, these were not the sort of explanations he would indulge in. These were for cowards and rascals.

2

Opochinsky alighted from the train at a station that still smelt of freshly sawn logs and was yellow with pine boards, trickling golden tar. He saw many of these buildings later—the town was growing quicker than any in America—but just now it was another detail that astonished the city man. Imagine a new station barracks, light, shining walls, with pine-tar oozing through the joints.

Opochinsky picked a little tar, rolled it thoughtfully between his finger and thumb for a moment and then seized his suitcase. Sidelkin came up from behind. Andrei did not want to speak to him. He stepped lightly over the planks laid down for a roadway. They gave under his feet like springs and squelched out liquid, whitish mud.

Birch trees grew along the roadway. Some birches! Just so high—why, a three year old child could reach up to the topmost branches. There were plenty of children round here. Away off, on the blue slopes of the hill white tents gleamed among the rare, tall pines.

Later Andrei learned that the population of "White Stone" town grew at the rate of 100 people a day. How could these new inhabitants be housed at once? Huge tents were set up and sheltered scores of people. The tents were low and stuffy, but provided the only solution to the housing problem for the moment.

Opochinsky could only see them from a distance. Their canvas was a dazzling white, the mica windows shone, people stood about near them, children played. And as far as one could hear, the sound of axes rang out, electric saws screeched, small freight cars rattled over the rails. Books that he had read long ago and forgotten came into Opo-

chinsky's mind.—Why, what the hell!—this was the Klondyke, surely.

Mountains encircled the valley where a town was growing up.

They were not very high mountains, but the summits were covered with snow. Thousands of streamlets sparkled in the sunlight, and raced down joyously to White Stone Lake. The lake was dark, but no matter how dark it grew, the reflection of the mountains could always be seen in it, wonderful mountains, just like those in Japanese drawings.

He brushed past a coarse birch tree, and tore off a fat little bud. In Leningrad wild cherry blossom had come and gone—it was almost the end of June. He crushed the bud in his fingers and sniffed the strong smell that came from it. It reminded Andrei of rectified spirits.

On the other side of the river a cloud glided slowly down the mountain. It looked tangible, it seemed one need only put out one's hand to touch it. The cloud trailed down the green slope, hiding the glittering rivulets. The river's roar drowned the tapping of the axes, and the screeching of the saws, the neighing of the horses, and even the rattle of the caterpillar tractor. A hundred yards or more below, by the shore, figures of women swayed. They splashed about in the water like beavers, standing on logs that had been thrown from the shore in places. The women were rinsing their washing.

A railway ran along the bank close to water.

Opochinsky took in all this with the greedy eye of a conqueror arrived in a new land. The legs of the conqueror should stand firmer than any wireless masts and his hands should be able to get the whole of life in their grasp.

They were accommodated in a big barracks, the windows of which looked out on a little wood of young pines. Snow lay about here and there between the trees. The June sun shone brightly through the windows. The noise from the street sounded muffled. Andrei glanced about contemptuously. Some people, he could not tell what sort, lay about on the benches. He was irritated and ready to repent of having come here.

Still he showed no sign of it. He just threw someone's boots off his bench, and put his suitcase at the head of it, first feeling if the lock was all right.

Some of the people were sitting about, some sleeping or simply lying on the forms. In a far corner a domra throbed plaintively. Nearby a few men were playing a game; the dice rattled loudly on the wooden stool.

"That's worse still. . . ." Opochinsky was worried. He took a second glance round. It did not look as though he could put up with this for very long. Just imagine, a fitter, one of the best "Putilov"[1] workers, a man with a good job, a decent flat and his own mates, had come to this—to this common lodging house.

Nobody took any notice of the newcomer; not even when he threw open the window and shouted loud enough to be heard in the farthest corner.

"And don't any of you lot dare to shut it! I know your dirty ways." The challenging tone of the newcomer made no impression on the others, and this was some slight consolation to him.

Opochinsky did not see a single drunken man. Whether it was simply an accident or something

[1] Putilov, a large Leningrad factory.

"Even now he carried in his note-case a cutting from *The Voice of the Fighter.*"

else—at any rate the town was in a suspiciously sober state as it passed by Opochinsky.

Workers hurried along the street. Sometimes they could be heard swearing and shouting, but that was ordinarily healthy excitement.

It seemed to Opochinsky that something was missing. It could not be that a new land had been discovered and that it was being settled with new and better people. It could not be.

3

In the morning Opochinsky went to the skilled workers department of the trust. He was sent to the floating factory.

"You say you never worked in the assembling room yet," he was asked. "You're joking, all the folk from the Putilov Works are the same." And the manager said goodbye to Andrei, laughing as much as to say "You can't take me in!"

As a matter of fact, the factory had managed to get on without fitters until lately. But now it was going to the dogs for lack of them.

The wind sang through the big, unfinished building. It blew underneath and among the scaffolding and under the ferro concrete vaulting. Underfoot—everything imaginable lay about. To be a fitter was not sufficient. One had to do just anything: to unload the tractor sleighs, to mark out the ground for the foundations, to drag heavy pipes, every devilment in fact. Was that a conqueror's job?

Never had Andrei been in such a ridiculous position. He had always done just what he wanted, and here—the queerest things happened. How much time, for instance, did the ball mill take up? Why, you could have written a whole story before the mill had been got on to its main bearings.

The engineer was quite a young fellow, just out of the Leningrad Higher Technical School. No instructions had arrived; the mill was being mounted in a "hit or miss" way. There was no time to waste. To tell the truth, this engineer Kolosskov was a desperate fellow. He swore like a trooper, and was no respecter of persons. Even the director of the trust was afraid to interfere in the engineer's work though he was simply itching to do so.

He stood gazing for a long time at the handful of people by the mill and shuffled his feet impatiently.

"Ready!" announced Kolosskov, stepping back and unbottoning his tattered leather jacket. It was the first time he saw the mill in its proper state.

A huge drum with a trap door in the wall, a trap door big enough to let a tall man through. The bearings that were as powerful as piers—those proud main bearings—stood there in all their imposing beauty.

The drum itself was double a man's height in diameter. It looked like a giant, thrown down on his side and tied hand and foot.

"Well, damn it! another couple of weeks," the engineer clapped his hand greedily on the cold metal. "Well, now you'll see no more of me for a couple of days. For one thing, I'm going to get a good sleep."

When the hooter shrieked in the power station, Kolosskov and Opochinsky went out through the gates of the floating factory. Its light, strong form was still half hidden by scaffolding. The soft grey of the concrete wall could be seen through the maze of blackened timber and blotchy boards.

"We'll clear it all away," said the engineer with conviction; he walked carelessly, without noticing where he was stepping on the dirt under his feet. "I'll make that factory hum, it'll hum like your Putilov Works!"

In Opochinsky's eyes youth was an excusable weakness, so he held his peace. Putilov Works, indeed! . . .

They kept meting people on the way.

"Well, how's business?"

"Oho!" replied Kolosskov. "Today we finished the first mill. This is my asistant, Comrade Opochinsky."

"You'll soon have the works going, I suppose," another asked Kolosskov.

"And what about transportation," retorted the engineer acidly. "Supposing they only give me two tractors a day instead of three. One will have to go to the garage at once, it'll be out of order, the others will be simply promised to us. Yesterday my equipment was dumped down on the ground by the store house. There's a piece of idiocy for you."

"It's fool play, it's wrecking," suggested Opochinsky.

"To fetch logs!" sneered Kolosskov. "To send a tractor man to fetch logs!"

Before they parted Kolosskov and Opochinsky mounted the steps of one of the "standard" houses and stood leaning on the handrails.

Far below the river rushed by, the same river that Andrei had stood gazing at for so long the day he arrived.

"You notice, nobody makes any use of it," said the engineer thoughtfully.

"There's no doubt, it's a fine place."

"A fine place," repeated Kolosskov, fingering the rail. "It's startling to think what it'll be like in five years' time. We'll harness that river yet, or I am a Duthman. The Terek, the Darial—what a lot of paper and ink has been wasted on them—while this river, why the Terek and the Darial couldn't come anywhere near it. How it roars, just listen!"

He was as proud of its roaring as if the river was his own. He kicked a round stone with his foot. The stone rolled down the steps, rolled away below for a long time, how far neither Opochinsky, nor Kolosskov could guess.

"See that!" cried the engineer solemnly. "Now, we'll show you what's what, we'll rein you in, and how!"

"Fine place," repeated Opochinsky. He drew out a clean handkerchief and began thoughtfully to wipe one finger after another—an old habit of his.

4

Taking advantage of his unexpected promotion as assistant, Oppochinsky moved freely about the factory, taking stock of various defects. He did not want to interfere in anything, however. Kolosskov had been called back to Leningrad—something had gone wrong with the imported equipment. Let him put things in order himself when he returned, that was his business as engineer.

Sidelkin was working in the garage. He was by no means one of the best workers but he had already been promoted to the position of foreman fitter.

"You wouldn't have been promoted to more than a good kick, if I'd had any say in it," thought Andrei. He was a good deal vexed at heart that he had come off so badly himself.

"And the wages are not so good," went on Sidelkin. "Eight roubles a day, well, and with a bit of effort, nine."

"There would be too much for you," Opochinsky was going to say and then checked himself. It was no use getting irritated over a fellow like that; no matter what you said to him, it was like water off a duck's back.

Moved by a sense of injury, Andrei went to the manager. He went, as one might say, without being invited, but Andrei was never one to try and see the small fry first.

He laid out all his documents on the sheet of plate glass covering the table. From these documents it appeared that he was a master of all trades, an inventor and an active social worker.

Then he demanded:

"If a man comes here, to place himself at your disposal, of his own free will, what attitude do you take up towards him?"

"In what way?" asked the manager.

"You give him seven rubles a day. How's that. Make him live in a barrack. How's that. And last of all, give him the sort of work that the lowest vagabond could do. This is no place for a worker, a pretty highly-skilled worker like me."

He thumped the table with his fist, gathered up his documents and demanded the following conditions: (a) work in his own special line, (b) no less than 15 rubles a day, (c) a room to himself.

"What's your special line?"

"Any you like," replied Andrei with pride, emphasising his words with another blow of his fist, and shaking out a snowy handkerchief. "I've thousands of specialties. Just take me out of here, that's all."

The manager stroked his chin in respectful silence. He lit a cigarette, thought of offering one to his delightful guest, then changed his mind and put the cigarettes back in his portfolio.

"Was it for your greedy demands that you were barged out of Putilov Works?" he asked suddenly, and laughed. "You can't twist me round your little finger. I come from there myself, I'm from the second machine shop."

Opochinsky was simply floored. Who had chucked him out, and from where? The blood rushed to his face and he dropped quietly into a chair.

"This is no time for heap propaganda."

"What propaganda?" the manager rejoined in a lively and now quite friendly tone.

"A fellow barges in, pretends he's from Putilov Works—and what does he start doing."

"What?"

"Just—er."

A short silence followed. Opochinsky became aware of a strange feeling—devil knows, he had nothing to be ashamed of. And yet, he could not bring himself to rise and walk out.

"So, no satisfaction?" he asked after a while.

"You're just the same here as everyone else."

"We've got some better workers than you—and look at them!"

Opochinsky did not go home till late at night. He went down to the riverside and along the sleepers, just tramping on aimlessly. He picked his way among the stones that had rolled down from above and lay between the rails, he went round the trolleys left by the railway brigades. He tramped on ahead, not caring where. At intervals the line ran through woods, crawled up the slope of a hillock, covered with silvery moss, or drugged itself through a miry, filthy bog.

Not far away to one side lay a whole townlet of standard houses. A loudspeaker roared from a tall pine. Carpenters and joiners, those eternal vagabonds always to be found where new buildings are, sat round tables under the trees. Curls of white steam rose from the copper cauldrons, and a tantalizing smell floated out even to where Opochinsky stood.

Carpenters see a good deal in their time and therefore they were probably not surprised at what was going on around them now, and at what they were doing themselves.

After wandering about for some time Opochinsky returned home. As he approached the barracks, he heard a voice from the ditch by the roadside. He stopped and looked down into it. Sidelkin lay on his back in the white lay, singing. He was surrounded by a group of seasonal workers. They all slapped their cards down noisily on a flat stone. A cap served as a bank for silver, copper and paper money.

It was like that everywhere and at times the conquerors lived an idle, rowdy life. Opochinsky turned on his heel without a word and went on to the barracks. It was not this life, this ditch, this idiotic gambling that Andrei's restless nature desired.

The sound of an explosion came dully from the mountain side. Dynamite. The sound rolled away beyond the narrow horizon and another explosion followed.

"I can't go on like this!" Andrei exclaimed aloud, startling himself. He stepped aside to make way for a "Caterpillar" tractor, dragging wide sleighs that contained a rusty boiler. The load made a deafening rattle at every bump in the road.

A faint but penetrating sound came from the power station by the lake. Songs floated out—songs brought from more southern parts, maybe from Leningrad or maybe from some other place.

The white polar midnight was approaching, and still Opochinsky sat on a tree stump, a few paces from the barracks. The gamblers had somehow made things clearer to Andrei. He was not of them. He was not like Sidelkin, that indifferent, indiscriminating sort.

"And what am I, then?" Opovhinsky asked himself sternly.

Before the revolution he had kept his own workshop. It made no difference that he could not even take on an apprentice. He had been his own master, his own pupil. It had gone on right up to 1915, the year he had been called up for the army.

"So I never really had the chance to marry . . ." he was thinking somewhat vaguely.

"Ah, and how I've been knocked about and broken down, what I went through! And the result?"

"I'm—just an unsteady, petty bourgeois, after all."

Again he spoke aloud. He spoke with authority, decision. He winced at the memory of his last conversation with the chairman of the Works' Committee in Leningrad.

"I am not on an uninhabited island, am I?"

The picture of the tables set out under the trees rose once more before his eyes, the bearded carpenter at one of the tables—then the ditch by the roadside, the card players—ugh! to hell with it all!

The third shift of navvies passed by. Their sharpened spades gleamed.

Opochinsky's smart wrist watch showed a quarter past 12. The sun stood over the highest, sugariest peak. Explosions echoed through the mountains. The fresh chips and shavings underfoot gave off a pungent scent. Somewhere a late bird twittered, in a word, everything was like the descriptions in books.

When Opochinsky had got used to his unpleasant quarters in the barracks and accepted the necessity of having to put up with the place for a while—he realized that the management was really shorthanded—he began to look around and to observe his neighbors in the barracks more closely.

Most of them interested a finicky and stuck up fellow like Opochinsky very little. They went out to work early in the morning, had dinner on the way home, and lay down to sleep as soon as they got in. They slept heavily, groaning, and rose often. They would seize the tin mug that clanked on a chain attached to the boiler, and, befuddled as they were with sleep, unbutton the necks of their shirts and drink greedily. They lay down without taking off their boots.

They were just seasonal workers, of course; Opochinsky could not expect anything else from them. And by the way, here near the door, slept Iglov, the fellow who had come in the train with Opochinsky. He was a gloomy, unsociable kind.

It was Opochinsky who made the first advance. Once he followed Iglov, when the latter was going out for a smoke on the steps, as he usually did of an evening. He smoked only in the open air.

Just now he wore leather breeches.

They were rusty at the knees and polished with wear. He had sandals on his feet. His braces had slipped off his shoulders and trailed undisturbed over his hips.

"It's night time," Opochinsky began uncertainly. "At least this is what they call night here."

He pointed vaguely to one side. There was no doubt about it: this local species of night was a surprizing one. It resembled a cool midday.

The manager passed by. His footsteps scrunched on the road strewn with rubbish from the new buildings. He glanced at the porch where Opochinsky was standing.

Then he recollected something and mounted the steps.

"I was just going home from the meeting," he began, sitting down and lighting his cigarette from Iglov's. "And then I got a call to the garage, the chauffeur got water on the brain, gone ditty all of a sudden. I went there, although it's really the transport manager's business. And there I saw a regular drinking bout in full swing." The manager laughed. "They were not a bit shy about it, either. Sitting in the motor lorry, on stools, as if they were in the park, toasting each other all as comfortable as you like."

"That son of a bitch got it up—the foreman fitter! He says he's from Putilov, too," he broke out with sudden force.

Opochinsky gathered that he was speaking of Sidelkin. Two or three of them would be kicked out tomorrow.

The manager suddenly grew silent. Rolling a cigarette between his fingers he added in a thoughtful tone:

"Well I suppose I'll have to throw them out. And then what! Who'll do the work?"

"They'll have to be thrown out all the same, Vassili Antonitch," said Iglov firmly. It seemed he knew the manager well. Opochinsky had not known this before.

"Well, well," Vassili Antonitch said by way of reply. Then he crumbled the stub of his cigarette and flipped it on the grass.

They all kept silence.

"It was Sidelkin, then," Andrei was thinking. Suddenly he felt upset, as if it was him they were intending to throw out.

"And nobody ever threw me out from anywhere."

Before he turned in to sleep, he descended from the porch to have a walk round. By the roadside a young seasonal worker was trying to straighten out a shovel. The shovel was bent as if from a terrible blow, or as if a heavy vehicle had passed over it. The lad was striking it on a stone with all his force, so that sparks and splinters flew out of it. That would hardly be of much help: it would only loosen the handle and turn the edge. In any case, it was a shame to treat a tool worse than if it was a log.

He turned back to the porch, where Iglov was still seated in a cloud of smoke .

"How rough they are still with the tools, they haven't learnt how to take proper care of a spade, even, although, God knows, nothing could be simpler. But what can you expect from people with so little sense?" remarked Andrei accusingly, flicking his boots with the floor swab.

Iglov gave what seemed a desirable chuckle.

"Nobody ever came out of the egg knowing everything at once. We've all got our own shortcomings."

Opochinsky did not see what he was getting at. When he was already in the barracks he remembered the manager, Vassili Antonitch, and his freckled hands covered with reddish hair, his worried smile.

"You seem to be a restless fellow," Opochinsky said to himself approvingly. "Well, it's natural in a place like this."

The vision of Sidelkin rose before his eyes. Andrei half rose leaning on his elbow: Sidelkin's bed was not even crumpled.

"Dirty dogs, came a thousand miles and what did they bring with them?"

He was almost glad that Sidelkin was being sent away.

"If you want more—ask, if the money is too little—earn more, work yourself to death—but don't dare to quit work, to slack," he wanted to tell him, but Sidelkin's bed was empty.

No, that was not the way to conquer new lands, Andrei was sure.

"You can't hold out to the last lap, you can't fight to the finish. Just like the Makhno robbers: they'd run from house to house, collect a heap of rubbish and rag it after them on a wheelbarrow—an extra burden—it weighs on the others."

Opochinsky's head was already heavy and confused. He turned to the wall and fell asleep in a moment.

The manager passed by the barracks again that night. He was talking loudly to someone.

If Opochinsky had been awake he would have heard:

"The garage is in a regular mess, I can tell you. I've got a fellow in my mind for it, though. But he's a hard nut to crack, devil take him!"

Near the power station the "rail clock" sounded. They used to beat out the time on a rail. Just now you could count 12.

Vassili Antonitch's busy day seemed to be nearing its end, at last.

5

As he was coming back to the barracks after dinner Opochinsky met the charwoman with a blue envelope in her hand.

"Dance, else I won't give it to you."

But Andrei preferred to get it without any horseplay. He seized the woman's wrist, shaking with her suppressed laughter, squeezed it slightly and took the letter out of her hand.

It was a letter from the chairman of the Works Committee in Leningrad.

"Many of us here thought you were just out for what you could get, that you didn't understand your proletarian duty to industrialization, when you refused to go to Stalingrad works. But when we found out you'd gone to a still tighter place, we didn't feel so bad about it, although I think it's just petty bourgeois anarchism to choose your own tight place, without thinking about the Party and the trade union organization of our tractor works.

"Well, of course, to be dissatisfied is one thing, but the fact is that you didn't turn out to be a deserter, after all. I must say that I personally thought you were at one time. Now the thing is that you must show what you are made of and do some real shock brigade stuff there, show them what the Putilov proletariat is made of. You've got to be a leader of the socialist competition and shock brigade work. An expert like you must do something extra.

"As you probably know, we're up to the neck in work here. No matter what one does, it's all too little. Some of the boys, of course, we simply have to order home as a matter of discipline: they go at it 16 and 18 hours a day. That's bound to have an effect on their health. It does.

"Well, that's how things are with us, my dear Andrei Ilyitch. You've got a pretty good head on the whole, but a difficult character. It could be improved a lot. I'm not mistaken when I say that

our best Putilov man won't disappoint us but will be right in the front rank."

Andrei read the last lines over again. A strange warm feeling came over him. His comrades hadn't forgotten him after all. They were watching him affectionately. They were following his movements with hope and pride—well, that was something to feel gratified about.

He folded up the letter carefully and went off to work.

At the gate of the floating factory Andrei saw Vassili Antonitch, who was bending down cleaning the mud from his swamp boots with chips of wood.

"Hallo!" he shouted to Andrei, as if to an old friend. He threw away the chip. "Well, how are things with you?"

Andrei greeted him in a more reserved tone and handed him the letter. The manager began to read it with the amused expression of one who regards you as a fraud and a scoundrel. But as he read on towards the end, Vassili's face grew longer and he pushed his cap on to the back of his head.

"Yes," he said quietly, "well, then, let's get on with this shock brigade work. Super shock brigade, perhaps I should have said."

That was all. Andrei had expected more. He snatched up his letter angrily and stuffed it into his pocket.

He soon forgot this encounter, though. As regards the letter, Andrei read it over three times, each time reading a new interpretation into the lines. Nobody had ever spoken of him before, had ever expressed any opinion, bad or good. That time in the army newspaper—well, they'd had to do it that time, it wasn't every day that people escaped after having been sentenced to be shot. But who had ever spoken in such a friendly way as if they cared about him.

The second ball mill was being set up. Opochinsky had got used to this work now and it was to him the workers turned when Kolosskov was absent. His quiet disposition helped him to understand the most complicated machine at a glance. He assembled the new mill with something like boredom and even a touch of dislike. There it was, the drum, trimmed with rivets, like fancy buttons, there was the yawning trap door, there the trade mark of the firm. All in their proper places.

Opochinsky could not forget the letter.

"Maybe you were kicked out of Putilov for greed." The blood rushed to his face as he thought of those offensive words.

"Who kicked me out?" he asked aloud, slapping his pocket, where, like the strongest refutation the letter lay.

Fortunately no one overheard his strange question.

Just before the work was finished Kolosskov came in. He was pale, with swollen, inflamed but somehow beautiful eyes, he staggered about, as if after a heavy illness.

"I've got to be here, I've got to be there at the floatation," he whispered despairingly, wiping a perfectly dry forehead with his sleeve. "Unthinkable! As soon as I've finished the mounting, I'll clear out. I've forgotten how people sleep now."

A minute after, forgetting what he had just said, he added:

"I think, though, we'll gain a week. Not a minute less."

The fitter, who had arrived from Murmansk together with the equipment, came up at that moment and the engineer staggered out after him.

"Andrei saw Vassili Antonovitch who was bending down cleaning the mud from his swamp boots with chips of wood."

Andrei sat down on a log, one end of which stretched far out into the water. He took off his boots and socks and dipped his feet into the lake. The cold shot through him, spreading upwards like oil through a lampwick. He clenched his teeth.

"They wouldn't write an appeal like that to everyone," he was thinking with satisfaction. He could not understand why the chairman should write to him for no particular reason.

Then he started. Supposing Sidelkin had received a letter like that, too!

He jerked his feet out of the water immediately and started to pull on his boots. In his consternation he could not get his feet into them at once, he jerked at them until they creaked a protest.

When he was ready, he stood a moment gazing at the lake lying so serenely among the mountains.

6

What queer things happened in this cursed place. Andrei would never have expected that the manager would have sent for him, would have sat him down in an armchair and said brightly, as he opened a tin of Sukhoum tobacco:

"Have a smoke, comrade garage manager."

At first Andrei was minded to take no notice of this new title. Then he suddenly frowned and looked straight at Vassili Antonitch.

"Yes, it's true," went on the latter in the same tone. "Here are the reins for you, take your seat and drive!"

He handed Andrei a blue paper, the copy of an order, where under § II stood Andrei's name.

"Then he sighed, took a pinch of the tobacco in fare well and left the office."

"Take on the job, root out this ex-partisan, and convict atitude. You know what I mean. Show them that these aren't the gold fields in America, old chap, but what you might call the home of the proletariat."

It looked as if Vassili Antonitch was thinking of Opochinsky.

His spirits fell. The manager was not joking, after all.

"I think I'd better be getting back to Leningrad," he said, screwing up his eyes contemptuously and pretending to yawn. It wouldn't do to show that he understood what the manager meant.

"Feel fed up all of a sudden?" remarked the manager ironically.

"Well, yes. . . ."

"Paid us a short visit, didn't you?"

This was more than Opochinsky could stand. He jumped up, started towards Vassili Antonitch and shouted, shaking with helpless indignation:

"That's how human capital is wasted!"

"It's not wasted at all," rejoined Vassili Antonitch in a mocking tone, again moving the tobacco tin hospitably towards him. "The main thing is that when you take over the garage, you should keep all your attention on the state of the cars and tractors, you should study every one of them and know them like old friends."

"I won't take over anything."

"Because all the worst cads and conceited pups have collected there, so you'll have to do a bit of ventilation."

"He's hanging on like a bulldog to me," thought Opochinsky, without any pleasure and gradually reconciling himself to the inevitable. He took up the order, put a pencil mark round the point referring to himself. Then he sighed, took a pinch of the tobacco in farewell and left the office.

He returned to the floating factory. The second shift of fitters was just going in. Andrei halted in the doorway and felt a twinge of something like regret: how soon one got attached to places. Not so long ago he had come into this place with reluctance and indignation. Now the time had come to leave it and he stood as if saying farewell to what had been built here and to what—today or tomorrow—would be added to.

Andrei went along to the brigade which was busy around the motor pinion. The pointed teeth of the pinion shone blue in the sunlight. The heads of the hexagonal bolts stood out boldly along the powerful seams. The pinion was thickly covered with oil, that gave off a strange, heavy odor.

They would get the motor together and the mill would come to life. Then all that was needed was to give it the mineral that went for grist, the beautiful white stone that shone with black specks. From a little distance the stone looked a tender grey, like rabbit's fur, in places it showed milky, faintly rosy veins.

Opochinsky squared his shoulders. And that was how the factory would rise. A little while, and its heart would beat like any other heart. There would be a booming over the lake, such as would drown the childish buzz of the power station; the power station would be nowhere, then.

Until now he had, for some reason or other, never looked at the factory from a distance. He went out of the gates, mounted the bank by the railway track, and glanced back at the light mass of the buildings, rising above the lake, at the rows of windows, glowing crimson, at the stockade running down towards the railway.

Well, after all, he had not left it for ever, he would still be able to come and look at it sometimes and admire it. It was worth that, because the ore, the half useless ore would, through the efforts of this excellent building, be turned into valuable raw material and that was no small achievement.

Then suddenly his conversation with Vassili Antonitch came into Opochinsky's mind and he felt upset again. Bewildered and disturbed, he turned off towards the club.

First of all he went into the reading room. There were no books, nor papers on the tables, nothing that there should have been. People sat around the tables, on the tables, at the windows. On their peaked caps shone miners' goggles.

The old lecturer also wore spectacles, but of the ordinary kind, gold rimmed. They burned like the reflection of stars in water. While he was speaking the old man spread out his hands. He was a little breathless, like one who was dazed with what he had to communicate to others.

"Before the war, now. What do we find? That the Germans were applying 170 kilogrammes of phosphorite manure to a hectare of land. Naturally, they got wonderful crops. And Russia?" He answered solemnly, pointing somewhere below. "Seven kilogrammes, that is 17 and a half pounds a hectare. You must understand that that was a starvation diet for our fields."

The old man coughed, spat into a handkerchief with a fancy yellow border, and then rubbed his spectacles.

"Well and then," he went on, examining them diffidently. "We've got a very, very difficult problem before us: the reconstruction of our agriculture. That is where our mines come in." At this point the lecturer gave the nearest man a dig with his finger. "They've got to supply our fields with phosphorites. Just think, 10,000,000 in gold is going annually abroad. Who is that for, I ask you?"

He coughed and spat in his handkerchief again.

"As a result of our activities, we shall not only save a considerable sum of foreign money—goes without saying. We have found our own medium for making the earth yield a triple harvest. More than that, our phosphorites will be the cheapest in the world and we shall send over there . . ." The old man pointed at the window. "The West will take them, because ours are better than those supplied by the United States or Morocco. Yes, I'm not joking. We're much richer than they are in phosphorite anhydride. Comrades, I can't make speeches well, I'm a geologist, but I'd like to think that I'd help you to understand why we're here and what we are working for."

Opochinsky felt sorry for the old man. Pity, he hadn't heard the beginning of the lecture.

When he was near the barracks, Opochinsky remembered his new appointment. Tomorrow, very likely he would have to round up Sidelkin. Well, anyway, he knew how to act in such cases.

Iglov was sitting smoking on the steps and talking to someone.

"So you'll collect the bureau tomorrow."

"That's settled," his companion agreed. Iglov yawned and adjusted his braces.

Andrei stood silent for a while and then the old lecturer came into his mind once more. Everything the old man had said had been necessary and right, but he, Opochinsky, would have put it differently.

"I'd have said it quite differently," he broke out suddenly, gazing at his brown wrinkled palm. Iglov gave him a rapid, puzzled look, but made no remark.

"He was right, of course," went on Andrei, calling to mind every detail of the old man's appearance. "But he hadn't what you might call spirit, a special way of putting things. I'd have shown everything like on a map: look here. I'd say, here's a lonely, deserted land. It's covered with moss, and ice and snow, with sour berries and all sorts of useless stuff like that. Here a man is about as rare as a white blackbird, one man to about every thousand miles. He is backward, he sleeps with his animals, and when he dies his body is eaten by clouds of midgets and not a trace remains of anything human. In all his life he never saw anything like a vice, say; he wouldn't know a file if he saw one." Opochinsky made the last remark in an offended tone, as if he had no patience with such an unenlightened creature. "Now our bourgeois neighbors from the West know well the use of everything. And we stopped being children long ago, as well. We take this great globe of the earth, this tundra where only moss and miserable little birches grow and we march on, mile after mile. And then we get there," Opochinsky stopped for breath, "and we build a road, we start a mine, we set up a power plant. That's what we're doing, and that's what's got to be made clear."

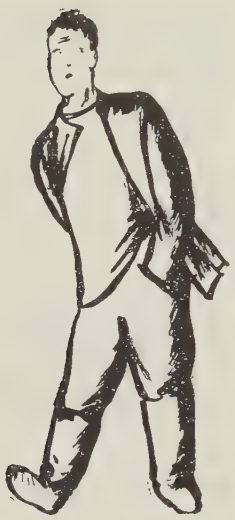
Iglov listened to him, patiently cracking his finger joints the while.

"When I look round I realize that we aren't able to describe things properly and arouse enthusiasm. That's a fact, like that old man, for instance," Andrei had forgotten that Iglov knew nothing of the lecturer. "Well, and what then. We haven't got such a terrible lot of the kind that fights as if it was for his own, and not as if he was just a hired beast. Of course, when a scouting party's sent out he goes with it, the most desperate fighter of the lot. Not a robber, or a drunkard."

He stopped suddenly, feeling that he had said too much. He gave Iglov a guilty glance out of the corner of his eye and began to whistle.

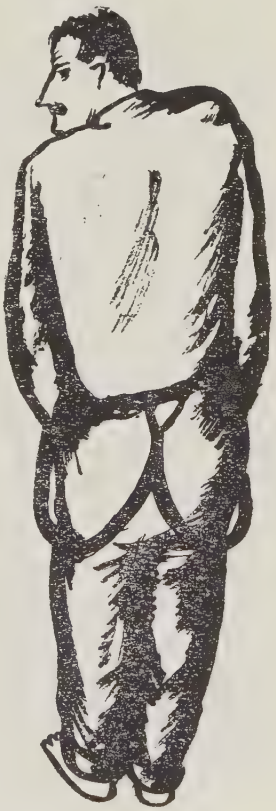
When Opochinsky was on the way to this place and thought of the conquest of the country, it always turned out that he, Andrei Opochinsky, was the conqueror. And how had it turned out in reality. It appeared that the scouting party was out already. And what did scouting party mean? It meant that the conquerors had come to this deserted land and ousted the "lone hands" (the kind that Opochinsky had formerly imagined himself to be), and created a disturbing, busy life.

„He gave Iglov a guilty glance out of the corner of his eye and began to whistle."



And they created the town, the factory, the mines.

All those qualities that Opochinsky had attributed to himself alone, as late as yesterday, belonged to everybody and that was just why they were all different. The heart and brain and hands of the conquerors, they were the property of all, that is, of all who had found this lost land, had



"Iglov gave him a rapid puzzled glance but made no reply."

examined it, sent a scouting party here, had made roads, and were tearing open the mountain sides with dynamite, were enriching the limitless fields with fertilizer, who had turned the world upside down and conquered it for hundreds of millions of landless, robbed and desperate people.

"Maybe that's what communism really is?" Opochinsky asked himself and replied immediately: "I fought for this, all the same. I'll not give up now."

Iglov thoughtfully blew out clouds of smoke.

"There's a Party meeting at 8 tonight—are you coming?"

"I'd have to change my clothes," said Andrei, turning to his usually silent companion in surprise. So this quiet unobtrusive fellow was inviting him to a Party meeting.

"Clothes don't matter, it's not a social evening."

"Still, I can't go like this," said Andrei sternly. "I'll have to put myself in proper order."

7

The funny thing was that Andrei became friendly with Vassili Antonitch. His name seemed familiar, there had been an old marker called Otdelkin in the department where Andrei used to work, in the Putilov works.

"Yes, of course, it's my father," Vassili Antonitch replied, delighted. "He didn't want to go on pension. Better for me to go and be a watchman there, he said."

"So he's your father?"

"He was a famous marker one time—now of course, that's all over."

Then Vassili added, in a more serious tone:

"I wrote for him to come here. The old woman's dead, what's he got to stay in Leningrad for? And he's a regular terror, my old dad."

He spoke of the old man, as if their ages and roles were reversed.

"Yes, Anton Fomitch—he's a terror," he repeated and then asked what sort of a reception Opochinsky had met with in the garage.

Opochinsky had noticed nothing particular. Things stood badly with the machines, but who could tell whose fault it was, the people who worked them or not.

Andrei was right in one respect: the chauffeurs and the tractor men took no interest in the care of the machines. If a machine was in order, a fellow could work, could earn a good bit. If a machine was out of order, he sent it to the repair shop, stuck his hands in his pockets, received the average, and was at no loss. Whether the machine carried ore, or stood in the garage made little difference to him.

"Well, tell us what you think."

Opochinsky did not suggest anything extraordinary. He only said:

"Suppose a man takes good care of the machine, he should get paid at piece rate as always. And at the end of the month a bonus. If the machine was out of order say for three days a month (supposing the worker has broken it), no bonus should be given, if it was at a standstill for two days—25 rubles, if for one day—30 rubles, not at all—35.

"But how should he be paid for the standstill, according to the average rate?"

"Why, no, according to the initial rate."

Otdelkin looked attentively at Andrei for a few moments, and then gave a satisfied chuckle and slapped him on the knee.

"I knew our old Putilov mate would think of a way out. He's got a head on his shoulders. His wits aren't wool gathering!"

Vassili Antonitch pulled out a writing pad from his case, jotted down some figures on it for a while and then handed it to Opochinsky.

"For instance, take some fellow called Sidorov or Ivanov. Look here."

Quite interesting results came out of it. Only now Opochinsky could fully understand what his new scheme would mean.

"Look here, for instance."

"If, formerly, these three received 1,050 rubles, they must now be paid 1,081 rubles. Certainly, the difference between the pay of the good chauffeur and the bad will be obvious at once. Sixty rubles, anyhow."

"They'll look after the machines, won't they?"

"Sure, they will," agreed Otdelkin, looking at his friend with respect."

"Supposing we spend 1,000 a month for bonuses, still that'll be a saving."

"O-oh!" Otdelkin wouldn't hear of it.

"I'll save on the standstills, that's one, on the repairs, two, on the condition of the machines, three."

"Yes, that's clear!"

Andrei went off to the garage, picking his steps, for it had been raining in the morning.

Otdelkin stood looking after him, smiling to himself and whistling something entirely out of tune: Vassili Antonitch had never boasted of his ear for music, and it was a good thing, too.

That evening as he passed the garage, Otdelkin saw that the Lenin Corner was brightly lit up. He went closer and looked in through the window. About 20 men were sitting about in the most varied poses, on the floor, the table, anywhere.

A queer looking chap, disfigured by small pox, with a well fitting Caucasian blouse, was talking, emphasizing his words by decisive gestures.

Otdelkin went in. He settled down by the door and caught sight of Andrei, by the window. He sat with downcast eyes, hugging his knees.

"It would be like that—there'd be snow in the night," the man was saying, painfully and with a kind of astonishment (at close quarters he did not look so young). "The road would be snowed up and still, we had to go to the quarries, pick up the ore and fetch it. Well, and about 7 o'clock, before we began work, I'd up and say: 'We can't lost any working time, it isn't our USSR that's at fault that it's snowing today, the USSR shouldn't have to suffer and off we'd go in couples, one couple after another, and stamp out the track, a bit further . . . ' After that, of course, the horse could get on."

He stopped and looked reproachfully at his comrades. Opochinsky's head drooped lower.

"We used to get the ore and weigh it like gold on special scales. I knew every horse better than my own brother. In any kind of weather, snow, thaw, frost—I knew how much each horse could pull. Yes, I knew all about that," he boasted naively. "Well, they sent us a tractor at last and then, motor cars. Just a few, of course. Naturally, we couudn't believe that tractor or motor trucks should get to such deserted places as this. Couldn't believe our eyes at first, honestly. I'd stand up in the truck and take a look round, thinking where have I got to anyhow. The snow all green, like on

the films, and about 15 feet deep. Such a wild place—you wouldn't believe that it wasn't a dream of some kind. Another time, you'd be taking out the car, and the headlights were devilish bright, acetylene, you know. You'd turn them on and hell, there in the middle of the road you would see great hares a-sitting. I tell you, as many as 15 or 20 at a time, sometimes even more. The little devils, they'd never seen any lights before, much less my headlights. I suppose it was interesting enough for them, but I was damned sorry to run over them. It's not like running over a human being, I know, but still, you don't like to do it. I sound the horn at them, once, twice—and then I shout: "Hey, there, don't go round in your bare feet in these parts!" Then I start, but never a move out of them. Well, I just had to get out, and beat them away with a stick. That'll give you an idea of what a wild place it was," he concluded pathetically.

After a short silence he went on: "Now, of course, I don't count that as a road at all," he snorted contemptuously. "But that's what it was then. I can hardly believe myself, when I think of it, but then, what a torment it was! Eleven hours on the road. And only 20 kilometres to go. You'd never believe it."

"Eleven was nothing, Kostya," came from a tall chauffeur who was sitting on the window sill, swinging his long legs uneased in smart brown laced up boots. "Remember the time we went out at 7 in the morning and got in at 9 in the evening—no, 10 it was."

"There y'are," rejoined Kostya delightedly. "Here's Lissovsky still alive, he remembers it all."

"We dragged the Ford in with horses," prompted Lissovsky with a laugh.

"With horses!" Kostya interrupted. "That was nothing. Remember how eight of us dragged your car on ropes for about 2 miles. I was in the hospital for 3 weeks after that."

"All sorts of things happened."

Just at that moment Opochinsky caught sight of Otdelkin and motioned to a place beside him, but Otdelkin shook his head.

A short silence followed. The man who had been telling his story could not quieten down, he went on talking excitedly in low tones to Lissovsky.

Opochinsky stood up.

"Why did we start all this?" he broke out. "You all heard how our first comrades, well, you might call them pioneers, worked. What care they took of our transport! They were real shock brigaders! That's right, isn't it? But now you never see enthusiasm like that, nobody has any use for it."

He looked accusingly towards the far corner of the room, and Otdelkin noticed two chauffeurs sitting there watched Opochinsky out of drowsy eyes. Otdelkin knew them, they were the most inveterate slackers—Salov and Malkin.

"He'll swallow a chap at one bite," remarked Vassili Antonitch approvingly. He was glad that he had not been mistaken in Opochinsky, although it had been a risk. "One Putilov worker is worth three others, and even more," he boasted to himself.

"I'm a fitter, I'm a worker, just like you," Andrei continued. "I've been on all fronts myself and I've heard what comrade Lokotov's been saying here, and I shiver when I think of it. They only had cod to eat, they worked like beasts of burden—and still they worked. And what's it like now. Have we really forgotten the country and the extraordinary times we're living in."

8

As a "promoted worker," Opochinsky had been given a room for himself in a newly built house. It was a small room on the second floor. The windows gave out on White Stone Lake. It was a bright, sunny room. It was poorly furnished, but everything looked fresh, it smelt of newness and that peculiar strangeness that invites you to come in and make it cosy.

Opochinsky tramped up and down it with great satisfaction, touching the walls, stamping on the floor, and coughing. His voice rank hollow in it.

That evening Iglov called in. He sat down on the window sill and started to smoke, hanging out of the window.

"How are things going on in the Party nucleus," asked Andrei, never pausing in his occupation of moving the bed, the cupboard, the table to different corners. These had not been arranged to his liking. Everything was all right in the Party nucleus. Iglov gave monosyllabic replies. Then he crumpled the fag end, threw it out of the window and prepared to go.

"Well, we're near neighbors now," he said, with his hand already on the latch. "How's that?"

It seemed that Iglov had been taken on work in the town committee of the Party. He had spoken of this transfer once when they had been sitting on the steps of the barracks.

Opochinsky went downstairs and over to the garage. It was fortunate that the house was situated about 5 minutes walking distance from the garage. At the gate Andrei stopped before a three-ton car. Its radiator was rumpled, the left head-lamp was knocked to smithereens, pieces of broken glass lay under the wheels.

"Who did this?" Opochinsky actually paled as he looked at it. He went into the garage. Salov and Malkin were sitting on boxes and indulging like bosom friends in a filthy conversation about women.

Malkin took no notice of Opochinsky's question. Salov shrugged his shoulders and shouted indignantly:

"I nearly broke my neck in this rotten machine!"

"Your neck's your business," said Opochinsky dryly. "What I want to know about is the car."

"Never mind, never mind, I'm going to send in a complaint, there's danger, it's downright unsafe!"

Salov was talking absolute nonsense, a sign that he was really frightened but trying to hearten himself. Andrei gave him one scornful look and turned away: he could never bear the sight of a coward.

"I'll call a commission, that's what I'll do, and if it's you that's at fault," said Opochinsky in a threatening tone, "I'll make you pay for the repairs out of your own pocket."

He made another survey of the damage done: yes, it must have been headed on furiously to have received such a terrible knock. It had only been brought here a month ago, it was practically a new machine.

"Yes, this means you'll have to pay for the repairs out of your wages."

"It's not in the regulations," Solov objected, rather timidly. The other chap, Malkin, still took no notice of Opochinsky.

"I make my own regulations here."

So this was the kind of workers he had.

On the whole there was more work than it was possible to cope with in the garage. Opochinsky went over his staff and tore his hair: anybody who was too lazy to do anything at all went to be a driver. And the repair fitters! What things one saw here! That Sidelkin was foreman fitter was not surprising. The rest were straight off the grass, so to speak: until yesterday they had been barbers, bakers, stone breakers. So it simply came to this, that people came into the driving trade, hoping to find either a pack of fools or mountains of gold. Who could guess what they would be up to, these folk.

Where was the former Opochinsky. Until quite lately, it seemed, when he went up and down in his work, he had only minded his own business, and for the rest, he hadn't cared what happened. Now he got worried about the slightest thing. Well, and to tell the honest truth, who of us would bother about things that go on in our flats. Here was Andrei coming home, feeling some kind of anxiety and finding out suspicious, unpleasant things with his unerring scent.

For instance, Ipostassiev always had crowds of what he called friends coming to him. They would spend a long time in his room, never leaving it until almost daylight. There were somehow too many of these visitors: Andrei did not like the look of it. Not an evening passed without this crowd, although, to tell the truth, they made no noise or rows of any kind.

Then there was room No. 7, where one of the employees lived. Every day some strange people would visit him. It was really surprising that he ever came to work. Were they also "friends?" They came and went without delaying, like water. Often when he came home from the garage late at night, Andrei would meet one of these visitors just leaving.

Andrei told Iglov. The latter was up to his neck in work and usually returned home about midnight. No matter how he tried, he could not conceal the fact that he was desperately tired.

"So it's like that," he said throwing himself down on the leather couch. "You should speak to Otdelkin about it."

It was really not Otdelkin's business at all, but Opochinsky had got used to going to Vassili Antonitch about his affairs.

"They must be trading in 'devil's milk,' remarked Otdelkin, offering his cigarettes to his pal. The Sukhoum tobacco was all finished now. "Nothing more or less than that."

"You mean vodka!"

"Sure!"

Opochinsky was dumbfounded. He was no saint himself, but it seemed to him impossible that here in a town where a dry law had been put in force, there should be bootleggers, particularly right under his very nose.

"Yes, exactly, bootleggers," Otdelkin rejoined calmly. "And if there was free sale of drink here, they'd have nothing to do. You keep an eye on them."

Sidelkin was behaving like a fool as usual. Opochinsky noticed that Sidelkin was trying to take advantage of their former friendship. When a fellow asks for leave several days running, or simply doesn't come into work at all! Opochinsky was no child, he understood perfectly well that a little more and the garage would be ruined. Well, that's the new manager for you, they'd say! Get the place full of his own pals, and a fine lot they are, too!

Andrei resolved to have a good talk with Sidelkin and not let anything pass. But it so happened that Sidelkin himself called once at about one o'clock in the morning.

"How did you find me?" Andrei remembered well that he had never told Sidelkin his new address.

"A pal of mine told me. Maybe you know him —Ipostassiev?"

"I suppose you're going there for vodka?" asked Andrei, purposely indifferent.

"Eh, vodka. That's in room No. 7, and at Ipostassiev's we—you know!" and he made a gesture as if dealing out cards.

"You should come in sometime: he'll give you tea, you can have something with it, a drop of vodka. And he makes such jam, eh, boys! But, of course, it's all on the q. t.. There's a fellow for you, get everything ready."

"He's a damned fool!" remarked Andrei as indifferently as before. "Nothing but trouble. Does he play, too?"

"God forbid!" yawned Sidelkin. "He just gets 5 per cent of the winnings."

Excellent! Here under one's very nose, a gambling den. Opochinsky stared fixedly at Sidelkin for a few moments and tried to control his desire to get up and give him a whack on the ear.

But he kept a tight hand on himself. Just to think that he'd chosen to travel with this fellow! Fellows like that should be weeded out ruthlessly, so that not a trace remained.

Sidelkin looked round and touched the window frame.

"Mine is a better room than this."

"Yours?"

"Well, of course," Sidelkin chuckled triumphantly. "I won it from a technical expert here. He lost everything, had nothing to play with, he didn't want to lose his watch. 'Well, and how about your room?' I asked. He thought and thought, see, and would you believe it?—agreed. So I won it from him. What funny folks there are anyhow."

Opochinsky's hair seemed to stand up on his head. What was happening here, anyway. Ganibling, and accommodation, a priceless treasure here, as stakes! Where was he?

Sidelkin, muttering in his beard, went over to the cupboard, flung it open and slammed it to again. He raised a corner of the blanket on the bed and dropped it. In general he was behaving like an inspector.

"Well," began Andrei in a dry tone, as if he was dictating to Sidelkin. "I could, of course, give you into the right hands in about three minutes, you and your gamblers. But I'm treating you as a Putilov worker. Cards! Well, that's your business, your funeral. But you've got to be at work on the stroke, remember. You'd better chuck your slacking. I've got to make you a model for the others."

Sidelkin went out without saying anything definite. Andrei sat thinking by the window. He could hear the noise coming from the power

station. There were no explosions today, evidently they had enough rock for today.

"You can drink, but you've got to do your job, too." Andrei was thinking. But the trouble was that Sidelkin had no idea how to do his job.

9

Opochinsky decided to start with the workers at present. So, on one pretext or another, he called up the drivers, fitters, tractor men and sounded them. He had a particular faculty of knowing, by some trifling thing, some insignificant point, some small action, the kind of man he was dealing with.

When all was said and done, things were not quite hopeless. It was too much to expect that none of the 80 workers would be rascals. Such things don't happen. The majority were ordinary folks such as you find everywhere. If things could be put right with them, then the garage would be saved.

Sometimes Andrei went over in his own mind the people he knew in the Putilov works. Average people. They only come to the front when people troubled about them sufficiently. They were working folk, the ones who bore the burden and no one thought of regarding them in any other light.

Once when Andrei was speaking to Lokotiev he said: "Our people think that every man is needed here, no matter what he thinks. It's nonsense. Here we need suitable people, not grafters, nor vultures, nor the kind that would sacrifice everything to save his own skin. There's no collective spirit here, that's what's the matter."

As Opochinsky said this he seemed to see before him a fellow who had come here ready to grab everything, to whom it was all one whether he killed his friend, or made him dead drunk, or robbed him at cards. This fellow came here with an uneasy conscience, a restless eye, with something up his sleeve.

Yes, there were people like that. They seemed hateful to Andrei now. It never even occurred to him to recollect what he himself had been when he first arrived. He had not been a drunkard or a robber, but that was not the point. He had been attacked by the "Gold Fever." For a short time, it is true, but still he had suffered from it and this he ought not to forget.

And Andrei had forgotten all this. He had already begun to think that he had always been what he was now, that no one could reproach him and that he had a perfect right to the respect with which he was now treated.

As for Lokotiev, it appeared that he was one of those who had left home at an early age to fight in the Civil War. At 15 he had been among the fighters of the unforgettable Vaman army and followed its hard road with never a word of complaint.

It was easy to understand then, how he could stand this without complaining. When he had arrived at this deserted place and seen the work that was to be done, he remembered those hungry, barefoot torturing marches along the Black Sea coast.

"What do they know?" he said contemptuously. "They've seen nothing yet. They grew up quietly, no hurry for them, but whoever went through 1918 and 1919—looks at things differently."

"How about Lissovsky?" asked Andrei remembering the smart looking driver.

"He was with the Vaman army, as well. He was one of the officers, and then he worked on communications—he's a fine chap, although he comes from the gentry, but still, that does happen. We were demobilized about the same time. He says to me: 'Well, Kostya, what am I going to do now. I was mobilized at 16.' He's a bit older than me. 'I'd like to rest from the army, but I never learned a trade of any kind.' As to me, by that time I'd managed to get to know something about cars, just now and again, in snatches, and whenever the driver was off sick, I'd take the car and drive people, sometimes Lissovsky. Well, I got used to it. I can learn to drive any make of car in about two ticks."

"That's how it is with me," put in Opochinsky, seeing Lokotiev from a new point of view. Lokotiev was his own kind.

"So that was how it was," continued the driver, yawning and slapping his sunburned chest. "Vanka Lissovsky came along with me, of course. Wherever I went as a driver, I took him along as assistant. There are times when no assistant is needed: still, if I insist, they let him come. That's how we live. Lately we ran taxis together in Leningrad."

"And could he do it? On his own."

"He learnt. He's that sort. It's hard for him to learn, but once he learns! He's like a conjuror. The machine does everything but stand on its hind legs and beg. He plays on it like on the piano. And for tricky work, he's got a real gift."

"But with regard to the Party, it's a blind wall, as we would say," went on Loktiev in the tone used between Party members. "He wouldn't join. And he was rewarded for his work at the front, you know, and got a prize in the municipal garage. He's done rationalization work, and he's an inventor, got the best of records. He could write to any of our Faman fellows any time. But he prefers to stay with me." There was a note of combined ridicule and tenderness in Lokotiev's voice. "In that way he's a bit of an aristocrat. He wants to be invited. No, they might think I was trying to stick myself in. To push himself. Nobody would think such a thing of him!"

"That's no good," remarked Andrei in a preoccupied tone, as if listening to his own thoughts. "If you're our kind, why don't you join the Party."

"I've been at him about it for 8 years now. Exactly: why don't you join, I say."

Andrei went back to his office, turning over in his mind his conversation with Lokotiev.

"If you're one of us, why don't you join?" the words applied to Andrei himself. He would have liked to forget them, troublesome reminders, but they never ceased to bother him. "He wants to be invited!"

The clerk in the office handed him a letter from the Trust. It said that the gap in the plan regarding the transporting of the ore from the quarries got wider and wider from day to day, that new lorries could only be sent by autumn and that some way out of the difficulty must be found at once.

The manager of the garage must take the responsibility of dealing with the situation, the causes of which were according to the Trust: lack of discipline, the constant break-downs of the cars, and the snail's pace at which repairs were carried on.

The letter was precisely and sensibly written, no exception could be taken to anything in it—but there was nothing new in it, either.

Andrei folded it up, stood for a moment, thinking, and then left the shop. A wave of disgust with everything swept over him. The reason for it he could not have explained. It was simply that he was overwhelmed with the knowledge of how much remained to be done, that he would never be able to cope with it all. He had enough strength in his hands to take the spanner and screw a bolt tight. But this was a case where he would have to remake the whole foundation on which the garage stood and was still somehow managing to exist.

Only now after he had received this letter setting out the facts so pitilessly, Andrei realized how little he had done since he had taken over the garage.

"How did that happen?" he asked himself. And found no answer to the question.

The only communist he knew in the garage was Lokotiev. He would have to call him aside and talk things over with him. How people changed! Would Andrei ever have thought of asking help from anyone. Had he not always managed his own affairs?

Lokotiev never trusted anyone with his lorry. He did everything for it, down to the last trifle. Just now he was busy with the crank bearings. Lokotiev's hands moved like clockwork, they seemed to know their business no worse than he did. The bearings were gripped in the vice. Filings settled on them like gold dust. That was how Lokotiev worked. Opochinsky looked at the bearings with respect.

Lokotiev read the letter from the Trust, released the vices and blew away the filings.

"I'd like to have a chat with you."

"This very minute," Lokotiev agreed.

They went down the corridor together. The fitters at their benches cast mocking glances after them, as much as to say: "Look at him, he's 'one of themselves' now."

Lokotiev asked the clerk to go and take a turn in the fresh air, asked Opochinsky to sit down and settled himself to listen. It looked as though Andrei had been called and that the real manager was this pock-marked, easy going fellow.

'Let's see, there are 21 drivers. Seven tractor men, 18 fitters. I'm speaking about our folks, the workmen in the garage, 28 altogether, aren't there. And yet we must get out of this mess somehow."

Andrei was ashamed to admit that he did not know from which end to begin. Maybe he should go to see Otedlkin about it. No, he had exploited Vassili Antonitch enough. He tried to conceal his bewilderment and began in a roundabout way:

"It was all so easy in wartime. As easy as saying Jack Robinson. And here you'd want to be born with three heads instead of one!"

"Here, of course, it's quite a different thing," said Lokotiev absently. He was busy with his own thoughts. 'But let's count up: three Party members, two Young Communists. Now, let's take just the good workers: there's Lissovsky, one, and then—one, two, three, four—well, four. Why—three, six—seven altogether. Seven out of 75! We must get out of the hole."

Opochinsky scratched his pencil over the inkstand.

"Supposing we mobilize all the good workers. All the skilled men, that is. We'll get another seven or eight.—O-oh—that's already half!"

"Fifteen out of 75. Is that what you call half?"

"Half," repeated Lokotiev with conviction. "Only a few, but good ones, and the other 60 are the 'every man for himself' kind, just stragglers. But we'll get our own back."

He was very assured, but his assurance was not enough for Opochinsky.

"My own intuition warned me that there was a regular Bacchanalia in our garage," said Andrei, adopting a high flown way of speaking as he always did on these occasions.

"This didn't surprise me," he said, waving the letter. "I knew about it before, but the letter shook me up a bit, I must admit."

Lokotiev was again preoccupied. He was idly turning over the pages of a clean account book. The clerk glanced in through the glass door, and went away again.

"Let's go into the Union, the town party committee, and bring up the question of an extra day of work. That wouldn't be a bad idea, eh?"

Opochinsky could find nothing to say against this. It seemed the only way out. He received the suggestion in silence, however. Otherwise, it would appear that he, Andrei Opochinsky, had proved helpless without the young driver. This he would never allow. His authority as a Putilov worker was dearer to him than anything else.

"It's all because I'm not a Party member," that was the conclusion he came to, at last. "I'll have to call on Lokotiev for help often, I can see."

There was nothing impotent about Andrei's brain, though. No. He was a clever chap and he understood well enough that as time went on it would become more and more difficult to play a lone hand, a naked man up on a naked earth.

10

"It's your own business of course, you're the boss here," Lokotiev went on at last. He had been thinking over what Opochinsky had told him. "In your place, though, I'd be very careful. They'll accuse you of too heavy a hand."

Not long before that Andrei had called up several of the drivers and explained in a few words what the gap in the industrial and financial plan of the garage meant.

After this, they managed, with great difficulty to secure four signatures to the following resolution, drawn up by Opochinsky:

"We, the workers of the garage of the White-Stone Mining Trust, fully admit to the deficiency with regard to the unloading of the ore. We think that this was due to lack of discipline and insufficiency of rolling stock. We regard it as necessary to organize an extra day of free, unpaid, work, in order to make up for this disgraceful delay in fulfilling the programme."

"They'll accuse you of bullying them," repeated Lokotiev. 'Thats no way to do, Andrei Ilyitch, I'm telling you."

After a while Lissovsky came up, then the chairman and the secretary of the Workers' Committee. They sat for a while, exchanged a few casual remarks about who was on duty, and who on leave today. It did not look as though there was going to be much activity there.

It was time to go and open the meeting. A steadily rising murmur of discontent came from the Lenin Corner. It was always like that when they were waiting for someone a long time. Opochinsky had already decided that if the proposed extra day of free work did not come off, he would clear off to Leningrad without saying a word to anyone. And who would care to stay here after a mudslinging.

The Lenin Corner was unbearably stuffy. What else could be expected, when there were so many people that they had to sit about on the urns that held the cigarette stubs. When they were turned over on their sides three could sit on them. What a crowd was there!

The chairman of the Workers' Committee picked up a little table standing in the middle of the room and carried it nearer to the door, stepping on everybody's feet as he went.

The people livened up, began to talk and shuffle about, as always happens just before they finally quiet down.

Salov and Malkin pushed their way into the room and hung about near the door.

Regardless of the fact that the meeting had already begun, Salov growled out loudly—"Ephim, I told you so, they're late."

"Sh-sh-h!" sounded through the room; but this pair knew their job. They sat down on the floor at Opochinsky's feet. Lissovsky and Lokotiev sat on each side of him. They were the only men in the garage who looked down on this pair. They had never, to anyone's knowledge, even passed the time of day with Salov and Malkin.

"Ush, you parasites," thought Salov to himself. "Sticking round the manager now. We workers don't do that, it's only you can do it."

It was the first time he had seen the new manager at close quarters. Andrei's face was disfigured by a scar. This had almost disappeared now, but when his face paled, as it did when he raised his voice, the scar stood out blood red. At these times his face was frightful to see.

"The face of a devil," Salov thought triumphantly. "No decent chap would have a face like that."

Malkin sat silent as always, his chin resting on his knees—rocking backwards and forwards.

"Or it happens that I'm coming in through the garage gates and suddenly I see a lorry. Whose is it? The radiator is turned nearly inside out, the headlights broken to bits, the spring has something wrong with. . . . How could it have got smashed up like that. It looks as though it's been done purposely, as if somebody drove the car into a wall or a post. Well, I'll have it mended at the driver's expense, but the machine itself costs money! And the ore is lying there idle! You've got to think of that. It's not just a matter of making the driver pay 70 or 80 rubles."

"Ephim!"—broke out Salov, in a serious tone. "He means it. Is that the way to behave to the proletariat?" he yelped.

And, as always happens with people who are accustomed to doing whatever comes into their

„Lokotiev asked the clerk to go and take a turn in the fresh air, asked Opochinsky to sit down and settled himself down to listen."

heads, he reared himself on his bow legs and turned to Opochinsky.

"You'd better give me the 80 rubles back, you, standing there wiping your fingers on your handkerchief, you damned bureaucrat!"

To his intense disappointment, Opochinsky only gave a slight inattentive smile. This was more than Salov could stand. He flew at the manager, and beside himself with rage, grabbed him by the neck.

Lokotiev gave Salov a slight push. Then the latter lost all sense of what he was doing, shook Opochinsky and flung back an arm for his usual blow. But Opochinsky, although he was about 12 years Salov's senior, caught the latter by the wrists with extraordinary agility, twisted him round and held him by the waist to prevent him from falling to the ground.

Sidelkin was watching from his corner, anticipating a row. Malkin also tried to get closer to Opochinsky, eyeing him cautiously. Lissovsky and Lokotiev were, however, ready for anything. Lokotiev winked at Lissovsky and they pulled Malkin away. Unlike Salov he got worked up slowly, but came to himself quickly.

The audience was, of course, interested in this way of putting a question, as one might call it, and was already shuffling excitedly. Each man began talking loudly to his neighbor. In the front row two men got to their feet, took Salov by the arms and dragged him relentlessly from the room. Opochinsky watched him with the same half amused expression on his face, as much as to say: "It wasn't a bad thing at all, my lad, that you poked your nose in where you weren't invited. Thanks for that, anyhow."

Then he said aloud, screwing up his eyes and trying to make his voice even harsher than usual: "You saw that. There it is for you, the gap in the plan! Look at it well, feel it all over. Yesterday he smashed up a lorry on purpose. Go and have a look at it, if you want to. Today he tackles me when I'm carrying out my duties. What would he do tomorrow. It's people like these who prevent us from carrying out our industrial and financial plan. I've got to know the personnel of the garage now and honestly, they're something to be proud of! but pups of that kind will only spoil the plan."

He evidently expected that by playing on the workers' self-esteem, he would be able to make them do whatever he wanted. But the meeting

quickly recovered from its excitement and was already listening quietly to what the new manager might have to say.

Sidelkin was laughing, as if everything was going on according to some scheme of his own. Alongside of him a new worker stood, leaning against the jamb of the door. He was one of a party just sent from the Putilov Works in Leningrad. The works had taken White Stone under their patronage, as shock brigade construction work.

It was plain that the Leningrad man liked to show off. He wore a tan leather jacket, practically new, lined with white sheepskin and a cossack cap of the palest shade of grey wool, and this in spite of the warm weather. In his hand he twirled a china pipe with a silk tassel on the mouthpiece.

"Where have I seen him?" Opochinsky was wondering.

The meeting was waiting. Then Opochinsky decided to do a surprising thing. He pulled off his blouse, then the yellowish net shirt and said loudly, impatiently:

"Just give my back one rub with your sleeve, you'll see what we went through."

Then, without waiting, he grabbed the sleeve of his blouse, and rubbed it over his spine, hard. His face was red from the effort. The skin of his back reddened for a moment, then came out in white spots and in about 15 seconds, great purple, almost black, weals could be plainly seen down the back and across it.

"His excellency, General Sidorin, flogged me for an hour and a half, and never a sound out of me!" He began, as if with envy. "You never saw anything like that, you stayed by the stove, kept yourself warm, your heads don't ache. It's a shame to think of it! Eh, boys!"

His hearers shuffled a little, but no one spoke. Lokotiev gathered up the blouse from the floor and handed it to Andrei, who began to put himself straight, without raising his eyes.

"What a lot of indifference there is here," he began, in less assured tones than before. "Yes, they're right about our Russian folks, when they say—"

What exactly is said about Russians, he never told them, because at that moment the Leningrad newcomer in the leather coat came up to the table. With the pretended self control usually assumed by a newcomer in unfamiliar surroundings, he began to speak.

"I'm called Karaulov, and I've been sent here by our Putilov workers," he said in a somewhat condescending tone, waving his fist about.

"Well, to put it in a few words, I'm not to blame for your delay in fulfilling the plan, since I only came three days ago, but still, I'll agree to do this extra day's work you're wanting. Where am I supposed to go?"

Again there were signs of movement among the audience.

Nobody stood up, however. Again they began to talk, as if the meeting was over and there was nothing to do but chat. Two loafers who were sitting near Opochinsky, began a loud and extremely frank conversation about family affairs, interspersing it with the choicest expressions. No one would imagine that a meeting was being held and an important question being discussed.

Another few minutes and Andrei would have jumped up and cursed this hopeless crowd, and then rushed out, banging the door behind him furiously, never to return. That was the kind of fellow he was.

And suddenly Lokotiev pushed his way, sideways, into the middle of the room, and stood, fixing his narrow leather belt.

"Well, you've got to be a pretty low down swine," he began forcefully, playing with the heavy metal tip of the belt. "You've got to be a regular dirty dog to sit looking round at a time like this. I swear I'll not go back to the garage till I can carry three times my share of ore! I've never had to give my 'Autocar' a single tap with the hammer. It's worked without breakdowns, does its job without a mistake. Look here, boys, you can't go on like that. Take Vanya Lissovsky—"

"Sure enough," said Vanya, without waiting for him to finish.

"It can't be that we don't understand what's required of us," began Karaulov in the same lofty tone. The tone itself was the result, apparently, of his consciousness of his high calling as a Putilov man. 'We Lemingrad boys, of course, we'll all come out like one man."

"Well, come on, then, come on out like one man!" shouted Salov hysterically. He had managed to creep in again. "Where were you, when we were all dying of scurvy. When we had nothing to eat but rotten cabbage. Where were you, you little fop?"

Karaulov recovered rapidly from his momentary bewilderment and started towards Salov. Just then Malkin touhed Karaulov's elbow.

"Excuse me!" Malkin said threateningly. "And don't you go gabbing about what never happened, Salov."

He had changed suddenly. Neither Opochinsky nor Lokotiev, nor, probably, any of the others, could understand what was going on in him. Salov spoke in a loud whisper, but Malkin kept silence, his head bent, his body rocking to and fro. Salov went on with his angry, disconnected talk. As usual, Malkin made no rejoinders.

"It wasn't quite right, what I did," Opochinsky declared, trying to make himself heard above the din. "General Sidorin, of course, has nothing to do with it. But—it was just that I couldn't stand it—having to say such things here, as if you didn't know what you were here for, or as if this place didn't mean a damn thing to you."

"To hell with the place!" shouted Salov provokingly, but no one took any notice. He started to talk to Malkin again in loud whispers. Malkin sat, gloomy and inattentive as before.

Then Opochinsky, having straightened his shirt and trousers and pulled his belt tight, began in a voice that evidenced a desire to have done with an unpleasant duty as quickly as possible:

'Who's for organizing an extra day's work?" A few hands were raised.

"The majority!" shouted Lissovsky excitedly. "Everything's all right."

He would like to have wiped them out, crumpled them up, those others. He could not believe that the extra day would not come off.

The workers began to grumble.

"Don't act the goat!" Lokotiev said shortly to his comrade. "We're about as far from majority as we are from Murmansk."

"Yes, as far from a majority as we are from Murmansk," repeated Opochinsky bitterly. "Ehe,

boys, what swine you are after all! Why was I ever sent to this cursed garage!"

He gathered up his papers briskly, stuffed them in the pocket of his jacket and, pushing past the workers in silence, rushed out into the air.

A heavy sweat broke out on his face at once and rolled down to his chin.

He heard desperate shouts from the Lenin Corner. He glanced through the window. The workers were crowding round the table, signing their names on a great sheet of paper. A few remained standing against the walls, watching the crowd expectantly.

Andrei felt that it was all the same to him now. He made a gesture of disgust, walked down the steps and started off towards the lake. Not far away it lay clear and distinct in the indifferent Polar sunlight.

It seemed to Andrei that the noise from the Lenin Corner was following him, it was louder, surely, and waxed more furious with every moment. There was no escape from it.

11

All night he tossed and turned on his soft and lonely bed.

It was not yet four o'clock when he got up, locked the door behind him and went downstairs.

He did not dream of seeing anyone in the garage just now. He tried the door rather timidly at first, and it opened slowly and without the faintest creak. To his astonishment, people were swarming round the cars and under them. There were fitters at only a few of the benches.

Lissovsky, Lokotiev, Malkin and three drivers whom Andrei did not know were there. That was nothing. They were just the ones who had voted for the extra day at yesterday's meeting.

"And where's the new fellow?" asked Andrei. He could not see Karaulov anywhere about, but he remembered the smart looking fellow very well. It seemed that the boys had sent him to the barracks where the garage workers lived.

Malkin was messing about near his car. Funny chap, no one had persuaded or obliged him to come into this. He had come himself and was working no worse than the rest.

Opochinsky hurried off to where he supposed Karaulov would be.

He found him in No. 7 barrack. Andrei stood by the door so as not to be seen. The whole of the right side of the barrack could be seen from here. A file of cots stretched to the farthest wall.

The workers were just waking up, turning over on their sides, rubbing their eyes, when the Leningrad boy shouted at the top of his voice:

"At two o'clock this morning the drivers of our garage"— here he gave the few names—"fitters, loaders, started to catch up with the plan. Just now they're preparing the lorries so as to be ready to start for the quarries at six."

He was silent for a moment, straightened his shoulders, pulled down his leather jacket and added in a completely assured tone:

"That's a fact. Until the gap in the plan is filled up—they won't come home, I give you my word of honor as a Putilov man."

Then Andrei froze like a stone. For the workers began to get up, coughing, and getting dressed, though it was still a long time until work would begin. The Leningrad fellow came out. He did not see Opochinsky in the dark corner of the little corridor. After he had gone they began to talk in the barrack room, a lazy morning conversation, interspersed with loud yawns.

"To hell with him, we'll go along now—although my turn starts in the evening."

"Started at two, what a hurry they're in?"

"Just to show us up."

"Making us feel ashamed!"

"And the car is gone for repairs."

"We'll have to get it ready quickly, all the same, it's a bit awkward."

Then the conversation turned on Opochinsky.

"He says nothing, keeps his mouth shut, did you see his back?"

"His back! It's like a three-mile map."

"That's just what it is, a map, all drawn out as plain as a pikestaff."

"But all these old Party men are alike, they all came in for floggings," said a rosy cheeked giant with a soft, flowing moustache.

And he began to tell them a confused sort of tale about some Party man or other.

Opochinsky gave a little embarrassed cough, covering his mouth with his hand. So they took him for a Bolshevik and an old one at that. That's no good, Andrei, you've lain by too long in your non-Party state.

He went back to the garage. Lokotiev's "Autocar" was already grunting in a far corner. It fairly shone with cleanliness. Lokotiev had rubbed the wind-shield of the car with benzine and washed the seat with warm water. It looked as fresh as if its green paint had only been put on yesterday. That Lokotiev fellow, why, he took as much care of the lorry as if it was a girl.

Malkin was doing something with the jack. The chassis dropped ever so slightly and rested, at last, lightly on the tires. Malkin pumped once or twice just to make sure the tires were as firm as apples. Everything was in perfect order.

At a quarter to six Otdelkin came round to the garage. When he arrived the garage was nearly full. Andrei was tramping up and down, biting his lips in agitation. Almost the whole of the second shift had come in, as well as the first. He could not understand why it was, when only a bare quarter of the men had voted for the extra day.

At five to six Lokotiev sounded a blast on his horn and drove through the garage from one end to the other. He drew up at the gate and again sounded his horn. Its relentless screech held for a long time, as if awaiting the others. No one replied. Only Lissovsky followed Lokotiev, and then Malkin moved out. Then the whole shed seemed to get moving.

Behind the lorries, the "Caterpillar" tractors came rattling. So the tractor men were going out for the extra day, too. That wasn't bad, they were the most backward of all.

Andrei went up to Lokotiev's lorry and put his hand on the side of the car.

"Lokotiev—say a few words, will you?"

Lokotiev smiled, nodded and helped Andrei into the body of the lorry. The cars were already lining up, Lokotiev's "Autocar" was keeping them all back. From the one and only car left on the jack, Salov's flattened face looked out.

"Happy days! Have a nice ride! Write home, won't you?" he shouted, catching Andrei's eye.

An impatient hooter screeched from the tail.

"Let's bear this in mind!" shouted Andrei. He had caught sight of the luxurious moustaches of the fellow who had spoken of him as an old Bolshevik that morning. He felt that his voice was heard even by the very last tractor.

"Let's agree to fetch back our cars only when when we've got rid of what's blocking our way. We've got to remember this. And all the cars have to be in A.1. condition!" Then he bent over towards Lokotiev and told him to start. The lorry glided importantly past Otdelkin, who was standing at the entrance, gripping his satchel. Otdelkin smiled at Opochinsky.

Lokotiev's car turned and stood at the side of the road to make way for the others. And now they were all out on the road that was paved with chips and shavings. They were off to the mountains, to the quarries that were choking under the weight of the ore. And although the cars and tractors roared like a million horse power, all could hear the blast on the far side of the lake about 22 kilometres away.

M. Sholokhov

Turning Virgin Soil[1]

Translation from Russian

According to plan the area to be ploughed in Gremyachy Log in the spring of 1930 was 482 hectares, of which 110 were virgin soil. In the autumn 643 hectares had been ploughed and 2210 hectares of winter crops had been sown by individual farmers. It had been decided to divide up the total sown area among grain and oil-bearing plants in the following way: wheat—667 hectares, corn—210, barley—108, oats—50, millet—65, sunflowers—45, hemp—13. In all 1,325 hectares plus 91 of sandy soil under watermelon and similar crops. They stretched away to the south, from Gremyachy Log to the Ujachina Gully.

A public production conference, attended by more than forty of the most active workers on the collective farm, was held on the twelfth of February to discuss the creation of a stock of seed, the question of individual output in field-work, the repairing of implements in time for the sowing, and the alloting of part of the forage stocks for the spring work in the fields.

Acting on the advice of Yakov Lukitch, Davidov suggested sowing seven poods (1 pood = 16½ kilogr.—Trans.) of wheat to a hectare—4,669 poods in all. A deafening uproar followed this suggestion. Everyone shouted at once, no one wanted to listen to anyone else, the windows of the cottage rattled and shivered.

"Couldn't you go one better still."

"Hope you won't find it too much for you?"

"Never sowed like that on grey sandy soil in my life."

"It'd make a cat laugh."

"Five poods—and that'd be no joke."

"Well, five and a half, say."

"We've got as much of that fat land as would go in a bird's eye with an awl—land you could sow 7 poods to the desyatin on (desyatin = 1.1 hectare.—Trans.). We'd have to manure it by letting the cows graze there first. Why didn't the government think of it?"

"Maybe over there in front of Papyuskin Barracks, those fields."

"Ho-ho. Plough up all the grassiest spots, eh? Talking like a fool."

"You had better discuss—how many kilos of wheat to a hectare are wanted?"—interposed Davidov at last.

"Don't muddle us up with your kilos. Let's count either by measure or by poods."

"Citizens, citizens, order. Whew. They've gone crazy, the devils. Let me say a word," bawled the leader of Brigade Number Two, Lyubishkin.

"Have as many as you like."

"Uhu, what fellows, blast them. Regular brutes ... Ignat. What you roaring about like a great bullock. Blue in the face straining yourself . . ."

"You're foaming at the mouth yourself like a mad dog."

"Let Lyubishkin speak."

"You'd lose all patieence with them, it's enough to deafen you."

It looked as though the conference was to end in howls. At least when the rowdiest of them were beginning to grow a bit hoarse, Davidov, contrary to his usual custom, roared on:

"Is this the way to hold a conference? Whoever heard the like? What's all the yelling about? Everybody speak in his turn, the rest hold their tongues. You can't try this bandit business on here. Got to have some sense," and he went on in a quieter tone. "You should learn from the working class, how to hold a meeting in an orderly way. When we have a meeting in our workshop, for instance, or club, why it's held in a regular, orderly way—that's a fact. If one fellow gets up to speak the rest listen and here you all shout at once and what the devil you're saying you can't make head or tail of."

"If anyone makes as much as a sound while another fellow's speaking, I'll take him and give him hell, I swear it. Knock him silly, I will."

Lyubishkin stood up, and shook a heavy oak bar at them, laughing at the same time.

"You'll cripple us all then, by the time the meeting's over," said Demka Ushakov.

The audience laughed good humoredly, lit their pipes and settled down to the serious discussion of the quantity to be sown. It turned out that there was nothing to argue or shout about. The first to speak was Yakov and all that had seemed contradictory in the proposals melted away.

"Strained yourself shouting, so you did, and for no reason at all. Now, why did Comrade Davidov suggest seven poods? Clear enough, it's our general opinion. Aren't we going to sort it all out and clean it in a trier? Of course we are. Will there be any wastage? Of course there will. And maybe there'll be a good bit of wastage, too, because with some farmers, seeds are bad luck to them, you can't tell the good grain from bad. They're all mixed up together, and so they get sown together, too. Well, and supposing there's something over, it won't go to waste, will it? We'll get the horses and poultry to clean it up."

So the meeting decided at last on 7 poods. Things did not go so well, however, when it came to the question of the amount of work assigned to each plough. There were so many conflicting opinions that Davidov was bewildered for a moment.

Agafon Dubstov, the heavy, pock-marked leader of Number 3 Brigade, started on to Davidov.

"How're you going to plan out my ploughing for the year when you can't tell what sort of a spring we'll have?" he shouted. Can you tell when the snow'll melt and what sort of soil'll be underneath it—wet or dry? You'd think you could see through the ground, the way you talk."

"Well, what have you to suggest, Dubstov?" asked Davidov.

[1] An extract from M. Sholokhov's new novel *Turning Virgin Soil.*

"I suggest you don't spoil any paper and don't start writing things before it's time. Sowing-time'll come round and then we'll see."

"How's it you a brigade-leader and you make objections to the plan all the time? Maybe it doesn't seem necessary to you?"

"You can't tell beforehand what'll be," said Yakov Lukitch, coming unexpectedly to Dubstov's support. "How're you going to fix the average amount of work? For instance you have three pair of steady old bulls to your plough, and I've got three-year-olds, not reached their full strength yet. How can I keep up with you in the ploughing? Can't be done."

Here Kondrat Maidannikov broke in:

"That's a funny thing to hear from the manager of the Ostrovnov farm. How'll you work without a plan? Just come day, go-day, eh? I'll never lift my hand from the plough and you'll be lying warming your back in the sun, and we'll both get the same pay at the end? That'll be fine for you, Yakov Lukitch."

"Well, Kondrat Christoforovitch—and how'll you even up bullock-strength and soil? You've got soft soil and I've got hard: you've got low land and mine's on a mound. Now, just explain me this, since you're so clever."

"We'll set one quantity for soft ground and another for hard. The bulls can be paired off equally. Everything can be considered, don't you tell me."

"Ushakov wants to speak."

"Come on."

"I'd like to say this—we'll be needing the cattle and we always start feeding hard fodder a month before sowing: we give 'em good hay, corn, barley. And there's a question, I'd like to ask, how do we stand as regards fodder?"

'We'll talk about the cattle afterwards. Just now it's beside the point. The question of the average amount of daily ploughing has got to be decided first. How many hectares of hard ground, how many to a plough, how many to a sower."

"Sowers are different, too. I can't do as much with one sowing-machine as I would do with another."

"That's true. Well, make your suggestions. And you, citizen, why don't you say something? You belong to the active group, and still I haven't heard a word out of you yet."

Demid Molchun looked at Davidov in astonishment for a moment and then replied in a deep voice.

"I agree."

"With what?"

"That we must plough, I suppose . . . and sow."

"Well?"

"That's all."

"All?"

"M-m-m"

"So that's what we call talking things over."

Davidov smiled and added something that was drowned in the general laughter. Grandpa Shchukar began to explain:

"We call him *Molchun* (the Silent one) down at the farm, Comrade Davidov. He's been like that all his life, never speaks, except to mutter some thing if there's terrible great need for it. That's why his wife left him. He's not a stupid lad for a cossack, but what you might call a fool, or if you want to put it kinder, a bit daft-like. Or as if somebody had hit him with a sack of coal in his childhood. I remember him as a lad, a snotty little fellow, no good for anything, ran about without his trousers and didn't show any signs of cleverness, just grew up and held his tongue all the time. Why in the old days the priest at Lubyan wouldn't let him go to Communion all on account of that. At confession he covered Demid with black shawl—it was Lent, the seventh week, I mind—and asked him: Do you steal, my son?' and Demid says nothing. 'D'you wander in sin?' Not a word out of him. 'D'you smoke tobacco? D'you practice adultery with women?' Demid says nothing. All he had to say was 'Guilty, father, I'm a sinful man, father,' and he'd get absolution at once."

"Aw, shut up there, you," a voice came from the back and several men laughed.

"I'll finish this very minute. And Demid, of course, just snuffles and gapes like a sheep at a new gate. And the holy father was at his wits' end, was struck all of a heap with fright, the cassack on him fair shook with fright, but he still went on asking: 'Maybe you've coveted someone else's wife, or his favorite ass or his cattle?' And so he went on with the rest of the Gospels. And Demid held his tongue. And what could he say anyway?"

"Put an end to it, Grandpa. This tale has nothing to do with our business," Davidov ordered sternly.

"Yes, it has, I'm coming to that now. That's only the beginning. Another minute. Interrupted me, you did—eh, curse you. I've forgotten what I was saying, God help me. Blast you all. I remember now," Grandpa Shchukar clapped his hand to his head and rattled off a string of curses as if out of a machine gun. "Yes, that's it, he got up to the part about coveting another man's wife, there was the tobacco, and as for the ass, what was he to do about that, or the other holy beasts. Maybe he'd have coveted it, as he had no horse on his farm, but we don't breed 'em round here, and Demid never seen one in his life. And I ask you, dear citizens, where'd we get asses, anyhow? Never been seen here a hundred years and more. A tiger or an ass—or a camel either."

"Going to shut up now?" asked Nagulnov, "or will I have to drag you out of here?"

"Let Grandpa have his say. Time enough," said Rasmetnov, who dearly loved a joke and a good story.

Grandpa was granted another couple of minutes and then, swallowing his words, concluded:

"Happen that's why he kept his mouth shut, no one knows. And the priest was that surprised. Pushed his face into Demidov's under the black shawl and asked: 'Are you dumb or what,' and Demid up and says, to him, says he: 'No, that I'm not, but I'm sick to death of you.' The priest gets wild, then, and goes all green in the face and hisses out, so as the old women nearby wouldn't hear. 'Then what are you sitting there for dumb as a post you bloody son of a bitch?' And he gave Demid one between the eyes with the small candlestick."

Loud laughter drowned Demid's deep bass as he shouted:

"It's a lie. He never hit me."

"No, didn't he hit you then?" Grandpa Shchukar looked astounded. "Well, it's all the same, he wanted to, I'm sure. And the priest wouldn't give him absolution, anyhow. Well now, citizens, let

Demid hold his peace if he wants, and we'll go on gabbing, it don't make any difference to us. Although a good word like mine is silver, silence, they say—is golden."

"It'd be a good thing if you changed all your silver for gold. It'd be quieter for other folks, anyhow," advised Nagulnov.

The laughter continued here exploding, there dying down. It looked as though Grandpa Shchukar's story had put the folk off business for good that day. But Davidov's smile vanished as he demanded:

"What was it you wanted to say about the average amount of work?"

"Get down to business."

"Me?" said Grandpa Shchukar wiping the sweat from his brow and blinking. "I never wanted to say anything about it . . . I wanted just to clear up the matter of Demid. And the average has nothing to do with it . . ."

"I deprive you of the right to speak at this meeting. You should speak to the point, and keep your nonsense for afterwards."

"A dessyatin a day to each," suggested Ivan Batalshchinov, one of the delegates.

But here Dubtsov interrupted indignantly:

"Have you gone cracked? Go and tell these tales to your old woman. You'll never plough up a dessyatin in a day. Not if you sweat yourself to soap, you won't do it."

"I've done it before now. Well, maybe a bit less."

"That's it, a bit less, you may be sure it was."

"Half a dessyatin to a plough. On hard soil."

After a lot of argument the meeting decided on the following daily average of ploughing:

Hard soil—0.60 hectares per plough.

Soft soil—0.75 hectares per plough.

Since there were 184 pair of oxen and 73 horses in Gremyachy Log, the plan of the spring sowing was not excessive and Yakov Lukitch said so.

"We'll be through with the sowing early if we put our backs into it. It works out at four-and-a-half dessyatins to a yoke of oxen. That's easy enough, lads. Nothing to grumble about in that."

"But in Lubyansk it worked out at eight per yoke," said Lyubishkin.

"Well, let them sweat themselves to death if they want. We ploughed last autumn right up to the frosts, and they started to divide up the twigs about Michaelmas, making soap out of owls as the saying goes."

A resolution was passed to collect the seed-stocks within three day' time. Ippolyte Shalog, the smith made an announcement that everyone listened to gloomily enough. He spoke at the top of his voice as he was rather deaf. He twirled his greasy, smoky three-eared cap in hands black and worn with work. He was evidently shy of speaking before so many people at a meeting.

"Everything can be mended. The work needn't be held up for me. But what about iron, must try to get hold of some iron. There's not a scrap of iron for the blades and the handles of the ploughs. Nothing for me to work with. I'll start on the planters tomorrow. I'd need a lad to help and some coal, and I'd like to know what the collective farm is intending to pay me."

Davidov explained everything concerning the payment and suggested that Yakov Lukitch should go to the county town for iron and coal tomorrow. The question of the formation of a forage stock was soon decided upon. And then Yakov Lukitch spoke.

"We ought to discuss sensibly and clearly, how, where and what to sow, and elect a field-leader, a fellow that knows his job and can read and write. Why, before the collective farm was organized we had five land delegates and you couldn't see what they were for or what they were doing. We've got to choose one field-leader, one of the old Cossacks, who knows every bit of our land, both far and near. I'll tell you this: we've got nearly the whole village in our collective farm.

"They're all coming in by dribs and drabs. Just about 50 of the individual farmers left now and you'll see them waking up collective farmers tomorrow. Well now, we've got to sow according to what science dictates. I'm saying this because out of the 200 dessyatins we're supposed to plough for certain crops, half of them have to be made into what's called Kherson fallow-land. This spring 110 dessyatins of virgin soil have to be ploughed. We can't expect good crops off it this year, so let's make this Kherson fallow-land."

"Never heard tell of that."

"What's this Kherson?"

"You'd better enlighten us about this," said Davidov, secretly proud of the learning of his experienced farm-manager.

"Well, this is the kind of fallow that sometimes is called 'coulisse,' or American. It's the queerest thing and cleverly thought-out, mind you. For instance, supposing you sow, say, Indian corn, or sunflowers, and sow them very sparse, only half as thick as usual, then the crop will be just 50 per cent of the normal ordinary crop. You gather the corn-cobs or the sunflower-tops, and leave the stalks. That autumn between these stalks you sow winter wheat.

"How do you do that? The planter'll break the stalks, won't it?" asked Kondrat Maidannikov, who had been listening greedily with his mouth open.

"Why should it break them? The rows are wide apart, it shouldn't touch the stalks, the sides will pass it by. There's snow lying between the stalks. It'll melt slowly and give a lot of moisture. And in the spring when the wheat begins to show, these stalks'll be weeded out. It's not a bad thing when you come to think of it. Although I've never tried to sow this way myself, I'm thinking of trying this year. There's no risk in this, can't make any mistake about it."

"That's right. I'm with you in that." Davidov gave Nagulnov a kick under the table and whispered, "see that. And you were against him all the time."

"I'm against him still."

"That's just pig-headedness. Stuck like a bullock."

The conference passed the proposal of Yakov Lukitch. After this a lot of less important points were discussed. The folk began to drift away. Davidov and Nagulnov had hardly got as far as the village Soviet when they came across a lad of middle height, in an open leather jacket and the uniform of a Young Communist Leaguer. He was walking quickly, holding on his checked cap against a gust of mind.

"Someone from the county soviet," suggested Nagulnov, screwing up his eyes.

The young man saluted in military style.

"Are you from the village soviet, by any chance?"

"Who do you want to see?"

"The secretary of the local Party nucleus or the chairman of the soviet."

"I'm the secretary of the nucleus and this is the chairman of the collective farm."

"That's fine. I'm from the agitation-brigade, comrades. We've just got here and we're waiting for you in the soviet."

This dark-faced boy with the turned-up nose gave Davidov a quick glance, and smiled inquiringly.

"Aren't you Davidov, comrade, one of the 25,000 workers mobilized for the villages?"

"That's me."

"I guessed right. We met a fortnight ago in the district committee. I'm working as a presser in the oil-works there."

And then Davidov understood why, when the boy had approached him, he had caught a strong, pleasant whiff of sunflower oil. The boy's oily leather jacket was impregnated with this appetising, persistant smell that even the wind had no power to carry away.

Teppei Kataoka

Linesmen

Translation from Japanese

Aerial wires, underground wires, submarine wires; encircling our planet like a huge spider's web.

Telephones. Telegraphs.

Countless wires stretched taut and strong above our heads, under our feet.

Linking up the world's capitalists. Capitalists in their spider-parlors, organizing themselves over these wires.

Into a treacherous league for mutual aid in sweating and racking the proletariat . . .

1

A gale. Evening in the suburbs. Telephone pole on telephone pole looming up black.

And the wind moaning through the wires.

Near the Post Office stood a large pole. The test pole. Near the arms was a little platform. Tokimoto, a linesman, climbed up to find out where the line was blocked. He put the receiver to his ear. Where was the trouble? Up or down?

He tested first the up-direction.

"Hello, hello," he called and from the city side he overheard a faint voice.

"A finger, I say."

The wires must have crossed.

"Finger, a little finger or an index finger—he says he can let you have one."

Hell, that's a curious sort of conversation to hold; that's a rum thing to be selling.

Tokimoto's curiosity was aroused, he held his breath to listen.

"Then how much can you buy it for, one finger?" This time a different voice, quite distinct.

"I think about . . . " the faint voice again, "make a fine show . . . cut . . . with a knife . . . a lecture . . . " were the only disconnected snatches of talk he could catch

Then again came the distinct voice.

"Anything up to 100 can go down as expenses to the Cultural Club. No, no, not over the phone. You'd better come to the compound."

"All right,—I'll bring the man with me . . . "

Tokimoto could hear no more. What the dickens was the connection between the finger and the Cultural Club? Then he remembered he had work to do. He realized that the hand holding the receiver was cold.

The persistent moaning of the wires assailed his ears.

The Cultural Club and the fingers . . . he couldn't forget them. Which Cultural Club? Their Cultural Club? The one for Communications Department workers, of course, couldn't have any connection with fingers. Could it be the Cultural Club attached to the ITMB (Imperial Tobacco Monopoly Bureau)? Quite possible, there might well be some connection with fingers . . . skilled. If the Tobacco Bureau workers had skilled fingers that meant efficiency.

Tokimoto remembered that in three or four days' time he had to attend a refresher course at their own Cultural Club. He knew that these Cultural Clubs were a lot of bunk, but the employees of the Communications Department, and of other important government departments too, were obliged to join them, damn it all. But he had work to do now.

The trouble didn't seem to be the up-direction. He fixed his set on to the down-wire.

"Hey, is it up or down?" shouted a crowd of his mates gathered round the foot of the pole.

"Down," he answered. It was blowing. A big gale. There'd be more trouble to follow. "This is tough weather for us, boys!" As he looked down he wanted to pour out his woes to them. Standing up straight, his back pressed against the pole, he looked over the darkening town. Against the faint grey sky, stood out the roofs of the houses and punctuating the latter was an unending procession of telephone poles.

That was life for you. To keep all those poles and wires in order we were sweated unmercifully. If we didn't like it, how else could we earn a living?

Wind. Dusk.

Tokimoto was standing on the platform. At his job. Nothing else seemed real. The dreamlike conversation—about buying a finger—was completely forgotten.

He hoped to god it wouldn't be a snow-storm.

2

That night Soroku Tamano, another linesman was on duty. He was sleeping in the linesmen's quarters in the post-office.

He became aware of some disturbing sound. But he was tired out after his day's work.

Let me sleep a bit longer. Have a heart. Don't disturb my slumbers sweet . . .

He lay there drowsy. He was terribly sleepy, he thought to himself but would keep on sleeping no matter who tried to wake him.

But it was no use thinking like that; if he didn't get up he'd be fired. He rubbed his eyes. It was the telephone ringing. Blast it, he mumbled, and hopped out of bed.

"Hello hello," an irritated voice snapped back. "This is Tokyo Central. The X line, and the XXX line and the XX are all down. The XX is uncertain. All wires on No. 2 are blocked. Get a move on. D'ye understand?"

"I understand, I'll call an emergency rally." He hung up the receiver with a bang and hitched up his dirty sagging breeches.

"Twenty to three," with a yawn he glanced up at the clock on the wall. "It's the bloody middle of the night."

The sooty window rattled in the gale. Snow puttered against the glass.

"A snowstorm. What do we want a blasted snowstorm for. It's no wonder all the lines are out of order," he grumbled as he put on his muddy rubber boots. "And so late, too, blast them."

Outside the wind tore at his coat and the snow beat against his face. It was a bad storm. There was nothing to do, however, but plod on through it. The head electrician lived about half a mile away. He arrived at the house at last and banged on the gate.

"A message from Tokyo Central."

It took a lot of knocking but at last he appeared, this Communications Department electrician, who drew a Grade 5 salary of 80 yen[1] a month. He was thinking that his wife as she stood there, having dragged herself out of bed to see him off, didn't look very prepossessing, but once outside his expression changed. "It means an emergency rally. Hurry up and call them all up," sourly he ordered Soroku. Already his pet toothbrush moustache was powdered white with snow.

3

Is it because the great mass of the people would be inconvenienced with the telephones and telegraphs out of order, that there is all this fuss, officials shouting and workers being forced out into the snowstorm? If every single one of them was blocked for a whole day, what loss would it be to the proletariat? But for all that it was proletarian linesmen who had to lose their sleep to go rushing round all over the place in the storm. If they dawdled, they'd their day's wages of 1.10 docked.

From the centre of the network of wires which joined up every corner of the land, the bourgeois were organizing themselves. Not only making use of them for their ordinary business and speculating but also to concoct their plots and their coups to crush their enemy—the struggling proletariat.

"500 tons coal. State price. Reply urgent. 20,000 bushels rice arriving. Will sell 3,000 Tokyo Stock. N Y K down 20 points. Secure me Kanegafuchi Spinning at lowest price. Can you sell 300 at 2. Reply urgent. Indications that Communist remnants entered your district. Muster 15 detectives at XXX station. Search the roughly XX Maru arriving port tomorrow. Communist aboard disguised as business man."

Then there are the telephones linking up every police box, every country policeman's house, every police station, all the political police offices, every gendarmerie.

The spy walking in the streets. He has his eagle eye fixed for any member of the proletariat who is wanted. In a passing taxi is a suspicious-looking figure; it tallies with the description; straight away the spy flies to the nearest police box and calls up Headquarters. Then in every other box and every station the bells go ting-a-ling-ling.

"Taxi N X. Man in black inverness with brown felt hat and horn rimmed glasses. Check up with picture of the Communist XXX on your files and arrest."

Within the short space of three minutes all over Tokyo a drag net is cast. So efficient is the police telephone system for the bourgeois class .

4

Soroku Tamano kept on running through the snow night. He went from one end of the little town to the other, knocking up his mates.

"Emergency muster. All the lines are out of order."

He'd struck it bad to have to go routing them out in weather like this. Like him they all were sleepy. "What the hell does a snowstorm want to come for?" came grumbling voices from inside the houses.

"It's no use blaming me," Soroku would grumble. "They all seem to look on me as some sort of tormentor. It's a damned rotten job I've got, and I don't like it. Boys, don't hate me, hate someone else. It's not my fault." He felt like blubbing. Pulling a funny face he went round from house to house.

In less than an hour eight linesmen including himself, ten skilled men and seven casuals had collected at the post-office.

"Are you all here? All right, then we'll get it," said the young electrician in charge.

"Tokyo X line, the lower wire. Yokohama to stick it out on the platform of the test pole till the morning. Get there as quick as you can."

Some time after the two had gone out, the telephone started to ring. It was a report from them. The electrician put the receiver to his ear.

"Tokyo * * line, the lower wire. Yokohama X line the upper wire. No. 1, what about No. 1? I see. All right, then . . . "

He went back to where the rest of the men stood awaiting orders, and divided them up into groups to go out and attend to the trouble. He remained there in constant communication with the men on the test pole waiting for the results of the repair work. Until all the lines were repaired he had to stay there, but at least it was indoors. A charcoal fire burned cheerfully.

5

Soroku, in charge of two skilled men and three casuals, was assigned the lower part of the No. 1 Tokyo X telephone line. From the test pole,

[1] Yen=100 sen. A yen is equivalent to about 2 shillings or half a dollar; a sen—to half a cent or a farthing.

the wire going towards Tokyo was called the upper and the one in the opposite direction the lower. They knew it was the lower part that was damaged from the report of the men up the pole.

Shining their gas lamp along the road they trudged through the outskirts of the town out north along the highway. Twenty-five miles ahead lay the next post-office. There too there'd be an emergency muster, for sure, and a squad might be sent out in their direction. In that case the two squads would meet. But if not, Soroku's squad might have to walk the whole 25 miles.

The storm showed no signs of abating. It was 3.30 a. m., still some time to dawn. You couldn't keep your eyes open in that gale. Snow flashes danced in the light of the gas lamp.

"It's cold. Damned cold."

You couldn't work in overcoats, so under their ordinary coats they wore old ragged jerseys. Some didn't even have that. Before they knew it the snow soaked in through their coats, through their shirts until they were wet to the skin.

"It's cold. Damned cold."

They forced themselves to pass casual remarks from time to time as if it was a bloody lark. Otherwise they'd feel too wretched altogether. It was pitch dark but they couldn't walk carefully; they had to shine the light on the wires above and then stagger along with their necks craned up to discover where the break was. It might be anywhere between here and the next 20 miles.

Their outfit consisted of a ladder, a bamboo pole, a portable set, and copper binding wire to join the wire on to the porcelain insulator. On the end of the pole was a nail bent like a hook. They hitched this on to the wire and it scraped off the snow as they walked.

In weather like this there were all kinds of accidents. Crossed wires; earth leakage; snapped wires. When two wires got into contact through the wind that was crossed wires. When the pole got blown down you had not only crossed wires but a break as well. When the snow collected too heavily on the wires, the current leaked to the ground and that was earth leakage.

6

Soroku and his gang had been walking for two hours. The poles seemed to stretch forever along the highroad. It was dawn. The wind had died down and the snow was subsiding. White fields, white trees, white hills—the ordinary scenery of a country road.

"I could do with a bite," yawned Kayama, one of the navvies.

"What about some noodles," suggested Soroku. They had entered a little village that looked like an old post-town. They could get noodles at least, here, he thought.

"Don't be silly. D'ye think anything's open at this hour of the morning?" answered the skilled worker, Torida.

Under the fire look-out was a stone statue of the children's god Jizo. Round the corner was a little bridge with grass growing on it.

The snow had stopped completely.

There was a noodles shop and an eating house. Squeezed in between a doubtful looking "cafe" and a cake shop was a farmers' thatched cottage. The door was still bolted and the fire seemed to have been just lighted.

In the eastern sky appeared a blue patch.

They were all tired out with walking. Since they'd been called up they'd worked on without anything to eat. Their bodies were almost frozen where the snow had worked its way in but now a stickly sweat covered them.

How much further would they have to go?

Endlessly those wires, those bloody wires, would go on stretching to the gates of hell.

How much further was he going to walk them?

On they went, with heavy eyelids and running noses.

The front door of a little restaurant by the road side opened, and a girl in a night dress poked out her hand. The powder had come off her face in patches and she wore a stupid expression.

"Hello, sweetie," one of the men shouted. "Did you have a good time last night?"

The others all cackled, but the girl just stared at their sweaty grimed figures. Sinking back into listlessness again they tried no more sallies.

Leaving the village behind them they were again on a monotonous road lined with paddy fields. The ladder and the pole had become the worst burden to them. Their feet were not very tired; it was in the upper part of their bodies that they felt it. How much further, oh Lord?

"I hope we find the trouble soon?"

"So do I. It's as bad as hunting for yer girl."

"For your enemy, more like."

"Now the snow's all gone maybe it's mended itself. Don't you reckon all the snow will soon be melted?" said another, although he knew such hopes were vain.

"And so you mean to say we may as well turn back?"

"No such luck." They all gave a joyless laugh as they glanced in Soroku's direction.

"It's no good talking like that. Suppose when we got there they found it wasn't all right, there'd be hell to pay." Soroku gave the warning rather unwillingly, with his head down.

"There's nothing I'd enjoy more than a good row and then to be fired. Who wants to stick at a job like this all his life. As one of the skilled workers said this, Soroku raised his face and glanced at him.

His name was Machida and he was tall with a thin yellowish face which he seldom shaved. He was well known for his grumbling.

"Don't you like this job?" asked Soroku.

"Shit, is there anything to like about it?"

"But you've taken all the trouble of learning the work haven't you?"

"Don't be funny," countered Soroku.

"Are you suggesting that I try and raise m'self like you've done, eh?"

When an ordinary navvy passed into the skilled class he automatically became a candidate for the still higher class of linesmen. Did Machida mean it didn't count anything to become a linesman? He must be kidding. Wasn't the standard of living of the skilled worker far above that of the casual navvy? And at this stage for Machida to be saying he didn't like the job, what else could he do anyhow? There was nothing for him except to become a free laborer and get far less wages and be sweated far worse one-half of his time and out of a job the other.

Linesman Soroku Tamano had himself been picked out from the ranks of the skilled workers. Three years ago. His first wage was 1.10 a day. The second year it rose to 1.14. That meant a rise of 4 sen a day. Four sen a day raise was an honor. Last year it was only 2 sen. So now he was getting 1.16 a day. Some men who'd been working as linesmen for 10 or 20 years were getting as much as 2.20 or 2.30 a day. They'd turned their backs on the ordinary workers.

The morning sun shone on the snowy fields. Their road started to ascend. It was a pass. Both sides were thickly wooded. The sun's rays were more gentle and there was the sound of flapping wings somewhere. As they emerged from the wood, the road suddenly became very steep.

Then at the summit it swerved round to the right. One of the navvies who had reached the top, was just going round the bend when he gave a shout.

"We're in for it."

"Why?" asked the panting Soroku from below.

"This guy's going to be a devil."

Soroku hastened to the spot from where the voice came and there he saw a big pole lying prone across the snow.

"That's the guy that's given us all this trouble." The wires had snapped.

They all stood there stock still eyeing it with disgust. It would be a big job to set it up again and mend the wires. Their bellies were empty. Their bodies were exhausted.

"Hey there, let's make a start," shouted Soroku, with a forced display of spirit.

7

At the bottom of the other side of the pass was a pond. As each got near it he flopped down on the snow or else stretched himself out on a stack of timber that was there.

"Just how much pay do you get?" asked Machida, getting a light from Soroku.

"Me? 1.14 a day."

"And some travelling allowance as well?"

"With that it comes to about 2.30 a day. So I'm mighty thankful for days like this."

"You mean because going like this, on and on with nothing to eat or drink you can save all that, eh?"

"Now you're being funny again," said Soroku, laughing.

"But don't you reckon that when they drive you like this, you deserve at least 2.30 extra? I've heard that those damned engineers who don't do a stroke get travelling allowances of 10 or 20 yen a day. The more I think of it, the more I get fed up of this whole damned world."

"You're right," said Soroku lowering his voice. "All of us fellows are treated rotten, and of course we want to do something about it, and some of the fellows talk about forming some sort of a union. But I think you've got to turn it over a lot before deciding—because if you got fired for it, where will you find another job? In Tokyo the unemployed are already at one another's throats for jobs."

"But if it wasn't for us, I'd like to know who'd mend the break-downs."

"But for all that we only get a rise of two sen or three sen or in rare case four sen a day each year. They sure make fools of us." As Soroku spoke he remembered something else. "The other day at the Culture Club some guy was spouting away about that linesmen were of great national importance and that they had some grand something or other. Just trying to butter us up, the bastards."

"Flattery's cheap anyway."

"That's their game. When an electrician does outdoor work, he gets another special allowance proportionate to the distance he travels; so many sen a mile. How about us? If we linesmen are so important to the state why do we only get a rise of two sen a day each year?"

They heard a faint snoring. Two men on the timber stack were lying fast asleep.

"Here, there," shouted Soroku at the two sleeping figures, his discontent having no other outlet. "Here, get up, you'll catch cold. Let's be starting."

His watch said 11.50. A white glare came from the snow. They had been walking for eight hours on end; their start in the snow-storm last night seemed a far off dream.

"Let's go."

"Go? How much further?"

8

The Communications Department's Cultural Club had organized a refresher course in a wing of one of the famous temples in the Shiba district of Tokyo. Fifty linesmen, 30 skilled workers and 20 electricians, engineers and foremen had been got together. Linesman Tokimoto was among the number.

The course lasted for three days. During that period the members slept in the temple. All day they were drilled or set to cleaning. In the evenings they listened to lectures.

Such was the "culture" given to these conscripted government employees.

"In the event of war the linesman's responsibility is very great," the lecturer would say. "In wartime all manner of telegram, code ones and other vital ones are passing all the time over the wires. On receipt of messages, forces are moved, strategems planned, orders carried out. They hold sway over the destiny of our nation. You will therefore understand that you who toil so hard to keep the wires in proper order, you men doctor the telegraph and telephone so to speak, carry the fate of the nation on your shoulders. Once you have awakened to this mission of yours you will never become poisoned by imported foreign ideas which have been spreading lately and you will never let yourselves be led into doing anything rash."

War is coming, the lecturers warned them. In such a vital service it was essential that the workers be drilled into obedience. To hide the imminence of war by mouthing pacifist phrases would be fatal. Here they made no bones about their preparations for war. They were terrified lest when war came the linesmen line up with the working class. So terrified were they lest the proletariat should take possession of that vast network, that vast spider's web, the telephone and telegraph systems.

Here the capitalist class exerted all the strength of its will to emasculate the proletariat.

The last night of the course arrived. There was a lecture. The chairman introduced the speaker.

"This gentleman is a worker like you. This evening he has been persuaded to make a confession before all of you. I have no doubt that a worker's own story, told by himself, will contain much to edify us all and I hope that you will give the gentleman your closest attention."

Clapping. The man arose. A thin harsh-faced man dressed in a suit of ready-made foreign clothes. A low hound, thought Tokimoto.

"Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen," in a practiced voice quite out of keeping with his somewhat vulgar appearance, he began to speak. "Without concealing anything, though I am ashamed, I confess to you here that until last year I was an active member of the Japanese Communist Party."

The audience who until then had discounted him because of his appearance, at the words, "Japanese Communist Party" suddenly became tense as if a blow had been struck. Here was a fellow worth listening to; a member of—but then, if so, why all this modesty about "being ashamed," and then in the second place why did he announce publicly that he was a member?

They gave a cautious glance at the faces of the engineers, but these were quite composed, without any traces of surprise.

"Gentlemen, I tell you I worked for the Communist Party, never sparing my strength, even risking my life."

Wait on, that sounds a bit fishy, thought Tokimoto, why does he say "for the Communist Party," why doesn't he say for the working class? The speaker raised his voice a pitch higher.

"But the leaders of the Communist Party, while we were fighting grimly, what were they doing? They were in the Red Light District and in geisha houses squandering the money they'd got from Russia on debauchery." His tone was one of outraged indignation. With a start Tokimoto realized that it was all a put-up game. The fellow was clearly just a puppet of the ruling class. Tokimoto strained his ears to catch what he'd come out with next.

"Therefore I became thoroughly fed up with Communism. The principles seem sound enough, but those who try to follow them out, in the end only become the dupes of the leaders. Gentlemen, I confess my mistakes and repent of them. If you follow in my footsteps, you'll get the same bad deal from those leaders. And now I am going to give you testimony to let you see with your own eyes how deeply I regret my past. I am not disloyal. I swear before you all that I am an obedient subject of His Majesty, the Emperor. Here is proof of it, here."

The speaker fished out something from his pocket. A knife. Then he lay his left hand on the table, with the knife flourished in the air, ready to be lowered, he paused some moments. He glanced over at the engineers' seats. They were sitting back as if witnessing a show. The lecturer stretched out the fingers of the hand on the table. Steadily he lowered the knife until it was pressing on his little finger. "Ow," he shouted. Blood spurted out. The spectators rose from their seats as one man.

The finger had rolled over on the table. The lecturer swooned face downwards on the blood-stained table.

Tokimoto blanched and made his way outside. The conversation that had leaked to his ears on that platform of the test pole, four or five days ago—now how vividly had that deal in fingers been enacted before his eyes.

He could not keep his body from trembling with the excitement and indignation.

Mate Zalka

Military Secrets

Translation from Russian

A few words about military secrets

At the busiest moment of the organizational flurry in the Literary Union of the Red Army and Navy, I was approached by a well known writer. He grabbed me firmly by one of the buttons of my jacket and, in the tone of one accustomed to delivering clever speeches for the benefit of admiring audiences, began:

"Look here, old chap, what do you think of this idea of allowing writers to visit the army? After all, writers are a nosey lot on the whole, and impossibly free with their tongues.

"There might be unpleasant results. The Literary Union will have to look out, or else some of our comrades, contrary to all expectations, may let out some military secrets."

When I sat down to write this article on the "Voroshilov *Subbotnik* in the *Perekop* Red Banner Division, I forgot the golden advice of my contemporary, the famous Soviet writer. I finished my article, read it over and came to the conclusion that a foreword would be necessary otherwise my readers might not understand the reason why a person holding a responsible position in the Literary Union should speak of the most treasured secrets of the Red Army.

The idea is born

The resolutions passed at the June Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Party were being discussed by the Young Communist Leaguers of the Upper Kama Rifles. Someone suggested arranging a *subbotnik* of collective harvesting work. This resolution went through all the necessary stages, and soon came into the hands of the Divisional Political Department.

This coincided with the introduction of a variety of mass work—the divisional wireless meetings. The Department proposed to broadcast the resolution of the Young Communist Leaguers at the meeting. It was warmly received. The army boys, who were mostly from the villages and collective farms, shouted "Hurrah!" six times instead of the usual three.

Then followed details. The boys from the Moscow River district challenged those from the Bauman[1] ward, the Bauman men challenged the Orekhovo-Zuev[1] men and the latter—the Yakir infantry school, and everything was going on swimmingly.

It was not suggested by anyone in particular but the division got to calling the proposed extra day after the leader of the Red Army. And that was how the "Voroshilov *Subbotnik*" arose.

While the various regiments were challenging each other and the telegrams sent to many newspapers lay untouched, *Pravda* expressed the opinion that this idea had a profound political meaning. It thereupon took up a new slogan:

"Follow the example of the *Perekop* boys!"

Words and Deeds

The Political Department hummed. It had firmly resolved to carry out the idea of the "Voroshilov *Subbotnik*." The instructions of the Political Department were as follows:

"That the staff and the men of this division should show, on the basis of socialist competition and shock-brigade work, examples of Communistic work as a reflection of the high military standard of the *Perekop* Division."

The Political Department was transformed into headquarters and things began to develop.

At the general meetings—regimental, company, and battery—the Red Army boys passed resolutions declaring their readiness.

At the same time a committee of three got into touch with the town council and "allotments" were marked out. The camp was turned into one great agitation base. Flaring posters, banners and slogans were to be seen everywhere.

"All hands to the gathering of the Second Bolshevist Harvest!"

The collective and State farms which were working just then from dawn till dark, stood in great need of labor. They simply jumped at one proposal. The committee of three held a conference with the representatives of the collective and State farms and the town trade unions. Everybody was in high spirits. The collective and State Farm representatives fought for every extra army boy or commander.

At this conference a proposal was made by "patron"[1] factories of the town. All the workers who would be off work on that day desired to be present in the ranks of their particular detachments. The wives of the "red commanders" also offered to come and help.

The "patrons" and the wives were introduced into the "system" at once.

It was decided that on the 10th of July (the division's "day off") the boys would do their usual work and on the 11th they would go to the fields for the *subbotnik*. The fields of all the small collective farms and the big outlying state and collective farms, such as the "Odessa Grain Combine," the "Sixteenth Party Congress," the "Farm Laborers' Victory," the Chubayev and Lustdorf collective, etc., were divided up among the various detachments, patrons, and commanders' wives. A number of volunteer workers were sent off to collective work in the Ovidiopol and Tiraspol districts.

[1] Bauman ward—one of the largest wards in Moscow, called after one of the pioneers of Bolshevism.—*Ed.*

[1] A large industrial town in the Moscow province.—Ed.

The Division on the March

Exact information as to the condition and whereabouts of the "enemy" was given at the second meeting of the committee. It became known that the "enemy" was very strong and that it was situated in a manner entirely different from anything studied in military tactics up to now. It was found that the "enemy" closely encircled the town, and that there was no front of any kind. In some cases the enemy was right at the gates of the town and in other cases 30 or more kilometers away. Another thing was that the enemy formed itself into groups, blocks, here in a strange, unsystematic, hudded mass, there in a wide even front.

The "enemy" was for the most part made up of "industrial crops." This was explained by its proximity to the town. The ordinary "infantry," to which our lads were most accustomed at home —that is, wheat and oats—were seldom to be met with. There were more of the "industrial" plants, such as cotton, and beetroot and market garden products—things like cucumbers, tomatoes, cabbage and onions.

On the eve of the great day the "patrons" came over. They wanted to share the burden of this "attack" with their particular detachment. The commissars of the detachments took them to the clubs and reading-rooms, where it had been arranged they should sleep the night.

The Moscow River regiment formed a large vanguard and advanced on foot over Tirasspol which stretches in a north-westerly direction from Odessa. This march was made according to all the rules of military science. A task was set the regiment—to reach a certain line and "attack" the socialist fields at dawn.

Through its connection with the town Tramways Department, the staff had obtained a good number of trams. These began to appear at the appointed place at about 4 in the morning.

Previous to this a batallion of the Upper Kama Regiment in full anti-aircraft kit boarded the train. At 5 minutes past 3, they were already inside the train and had started off for the "Sixteenth Party Congress" State Farm, where the potato fields were in need of immediate reinforcement.

The Yakir Infantry School was to start from the Kulikov field. The faint light of early morning crept in through the windows of the railway carriages, resting on the rows of fresh, pink faces of the students.

A crowd of white linen coats could be seen. These belonged to the folks from the military hospital, who climbed in and were borne away in the direction of Lustdorf.

The staff moved in a column. There was a column of women—wives of the commanders and sappers. The artillery regiment climbed into the long line of cars and went off in the direction of their particular allotment, the so-called "irrigated fields."

By 5 o'clock only a few groups of civilians remained round the camp and the starting-points. They were the patrons who had turned up late. They had not thought that the men would all clear out sharp at the appointed time—4 o'clock.

The *subbotnik* was taken part in by the Odessa Red Army and Navy Club, the local Army and Navy Literary Union, and a brigade of men from the Kharkov Army and Navy Literary Union who were doing a great deal of work in connection with the publishing of our newspapers, hand-bills and bulletins. Then there were the Odessa Opera House, the Ukrainian actors and singers and the newly-organized military section of the Odessa Central Workers' Cooperative Society.

In the Fields

The real enemies (without any inverted commas) of the *subbotnik* proved to be some of the managers of the collective and soviet farms, who, in spite of their promises that a sufficient supply of implements would be given out to the volunteers, made no efforts to obtain them. In some places, therefore, there were no implements.

It is true that in his conversation with our industrialists Comrade Stalin did not speak of manual labor as doomed, but this does not mean that our army doctors, for instance, should be forced to crawl on all fours through a jungle of weeds or that comrades who have deserved a better fate should have to fight without the necessary weapons.

However—"you can take a fortress if you've got enough enthusiasm," and our folks were not easily cast down....

By 9 o'clock in the morning, on the "cucumber front" the full day's programme had been carried out. The "cucumber men" looked over the broad acres and marked out another plan for after breakfast. This plan was also fulfilled, a large excess over the original estimates.

"The rate at which the peas were gathered simply astounded the collective farmers"—wrote the company commander in his report to headquarters. "By noon the programme marked out for that day was completed, and a new and additional programme had been worked out."

The great fields did indeed present a picture of an attack. The advancing troops stretched in a line four kilometers broad over the winter onions which covered an area of 45 hectares. By 12 o'clock the line of fire was already far away from the road which was bordered on one side by a living wall of acacias. Army equipment and clothes lay piled along the crest of the ditch by the roadside. The weather was warm. There was no sun, the day was cloudy, but it was warm enough to go without a shirt. Even breeches were left off, under-pants were rolled up above the knees and the whole line became a mass of white dots looking like geese in the distance. A few yards from the clothes, sentinels stood. They were some of the weaker fellows, those whose feet got blistered from their boots, perhaps; this was the "rear."

In another field, off in a different direction, another batallion was attacking the potatoes. The whole of the Yakir school and some small detachments were working among the onions and potatoes. And all along the line of the front loudspeakers were set upon tall poles over which the staff of any particular section could communicate with the front-line.

At the collective farm office, work was going on at a terrific rate. The campaign number of the field paper *The Perekopets* was being prepared.

Pacifists like Schweik appeared on this front, just as they do on others. These "rear slackers" had sudden attacks of stomach-ache and took refuge in the bushes, where they usually stayed until

the front-line men were ready to drop in their tracks.

A breathing-space was called and the secretary of the Party nucleus on the collective farm, "The Perekop Victory," spoke. He was agitated. His voice broke.

"Comrades—" he said softly, "We're struggling, gosh, how we're struggling, comrades, and we're winning—step by step. This year we're the first in the Odessa district to finish the sowing campaign, and it looks as if, comrades, we're on the right road to the commune. You've been good lads, you've helped us when we were in a tight place, and I tell you straight, I don't know what to say to show our gratitude."

He was so worked up, poor fellow, that tears started to his eyes and his jaw twitched nervously.

When we came to the "Farm Laborers' Victory" allotment, which was entrusted to the artillery regiment, we hit on the rear slackers. The sentinel asleep, the commanders gone, a number of horses standing idly about, saddled.... But in the fields the work was going ahead in true Red Army fashion.

The "Farm Laborers' Victory" was an extremely interesting farm. It reminded one of the irrigated fields near Paris. The irrigation system was an excellent one. All the sewage of the town ran into the fields where more than 100 varieties of fruit and vegetables grew. There was a fine pig farm, a dairy farm and so on. Before collectivization had come in, all this had belonged to a handful of "kulak" market-gardeners who had waxed fat, and been overcome by their own farm laborers after an acute political struggle.

On this farm of several hundred square hectares, the artillery regiment was now working at a rate never before seen by the collective farm workers, clearing the fields, digging potatoes, packing away vegetables, ready for shipment.

The Retreat

At the close of a successful attack carried out near Rava-Russky in August, 1914, the Austrian in command of the Uhlan regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Steinerau, gave the order to sound the "retreat."

"The Cossacks have fled, the war is over." That was the kind of commander that Schweik would have liked.

After 12 or 13 hours of work the *subbotnik* was over. The portable wireless sets all over the fields sounded the signal for ""retreat," but work did not cease everywhere at once.

That was not disobedience. The competing brigades wanted to finish their allotments. When all detachments had collected at supper-time, dispatches and reports were delivered to headquarters. Copies, fresh from the press, of the campaign newspaper, were given out at supper, music played.

From the reports received, a general picture of the *subbotnik* could be formed. Excerpts from the future dispatches were being collectively formulated.

"True to the great traditions of the *Perekop* regiment, the men and staff of the Red Army have shown a fine example of organized communist labor, and have done record work.

80.45 hectares of land have been cleared, weeded and prepared for the next sowing, 218,570 kilogrammes of vegetables have been provided for the workers of the big proletarian centers, and the dirigible building fund has been presented with the total amount of wages for that day. Certain sections did splendid work on the harvesting and the command was able to combine this work with the tasks of military training. The command and the Party organizations of the detachments showed excellent management of the troops and proved that both the staff and the men were capable of working a a rapid rate.

At the present moment the task of the men, commanders and political workers of the Red Army is to work with redoubled energy and enthusiasm to master military science and carry out the orders of the People's Commissariat. Members of the Party and the Young Communist League must set an example of shock-brigade work. The best response to the initiators of the Voroshilov *Subbotnik* that could be made would be to organize one lone, uninterrupted "Voroshilov Day in Military Training."

How the order was worded

There was nothing in the order about the work of the commanders' wives and the patron workers who had toiled 12 hours in the fields, about the 15 and more different newspapers and handbills issued jointly by the patrons and collective farm workers, nothing about the fact that 103 men had applied for admission to the Party, 82 to the Young Communist League and 31—to the collective farm. But it was impossible to mention everything in the order. All that and many useful things were mentioned in the letters of instructions of the divisional political department; it was noted, for instance, that the political leaders of some groups flung out irresponsible slogans like:

"Five working-days for every Red Army man!"

"100% of all peasants should join collective farms!" and set themselves similar dizzy standards of achievements, without taking into consideration the possibilities of achievement.

It must be admitted that "Voroshilov *Subbotnik*" was worthy of the praise of Klim Voroshilov himself. It was certainly a tremendous thing, organized, prepared and carried out without very much fuss, but in an efficient, well-planned, definite way, and as the order showed, with big results. The results were, as a matter of fact, extraordinary. To tell the truth, social work is sometimes done very carelessly and with a lot of noise. The enthusiasm of those who take it up soon dies down, people begin to grumble or get offended and leave the job, or have to hang round in the heat or the cold, as the case may be, for hours doing nothing.

Our division set an example this time and as could be seen from the figures, the organized *subbotnik* might serve as a powerful means of social assistance to many a branch of our economy.

After the retreat and supper—meetings were held. The resolutions passed mentioned the eight negroes sentenced to death at Scottsboro, the secretary of the Chinese Communist Party who had just been executed, the successes of the Red Army

of China, the Spanish Revolution, and, finally, that tomorrow's lesson and work would begin at 5 in the morning....

"We're grateful to you, boys, you worked hard, you didn't come over for nothing. That's the sort of army we need."

"We the sons of the toiling masses," so runs the oath, replied the commissar of the regiment, and a loud friendly "hurrah" went up from the audience.

One word more about military secrets

I had nearly forgotten about this military secret business. Here I am writing away quite frankly about the army, I wonder—would Count Esterhazy, the colonel of Nth Hungarian Hussars in 1912, have permitted me to describe the excursion to his estate that he organized that summer when he forced the hussars to work three days in his fields. The Count's own farm-hands had refused to work for the low wages he offered, and the Slovaks (the cheapest labor to be had in Hungary then) were out of reach since there was a railway-strike at the time. A certain young journalist wrote about this. He was court-martialled and after a long drawn-out trial, sentenced to three years' imprisonment in a fortress, on a charge of betraying military secrets.

And I—here I am betraying how our army goes to work on the collective and State farms! After all, this can easily be taken advantage of by people with over-active imagination, who will say:

"A new kind of forced labor among the Bolsheviks. There they are exploiting the soldiers again."

If these gentlemen could have seen how these "soldiers" worked, how they returned to camp, how gaily the rockets soared into the sky and how the bearded soldiers straightened up at the music of the march.

The "Voroshilov *Subbotnik*" was taken up by the whole army, it afforded a fine proof of the unity of the army with the proletariat of the factories, and the fields. It was an example, on a huge scale, of the pliancy, the manoeuvring power of our Red Army, its political sensibility and readiness to defend our frontiers. An army like this is a terrible weapon in the hands of victorious class. And in this, then, lies my military secret.

Odessa, Field-Headquarters,
July 14, 1931.

Translated from the Russian
by Anthony Wixley

Peng-Pai

Red Hai-feng

Translation from Chinese

EDITOR'S NOTE

The following notes were written by one of the most famous leaders of the Chinese Communist Party, Peng-pai. His name is bound up with all the stages of the Chinese Peasant Movement, beginning with the organization of Peasants' Unions in Kuang-tung by the Chinese Communists and ending with the formation of the Chinese Soviet Territories.

The first peasants' union was founded in Hai-Feng thanks to the initiative and tireless efforts of Pen-pai. It was there that, under his leadership Soviet government was established. The first Soviet district in China was formed in November, 1927. The historic "Hai-feng Soviet Republic."

Peng-Pai was a member of the Chinese Communist Party from 1920, and was one of the most active organizers of the Kuang-tung Party section, and a member of the Kuang-tung provincial committee.

He was later elected a member of the Central Committee and finally of the Political Bureau. In September of last year he met with an untimely end at the hands of the Komintang butchers.

These notes were first published in the Chinese magazine *Chungo Nungmin.*

In 1921 I was head of the education department in Hai-feng. After the demonstrations of the First of May in which, at my instigation, the pupils of all the boys' and girls' schools in the district had taken part, the Hai-feng gentry began to spread rumors about the imminent "introduction of communism and the nationalization of women." One delegation after another came to Cheng-Chiung-ming with complaints. As a result I was dismissed.

I then resolved to go and work in the country.

"It's simply a waste of time and energy," my friends in Hai-feng told me. "The peasants are very scattered and can't be organized. Besides, they're so backward that it'll be impossible to do any propaganda among them."

My people were big-landowners in the Hai-feng district. My father received about a thousand sacks of rice a year as payment for rent. There were about 30 members in the family, but the tenants with their families numbered 500. When they learned at home of my intention to organize a peasant movement, all the members of the family—male and female, young and old, with the exception of two brothers who refused to express any opinion whatsoever—hated me violently. My eldest brother, I believe, was ready to kill me. But I took no notice of this.

It was in May that I resolved to make my first attempt and started out for a village in the Chishan district. I was wearing a foreign style suit, the sort usually worn by students and a round straw hat. The first person I met in that village was a peasant of about 30 years of age, who was grubbing about near a manure heap.

"Sit down, sir," he said, without stopping his work. "Sit down and have a smoke. You've come about the tax, I suppose? But we haven't a theater here."

I hastened to reassure him. "I haven't come about the theater tax at all. I just want to make friends with the peasants. I know what a hard life you have of it, so I thought—well, we might have a talk about things."

"Oh, it's hard enough—yes, but that's our fate. Have a cup of tea, sir, will you—but we've no time for talking. Don't be angry with us, please, for that."

And with these words the peasant hurried away.

After a while a young fellow of about 20 appeared. He looked a bit brighter than the first, and started to ask questions.

"What battalion do you belong to, sir? What do you work at? Why have you come here?"

"I'm neither an officer nor an official," I replied. "I was formerly a student. I've simply come out here for a walk and in the hope of getting to know some of you."

The young fellow laughed.

"Oh, we're no good. No fit company for gentlemen, anyway. Perhaps you'll have a cup of tea?"

And, he, too, like the first peasant, hurried away without looking round. I wanted to say something more, but he was already out of hearing.

I was very upset. I remembered what my friends had told me and my heart grew heavier. I went off to the next village. There I was greeted by the loud barking of dogs. They bared their teeth at me, and snarled, a hostile enough demonstration, but I mistook it for a welcome and went boldly on my way.

The doors were all locked and there was not a living soul in the village. Some had gone to work in the fields, others to the market. I went on to a third village. The sun was already sinking. It began to grow dusk. I was afraid to arouse the suspicions of the peasants so I decided not to enter this village and turned homewards.

At home, I was treated like an enemy. No one wanted to speak to me. They had all had their supper, and there was nothing left but a little soup. I ate it and went off to my own room. I opened my diary, thinking to write down the results of the day's work, but there were no results.

I tossed and turned all night in my bed, thinking out various plans. As soon as it was light, I got up, had some breakfast and started out again.

I came again to the village I had visited the day before.

"Have you come to collect your debts, mister?" an elderly man asked me.

"No, no!" I protested. "On the contrary, I've come to help you to collect yours. You're owed a great deal, you know. You have forgotton, perhaps. But I have decided to remind you."

"Oh, it would be all right if we didn't owe anything to others. Who could owe money to the likes of us?"

"Why, don't you know? But the landowners owe you a whole lot. They idle away their time year after year, while you are worn out with work. And then the rent you have to pay! One *mow* of land (1/6 of an acre) costs the owners no more than a hundred dollars, and you peasants have to work this *mow* for hundreds of years. Just try to count up how much rice they get from you all these years. We've decided that it's unjust."

"Well, and so I've come here to talk to you and discuss how it would be possible to get what you owed from the land owners."

The peasant laughed.

"It's too good to be true! Even if you only owe them a *sheng* of rice, they beat you and put you in prison. But that's how fate has willed it—some grow rice and others eat it. But excuse me, sir, I must go to market now."

"What's your name?" I asked.

"My name. Oh, I'm from this village. Come in when you have time some day."

I saw that he did not want to let me know his name, and so I did not press the point.

There were only women left in the village. The men were working in the fields. It would be awkward for me to be seen talking to women. I wandered about undecided for a long time and then went off to another village. In fact I went round several that day, but with as little result as the day before. I had a little more to put in my diary that day, though.

That evening it occurred to me that in speaking to the peasants we often used difficult expressions. Probably a great part of our speeches were incomprehensible to them. I took a number of abstract terms and bookish expressions and tried to put them into simple language. Then I thought out a new plan of action. I decided not to go into the villages, but to pick out the liveliest spot I could find at the cross roads near the town, and start propaganda there. This I did.

In the morning I made my way to the temple of Lun-shan. The main roads from several districts ran past this spot. The peasants who took this road usually stopped before the temple to rest. I began talking to them about their living conditions. I spoke of the causes of their poverty and of how to get free from oppression. I gave examples of exploitation by landowners and explained the necessity for organization.

At first I spoke only to two or three peasants. Then gradually the circle of listeners increased. A small meeting gathered. They listened, half doubting, half believing. No more than four or five joined in the conversation. About ten simply listened. But even this was no small achievement.

For the next two weeks I went there every day. Soon I had a regular audience of about 50 listeners. Returning home once, I noticed that the merchants I met stared at me with peculiar attention. At home I was told that a great many relatives had visited us lately to inquire about my health. This seemed queer. Soon the mystery was cleared up.

"Look here, young gentleman," one of our laborers said to me. "You'd better stay at home in the future."

"Why?" I asked, puzzled at his tone.

"People are saying that you're not quite right in the head. Better try and get cured."

This amused me a good deal. Later on I learned that it was the gentry who had started these rumors. And not without success. Many peasants believed them and got out of the way hurriedly whenever I approached. Still, I went on with my work as usual.

Once I tried to explain in detail why the peasants should organize.

"If the peasants would unite they would be able to secure lower rent. The landowners would never be able to stand out against us. Illegal taxes and every kind of oppression would cease. The landowners would no longer be able to take the law into their own hands."

"What are you gabbing about there!" an elderly peasant shouted angrily. "You'd better ask Ming-ho not to press for the back rents, then maybe I'll believe that you're not fooling us!" Ming-ho was a relation of mine, a merchant and landowner.

I was just going to reply, when suddenly a young man sitting beside me broke in.

"That's not the way to talk," he admonished my opponent. 'You are working on Ming-ho's land. If Ming-Ho reduces the rent, you're the only one that will get any good from it. But what about me? I'm not renting it from him. The question is then, not to ask somebody for something, but to find out if we can organize or not. It doesn't only concern you, it concerns us all."

I was delighted to hear this rebuke. I found out the name of the speaker and asked him to come to see me in the evening. He came and we had a long talk.

"Every time after your speeches," he told me, "the other lads and myself—we go off and argue with those who have no class feeling. They're all afraid that you're just trying to stir them up. But our lads—we believe what you say."

I asked him who these lads were.

"There's Ling-pei, Ling-hunag, Li-Lao-san, Li-Hsi-hsiang, all good friends of mine."

"Couldn't you ask them to come round for a talk? You run and get them, will you, and I'll go and see about some tea."

"All right. I won't be a minute."

The water was just beginning to boil when Chang-Ma-an came back with his friends. They were all young peasants, none of them more than 30 years of age, but to judge from their manner and conversation, quite wide awake.

I started to talk about the peasant movement, the most urgent question for me.

"I go out every day to do propaganda, and the peasants pay no attention and don't want to speak to me. What should I do?" I asked them.

"One reason," said Ling-pei, "is that the peasants have no time to spare. The other is that your speeches are too complicated—I don't understand them always. Then, of course, you have no friends among the peasants. The best thing to do would be for us to go together some evening, about 7 or 8 o'clock. That's the time work is finished in the village. And try to speak as simply as you can."

Clearly these were very sensible lads.

"But remember," they warned me solemnly, "if you're making propaganda in the villages, leave the subject of their gods and saints alone." I made no objection.

"And what if just a few of us organized a peasant union?" Li-Lao-san went on. "If others joined us—all the better, if not—we stay in the union ourselves, just the same."

So we decided on this.

"For my part, I offered to go to the villages the next day.

"If you all agree, then let Chang-Ma-an and Ling-pei call for me tomorrow morning."

They were very pleased. We talked for a long while before they left.

"Success may not be far away," I wrote in my diary, when my visitors had left.

I had just finished breakfast when Chang and Ling appeared. We started out at once. We visited several villages in the Chishan district that day. Whenever my companions introduced me to the peasants, the latter became noticeably more at their ease. They talked frankly to me, were friendly and agreed to call a meeting that very day.

When we came in the evening everything was ready: a table, benches, lights. About 70 people had come. The young folks sat in front, the older peasants behind them and the women at the very back.

I spoke of how the peasants had fallen into servitude, of the cruelty and oppression of the landowners, and indicated how it was possible for the peasants to obtain their freedom.

The speech went on in the form of questions and answers. This evening my words met with the approval of the peasants: they saw that we were familiar with their living conditions.

At the close of the meeting it was decided to hold another meeting in a few days' time.

I promised to bring a gramophone and to show them some conjuring tricks. We visited still another village, where we were equally successful. Then we went off to the Chi-shan district. I had given notice beforehand that I would show some conjuring tricks there and make a speech.

At the appointed time more than 200 people had assembled. They all liked the tricks and I took advantage of this chance to make a long speech.

During the week we arranged similar meetings in other places. Everything was going well. And then I noticed suddenly that Ling-pei and Chang-Ma-ang seemed in low spirits the last few days. They had become silent and thoughtful.

"No doubt the landowners have been putting out some rumors," I thought, and began to question Ling and Chang. At first they made evasive replies, but I persisted and at last they resolved to make a clean breast of things.

"My father and mother and brothers," said Ling-pei, "are very dissatisfied that I spend my time going about with you and do not work in the fields. 'You go off with this Peng-Pai,' says my father, 'It's all right for him, but what will you do—starve?' And today when I started out he nearly beat me. And it's not only my father, but my mother and brothers, and my wife—they all grumble at me. And so that's why I'm a bit down in the mouth."

For a week after that Chang and Ling gave themselves wholeheartedly to our work. They made rapid progress and soon spoke at meetings themselves.

We found ready listeners. When we raised the question of joining the union, however, difficulties arose.

Each man would say: "Oh, yes, I approve of this union. If the others join, then I will."

We tried our best to convince them.

"If everybody is going to do as you do, then it'll be a thousand years before there is a union. Let's suppose, for instance, that a lot of people want to wade across a river. Each is afraid to move first. I wait for that one, he waits for me, we all stand and do nothing. We should join hands and cross together. If one stumbles, the others will hold him up."

At last they began to agree.

"All right. We'll join, we'll join." I took out a notebook and began to write down the names.

Several of those standing near agreed at first to join the union, but when they caught sight of my notebook, they took fright and stole away. I resolved for the future not to write down the names openly.

Recruiting for the union went on very slowly. After a month and a half we managed to enlist more than 30 members.

A remarkable thing happened just about that time.

In the Yunglu district, there lived a peasant that I knew as one of our union members. He had adopted a little girl of six, who was destined to be the wife of his son when she grew up. Then a terrible accident happened. The child fell down a lavatory and was drowned. Her own family learned of this and resolved to avenge her. About 40 relatives, both male and female, came with the child's mother and made a scene. They shouted that our peasant had killed the child for no reason at all, and that therefore one of the members of his family should pay with his life.

A fight began.

We called all the members of our union at once and discussed what was to be done. We decided to go altogether to Yunglu, and ask the assailants for an explanation. This we did. We questioned the relatives of the dead child, wrote down the names of both men and women, and then ordered them to return home.

When they saw that we wrote down their names in the notebook, they took fright. At the same time the district elder, Cho-Ming-mei came up to act as mediator, hoping to get a big fine out of the peasants. But we chased him away and nearly beat him. This made a big impression on the assailants and they changed their tune.

At last they went away with hanging heads. We were none the worse for the encounter.

The news spread to the villages for miles around. The peasants saw that our members stood by one another faithfully. We, for our part, made propaganda of the incident.

From that time on, the number of peasants joining the unions increased.

At this time the usual scramble for land began among the peasants. The landowners, desirous of raising the rent, changed their tenants. Our union then made it a rule, that any of our members who wished to rent a plot already taken by some other member should first obtain permission from the

union. If the landowner raised the rent of the land, leased by a member of the union, or gave it to another peasant, the consent of our member and the sanction of our union was necessary; otherwise no one would be allowed to work on it. Whoever broke this rule was to be heavily fined.

If a union member was forced, as a result of increased rent, to leave his allotment and was in a difficult position he could request the union to find him another allotment, or to recommend him for some kind of work.

After this rule was established, rivalry ceased between the members of our union. The landowners, also, did not dare to raise the rents.

Usually, when the peasants come up to the town for manure and moored their boats, the leader of the town *tuhao* demanded two *mao* for each boat. If the peasant refused to pay the rudder would be confiscated and he would have to pay a ransom of several dollars. The peasants were naturally most indignant about this. Our Peasants' Union did away with this tax. We managed it as follows: whenever any of the town *tuhao* passed through our villages or a boat came up from the town we demanded a certain sum for "road" tax. If we were not paid, then of course, we refused to pay also. The mooring tax introduced by the *tuhao* was dropped.

We also turned our attention to conflicts that arose between peasants. The gentry and the *tuhao* always took advantage of these clashes to send the peasants up for trial or arbitration. This, of course, meant their ruin. We gave notice that all quarrels arising between our members should be reported to the union.

From that moment, the political influence in the village passed from the hands of the gentry to the peasants' union. The revenues of the district police and law courts fell considerably while their hatred of our union had proportionately increased. At the same time the capable arbitration in peasants' conflicts by the union, and a number of other important victories attracted new members daily.

In September, 1922, there were more than 500 peasants in the union. Another branch was opened that month in the Chishan district.

Our Union began to spread its influence to other districts. Now no less than ten persons on an average, per day, applied for membership.

We carried on propaganda on a large scale. There was not a day or a night, that we did not hold a meeting somewhere in the villages. Beginning from October, the number of persons joining the union increased to 20 a day. After Chishan district, Gun-ping and others—altogether ten districts organized peasants' unions forming a ring round the county town. We began to prepare for the founding of a county peasants' union.

A peasants' pharmacy and first aid station was opened by the union in the chief street of Hai-feng. A doctor who sympathized with our movement took charge of the pharmacy and gave medical aid. Every member of the union had the right to free consultation, and medicine at half price. The doctor's wife was a midwife and gave free help in confinements. Only half the cost of the medicine had to be paid for in these cases. This amounted to only 20 or 30 cents. It was not surprising, then, that the demand for medicines and the midwife's services greatly increased, especially since the membership cards were sometimes used by non members.

On the first of January, 1923, the Hai-feng County Peasants' Union was officially opened. By that time the union had a membership of about 20,000 families, of 100,000 persons or one quarter of the population of the whole county. The ceremony was attended by more than 60 delegates from all the districts.

The pupils of the middle and higher elementary schools, and also some of the intelligentsia began to express, little by little, their sympathy with Peasants' Union, and to offer their services. The Union employed them as propagandists. Propaganda took different forms. Every district appointed a meeting for a certain date, and the propaganda bureau sent a speaker to this meeting. Other propagandists moved about all the time from one district to another. Lastly, if some public amusements, theatricals or religious processions were to be held, the peasants would notify the union three days beforehand, and we would send an agitator there. So many notifications of this sort came from all over the county that we hardly had time to attend to all of them.

The Peasants' Union brought forward a new slogan, "Organize peasants' schools!" The peasants' schools aimed at teaching the children arithmetic (so that they could not be defrauded by the landowners), writing the characters for cereals and agricultural implements, and how to conduct the business of the peasant unions. The peasants fully approved of all this.

The Union found a good teacher, hired a school house, and asked for no fees. How could the peasants not rejoice?

The school rented a piece of land from a landowner. The money for this was supplied by the Peasants' Union. The agricultural implements, buffaloes, and labor were provided by the fathers and brothers of the pupils. They also did the ploughing and sowing. As soon as the hay mowing season came round, the teacher and the children went to work in the fields. The children were divided into four groups,—each group was given a definite plot. There was rivalry between the groups as to who would finish the reaping first. Thus the pupils were not only doing something useful, but also getting accustomed to agricultural labor. The actual harvesting was done by the fathers and brothers. With the exception of the rent to be paid to the landowner all the rice collected went to support the teacher.

No more than a month after the opening of the first school, ten others, some of them evening schools, sprang up in different places. They were all under the guidance and control of the education department of the Peasants' Union. More than 500 peasants' children were thus given a chance to obtain an education.

As regards the department of agriculture, the union would not accomplish a great deal, on account of the lack of trained specialists and mainly because under the present system of rents, increase of production would simply tend to enrich the landowner. The peasants regarded the land as another man's property and did not, therefore, even try to fertilize it properly. In order, however, to encourage the development of social impulses among the peasants the union decided to take up the afforestation of the hills. According to our plan all the barren mountains of the county

were, at the end of the third year, to be covered with green woods.

The court of arbitration attached to the Peasants' Union endeavored to use every case brought before it as a weapon in the struggle with the social evil of private property.

According to the department of health in charge of medical aid and the pharmacy, 60 per cent of the peasant patients suffered from anaemia as a result of insufficient nourishment and malaria, 30 per cent came to the doctor with knife wounds and dysentery, 10 per cent suffered from swollen legs, and 5 per cent of the patients were confinements. The medicines mostly in use were quinine and ointments.

At the time of which we write the Peasants' Union was in its prime. The magistrate of the county, Wang-Knei-ting (a henchman of Chang-Tsung-ming), maintained a neutral attitude to the Union. The Union developed and in time became powerful.

For the peasants our slogans were: reduction of rents, the curbing of the landowners' arbitrary rule, the abolition of all payments and obligations, and refusal to make presents to the police. To protect ourselves from our enemies we employed different slogans for the outside world: improvement of agriculture, the education of the peasants and the organization of mutual aid.

The time passed with extraordinary rapidity. It was already February, 1923. On the first day of the Chinese New Year, when gay processions of peasants from all over the county came into Hai-feng we gave notice that on the 16th of January —Chinese old style—the Peasants' Union would hold its New Year festivities.

On the day appointed crowds of peasants with colored flags poured into the town from all parts. They were preceded by numerous bands and accompanied by village troupes of amateur actors, who were to perform the "Lion Dance" in special costumes.

The meeting organized on a big lawn in front of the Ling-tsu temple, was attended by about 10,000 people, 6,000 of whom were members of the Union. After the music had ceased and the chairman had opened the meeting, speeches began. These were followed by singing and then the "Lion Dance." It all concluded with the slogan, "Long live the Peasantry!" shouted by 10,000 voices to the deafening rattle of fireworks.

Speeches were made that day by Peng-pei, Huan Feng-ling, Yan-Isi-shan and others.

"For the proletariat and all toilers," the speeches ran, "there is no such thing as New Year joys until the victory of the revolution has been won. New Year's eve for us is merely the day when we must pay our debts to the capitalist usurers. We are united by our common sorrows and sufferings. But we are using this day to demonstrate our strength and unity to our enemy, to strengthen our revolutionary spirit and to prepare for the final struggle. That is why there is both pain and exultation in the heart of everyone of us today."

Two thousand new members joined our union that day. The funds of the union were increased by 400 dollars. After this, an average of 100 new members joined daily. We could hardly get through all our work. The landowners sounded alarm.

"We thought," they complained, "that nothing would come of it—that it was all boasting. And now it appears that they actually mean business."

Chen-Yuch-po, a land owner and "gentleman," resolved to crush the Peasant Union at all costs. He asserted that we were preparing to introduce the "pooling of wives and property." At that time General Chung-Jung-tang returned to Hai-feng. He had not long before suffered some defeat, I do not remember from whom. With him there were only a hundred demoralized soldiers. Chen-Yuch-po begged him to crush the Peasants' Union. The general, however, could not summon up enough courage to do so and Chen did not know what to do.

His two younger brothers occupied important posts in the Kuangtung government. He himself was regarded as the most influential person in Hai-feng after Cheng-Chung-ming. He was very religious and offered up prayers to Buddha daily, begging him to destroy us. . . .

February came round. We were on the eve of the first serious clash with the landowners.

Chu-mow, one of the influential landowners, raised the rent on Ya-kunk and five other tenants who tilled his land. They held the land on a permanent, hereditary lease.

According to this system the land cannot be taken away nor the rent raised while the tenant pays the rent settled in the agreement concluded by the forefathers. The landowner's demands were absolutely illegal, and the tenants consequently paid no attention to them. Chu-mow flew into a rage and sent his servants to bully Yu-kung. The servants started a row in Yu-kung's house. Yu-kung complained at once to the county Peasants' Union. He declared that in any case Chu-mow's oppression had become unbearable and that since the rent was to be raised, he preferred to give up his land. The Peasants' Union granted Yu-kung's request.

Chu-Mow grew still angrier. He knew that after a member of the Peasants' Union gave up a plot of land, none of the local peasants would dare to work on it.

He ordered Yu-kung and the others to return their plots to him. Next day Chu-mow appealed to the court. He accused Yu-Kung and the rest of theft. The judge sent three of the police to summon the farmers. When the police arrived in Huannitan, the peasants had shut up their houses and run away. As soon as the police became aware that the peasants were frightened, they turned "from foxes into tigers." They arrested Yu-kung and the others, demanded six dollars for their trouble in doing so, two dollars for lodgings for the night (although the place was only 20 kilometers from the town and no expenses for lodgings were incurred) and one *tael* (about four dollars) for the summons. Yu-kung and the rest had never possessed such a sum, so they were beaten by the police and dragged off to a little townlet, Hunting. There Yu-kung pawned his clothes and gave the money to the police as a bride. Then he begged a local shop-keeper to guarantee that the rest of the money would be sent to the town next day. After this he was set free.

Next day Yu-kung appeared at the Peasants' Union with the money and reported all that had happened. The Peasants' Union decided "that if after the payment of one *tael* for the summons, the police should demand more money, Yu-kung was to tell them that he had deposited his money with

the union and that all demands were, therefore, to be addressed to the union.

Then the union gave instructions as to how he was to behave at the trial.

Yu-kung and the other five arrived at the court.

"You accuse these people," said the judge to Chu-mow, "of not returning the whole of your land to you, but you cannot show any evidence to support the charge. Since no proof is forthcoming, the charge must be dismissed as false."

At first Chu-mow did not know what to say. Then he asserted that he had evidence and that he would bring it up next time. The trial was closed. The judge agreed to the request of Yu-kung that summonses should be sent through the Peasants' Union.

And so the affair ended.

"Such a thing never happened before!" Chu-mow said to the other landowners. "That a landowner should lose a case against a peasant! The Peasants' Union is undoubtedly responsible for my losing the case. We must do away with the union."

Chu-mow stirred up all the landowners living in Hai-feng. The first to respond to his appeal was Chen-Yuch-po, who gave a banquet in the Chultsusi temple. More than 500 landowners and *shenshi* came to the feast. The feast was an impressive sight. Long silk gowns and rich sleeveless jackets, goldrimmed spectacles, gold watches and chains, round faces and large, well filled bellies.

Chen-Yuch-po was in the chair.

"Communal property and communal wives—that is what the Peasants' Union is aiming at," he announced. "It is bribing the judges and insulting the landowners. Property must have an owner. This is the immutable law of heaven and earth. And this pest Peng-pai is stirring up the ignorant peasants, and preparing an insurrection. If we don't take steps in time, both we and the government will suffer. If the landowners are unable to pay the land tax, the state treasury will soon be empty. But even the worst may happen—open revolt!"

The chairman's speech was greeted with thunderous applause.

Wang-Iso-sin, a landowner and one of the gentry, brought forward a proposal:

"Since the peasants have a union, we also must organize our union, so as to resist the peasants.

This was unanimously approved.

When the judge, Chang-Iso-fu, learned what happened he got very frightened. Chen-Kai-tin swore at him and demanded the immediate arrest of the peasants in question.

Three days later Chang-Iso-fu summoned Yu-kung and the five other peasants through the Peasants' Union.

In view of the unexpectedness of the affair the union called a special meeting.

At first it was decided to send a representative to attend the inquiry. This would have involved fulfilling certain formalities and there was no time. Besides it was a civil case and until the sentence was pronounced the accused could not be arrested. There was, therefore, nothing to prevent Yu-kung and the rest from appearing at the trial. We, for our part, would try to get in to the court.

While we were making our preparations, we received the following notice:

"The Union for the Protection of taxpayers has collected more than a hundred hooligans at the eastern and western gates of the town. They are lying in wait for you and as soon as you appear you will be beaten."

Scouts were sent out. They confirmed the truth of this statement. Then it was resolved to send only the accused and to hold ourselves in readiness.

Between 70 and 80 of the most influential *sheshi* and landowners came to the trial. The judge lost his nerve. No actual inquiry was carried out, but the order was given to put Yu-kung and the others in chains and take them to prison. All the landowners left the court perfectly satisfied.

The Peasants' Union learned at once of the decision of the judge. If a judge arrests innocent people and shows no regard for the law, the public cannot recognize such a judge and must resort to force. An extraordinary meeting of all the local unions was held, and it was resolved to go to the court with a petition the next day.

That night we mobilized our forces. More than 40 runners were sent about the whole county to notify the local unions that at 10 o'clock in the morning they must all gather at Lun-Sho-pu.

Next day more than 6,000 people were collected there with flags in their hands.

Peng-pai, who opened the meeting, began:

"Our comrades have committed no crime, and still they have been arrested. The judge has no respect for the law. We must understand that this is not merely a question of Yu-kung but of all peasants. The defeat or victory of Yu-Kung means the victory or defeat of more than 100,000 peasants. At this most critical moment we all must act decisively and as one man."

"I understand—I understand," said the judge, bobbing a deferential courtesy. "Still, it will be necessary to summon both sides for the inquiry."

Chu-mow then suggested that a representative of the Union for the Protection of Taxpayers should be allowed to be present during the trial. Chang agreed to this also.

"It seems to me that we have a fine chance for the struggle. If the landowners declare war on us, we shall destroy all the hedges between their fields. We shall turn all the plots into one great field, so that not a landowner will be able to find the boundary line of his land. I think we won't need to fight them then, they will fight amongst themselves."

This speech was greeted with shouts of approval.

Then the president spoke: "Our Peasants' Union has prepared porridge for more than 6,000 people. Let's eat the porridge and start off for the court."

When we had started, heavy rain came on. Up to then there had been a drought and the rain cheered the peasants.

When we got to the court house our way was blocked by armed soldiers. We did not stop to argue with them, but broke through their ranks. The soldiers did not dare to fire on us.

When we got up close to the hall, we elected 20 peasant delegates.

The judge locked his house and, accompanied by several armed officials of the court police, came out to negotiate with the delegates. He was extremely polite to them, offered them tea and cigarettes. Then he enquired the reason for our coming.

We presented the following demands: to release the peasants arrested without reason, secondly, to

set them at liberty with music and firecrackers, and thirdly, to make a public apology to the peasants.

"It was Chen-Kai-tin who insisted on the imprisonment of the peasants," said the judge, trying to justify himself as best he could. "I couldn't do anything. Listen, Brother Pai, you know that we are the best of friends. Please take away the peasants and I'll set the prisoners free tomorrow."

"This is no time for talking about friendship," said Peng-pai, "I've come here to speak to you as a representative of the peasants.

The people waiting outside lost patience and just at that moment they shouted.

"Will you release the men or not? Give your answer at once!"

There was nothing more for the judge to do, but to release the prisoners.

"Long live the peasantry! Down with the landowners!" the cries of six or seven thousand peasants shook the town.

We went along the chief street in a triumphal procession. The rain was coming down harder than ever. The shouts of the peasants grew still louder: heaven, it seemed, was favoring them!

At the corner of every street students greeted the demonstration with cries of "Long live our free peasant comrades!" and let off fireworks.

This cheered the peasants up still more. When we returned to the offices of the county Peasants' Union, the sky had cleared.

The demonstration convinced the peasantry that the union was their own organ, actually protecting their own interests. At the same time hatred of the landowning class increased. The union's influence spread to all the neighboring counties. Such large numbers of people came to join the union that there was not enough time to receive them all.

In the Isitsin, Wuhuak Hueian and Lu-feng counties the members of the Peasants' Union increased every day. Then the Hai-feng county union became the Huai-chou General Union and county unions were formed in each county.

In less than two months' time the movement spread to the Chaochou, Punin and Huai-lai counties. At length the Kwang-tung Provincial Peasants' Union arose.

Every day from three to four hundred peasants had to be received on various matters. Fortunately the number of comrades taking part in the organization work, also increased.

The Union for the Protection of Tax Payers, organized by the Hai-feng gentry, the landowners and all the upper classes was terrorized by the unheard of demonstration and the freeing of the arrested peasants. At the same time all the members of the Peasants' Union announced that the rice for the rent lay in the peasants' granaries and that if the landowners dared to attack them, all the boundaries between the fields would be done away with. At this the Tax Payers' Union quieted down. Chen-Yuch-po, the president of the Union, together with the other superstitious gentry began to pray to Pu-sa (a Buddhist saint) to show them some means of resisting the Peasants' Union. They organized Fu-luan (a spiritistic seance) in the Huan-Lao Temple. The "spirit" of a Shanti when appealed to wrote the characters—"The Peasants' Union will undoubtedly be victorious."

The landowners and the gentry hung their heads in despair.

Next day Chen-Yuch-po called a general meeting of the Tax Payers' Union. More than a hundred people were present.

Chen-Yuch-po announced at once that he wished to resign the post of president of the union, and gave the following explanation:

"Yesterday we held a spiritistic seance. The spirit that appeared in response to our summons, Juan-tian Shanti, said that the Peasants' Union would conquer.

"The spirit also wrote a verse that concluded—"May Han-yu grow and prosper." Han-yu was Peng-pai's former name. To go against what Yuan-tian Shanti said is impossible.

"Further, I asked Juan-tian Shanti how I should act? He ordered me to go to Hong-kong. I shall remain two days more in Hai-feng and then retire."

Two days later Chen-Yuch-po left for Hong-kong. Fearing the power of the Peasants' Union, Chen had arranged the seance purposely, so as to justify his flight. After his departure the Union for the Protection of Tax-payers was dropped.

From this time on only one person came forward openly against the Peasants' Union. It was one of Chen-Chiung-min's relatives, Chen-Po-hua, the editor of *Luan-jikan*. Every day fresh libels were published in this paper. Wang-Iso-sin, a *shenshi* and landowner and subsequently county magistrate, and Tsis-Tsin-yun, Chen-Chiung-min's former teacher who had a great deal of influence secretly sent telegrams to Chen-Chiun-min and to the Canton court. These telegrams declared that the Peasants' Union was in open revolt, was taking the law into its own hands, breaking down the yamens, and setting criminals free.

At that time the Peasants' Union was, as a matter of fact, in quiet waters. It was carrying on propaganda and organization work.

During the first half of the 12th year of the Republic (1923), the peasant movement in Hai-feng went on developing without any outstanding incidents. Once at midnight, in the sixth month—old Chinese style—a strong wind arose and thunder was heard. Soon the wind became a hurricane that threw down the walls of the houses and tore up the trees by the roots. Towards dawn there was a flood. Everywhere despairing cries for help could be heard.

Although the wind had dropped, the water did not recede for the space of two days.

This flood was one of the greatest calamities that could happen: it was just before harvest time.

The Peasants' Union was extremely active at that time. Life saving brigades were formed at once.

The energetic work of the union made an extremely favorable impression on all the peasants.

And then the waters receded. Peasants flocked to the union from the villages. Some reported their troubles, others asked what they should do about paying the rent. Every day between 500 and 600 people visited the union.

It was decided to hold a plenary meeting of the executive committee to discuss the problems that had arisen. Since some of the members were working at the time in Lu-feng county, a preliminary meeting was held before they came. At this meeting, two widely divergent tendencies were shown in the discussion of the rent question. Certain members insisted on the primary plan of the Union, according to which the struggle in Hai-

feng for the reduction of the rent was only to begin in three years' time.

Their opponents pointed out that the circumstances had changed a great deal. If the landowners were to demand the rent in full, in spite of the failure of the crops it would be a crying shame. As regards the peasantry, in their despair over this calamity, they were ready to fight the landowners to the bitter end. It would be wrong to underestimate their strength. In such conditions there was a fair chance of victory.

It was resolved to discuss all these questions at the plenary meeting, and in addition, to call a conference of the representatives of all districts.

The plenary session was held in strictest secrecy. The following resolution was taken: to reduce the rent by 70 per cent. If the crops do not exceed 30 per cent of the normal, to make a corresponding reduction. In case of the complete failure of the crops—to pay nothing.

The resolution was passed.

On the 20th day of the 7th month a meeting of representatives of the Hai-feng county districts was held. In his speech the chairman described the terrible situation in these districts. He gave an account of the activities of the Union and of the discussion that took place at the plenary session with respect to the rent question.

The resolution not to pay any rent was rejected: the majority were in favor of paying a maximum of 30 per cent of the rent. The executive committee was deputed to work out measures for carrying this resolution into practice.

After this the meeting was closed.

Soon the slogan to pay 30 per cent became a general one. Even the small children in the villages learned to shout it in the street. Groups of propagandists went about in every district arranging meetings and investigating conditions. The committee issued at the same time a manifesto to the peasants.

"It is not true," ran the manifesto, "that the landowners' land was acquired by purchase. The fathers and grandfathers of the present landowners took it by force from the peasants. Even supposing that it was bought, it was only paid for once, while the landowners have received rent for it annually for hundreds and thousands of years. Every year the peasants invest capital in the land. Seed, fertilizer, buffaloes, implements, all these demand no small expenditure and only then the rice will grow. The landowners receive the greater part of the harvest without doing any work. How much money and sweat have we and our peasant forefathers expended on this land!

"This year has been a bad one. The storm and floods have destroyed all that we sowed. The landowners' land has not disappeared, but all the labor and capital that we invested in it has been blown to the winds and washed away by the floods.

"Where are the crops to pay the rent? We must resist the cruel landowners! We cannot pay more than three-tenths of the rent, and if we have no means of paying even that, we shall refuse to pay anything at all."

The executive committees sent round notices to all the district police stations, indicating the possibility of conflicts arising between the peasants and the landowners, and warning the police that such conflicts should come under civil and not criminal law. The police, therefore, had no right to take any decisions in such cases or to arrest the peasants.

Just about then the whole of the Hai-feng county was sharply divided into two camps: the landowners and the peasants. The workers were all on the side of the peasantry. The majority of the shopkeepers took a neutral attitude. Some were, however, afraid of complications and dissatisfied with the "restlessness" of the Peasants' Union. The bigger merchants who owned land themselves, were on the side of landowners, like the *shenshi*, the officials, *tuhao* and declassé elements.

The majority of students came from the families of the big and small landowners, the *shenshi*, and *tuhao*. The movement for the reduction of the rent affected their family interests. The landowners took advantage of this to try and set the students against the Peasants' Union. Many of the elders took the young people away from school, saying that they could no longer afford to pay. As a result, the students who had at first expressed warm sympathy with us, now changed their attitude. Some of them even went so far as to become spies for the landowners.

It was the fourth day of the seventh month (July 4). The magistrate Wang-Iso-sin, published a notice saying that:

"Today Pen-pai, the ring leader of the robbers, intends to make an insurrection. The peasants must not allow themselves to be fooled, otherwise they will suffer terribly."

Police were posted all along the roads leading to Hai-feng to prevent the peasants from getting to the conference. The peasants, however, drove away the police and tore down all the bills, posted up by the magistrate. Wang-Iso-sin was terror stricken. He collected about 30 police and gendarmes and posted them to guard the four gates of the yamen. Trenches were dug in front of the main entrance.

By 10 o'clock in the morning between four and five thousand peasants assembled in the Peasants' Union offices. The landowners and *shenshi* hid, the shops were closed. Wang-Iso-sin lost his head completely and telegraphed to General Chung-Tin-tan, in Swabul, to send soldiers for the suppression of the bandits. Chung had very few soldiers and at first hesitated. But Wang insisted, saying that he would take all the responsibility upon himself. On his instigation the *shenshi* began to bombard the general with telegrams: "The Iufei have come to Hai-feng." Then Chung set all the soldiers he had—a hundred. We found this out through our scouts. Since we did not intend to go to the yamen with a "petition" nor to storm the prison, we supposed that this mobilization of the enemy forces was simply due to fright.

At midday the conference was opened. More than 20,000 were present. Peng-pai made the opening speech, followed by Lao-hun and Ling-shen, Huan-Chen-tan, Yan-pen and Pang-Han-yuan made stirring appeals. When the speakers described the sufferings of the peasants, tears came into everybody's eyes. At last, with thunderous shouts of "Long live the peasants!" the meeting closed. It was thought in the town that we were going to the county yamen. The police and gendarmes took to their heels as one man. Wang-Iso-sin also disappeared. The landowners and shopkeepers were terrified.

In the evening we heard that the detachment of soldiers sent from Swabul had stopped half way

and refused to move when the news came that the peaasants had broken into the town. Only a little later, when more reassuring news came, did they venture into Hai-feng.

Since we did not go to the yamen with a "petition" nor attack the enemy, we decided that the enemy would not try to provoke us.

That evening Huan-Li-suan, the president of the County Assembly came to the union. He pretended that he wanted to see Pang-Han-yuan, but in reality he had simply come to find out whether many people remained in the Union and if we were prepared to defend ourselves. When he found that all the people had left after the conference, he reported it to Wan-Iso-sin. The latter invited all the influential gentry to come that night to his house to discuss the situation. About 40 came. Chen-Isis-chow, a landowner and a *shenshi* was particularly vehement. He advised them to take advantage of the moment before it was too late and finish off the Peasants' Union at one blow. A plan of action was worked out in dead secret.

Never suspecting our danger, we made no preparations to resist an attack, but simply hid the more valuable of the documents.

At daybreak on July 5, Wang-I-san, the magistrate's younger brother, took command of more than 300 men, consisting of gendarmes, police, Chung-Isin-tang's soldiers and county militia.

They marched through the eastern gate of the city, surrounded the premises of the Peasants' Union and opened fire. Only then we understood that we were trapped. Resistance was out of the question. We scattered and tried to escape over the roofs of the houses.

Yan-Ii-shen, Hun-Iin-ya, Iuan-Feng-hu and Iang-Wei-tsin, who were members of the executive committee, together with a score of employees, had no time to get away, but were taken by the soldiers. The latter burst in through the main gate. The soldiers began to beat the employees with rifle butts, but they did not dare to touch Yan-Ii-shen, who was well known for his skill in Chinese boxing. The premises of the Union were looted and sealed up. When the prisoners were being taken to the local yamen, the *shenshi*, landowners and their agents greeted the procession with loud cheering. Wang-Iso-sin who had already taken his place in the court, began the examination.

"Are you the chairman of the Peasants' Union?" he asked Yan-Ii-shen.

"Yes."

"Peng-pai is using you as tools to make a rebellion. I have already issued 20 orders and you still go on disobeying me! Do you admit your crimes?"

"It is not Peng-pai who is using us, as tools, but we who are using Peng-pai. Pen-pai is not working for his own ends: he is sacrificing himself, protecting the interests of the peasantry. He is a rebel. This I admit. But Wang, the county magistrate is still more of a rebel than Peng-pai. Peng-pai is helping the poor, trying to save their lives. If that is rebellion, what would you call what you are doing, helping the landowners and capitalists to exploit the poor?"

Wang-Iso-sin rapped with his stick on the table.

"Shooting is too good for you. You dare to do propaganda for communism and communal wives. Admit it at once!"

"Communism depends on the stage of development of society and not on whether we do propaganda or not. As regards communal wives, the custom does exist already, not for us, but for you —the rich men and officials. You visit the brothels daily and sleep with prostitutes. Aren't they communal women? Just take the county magistrate—and—has he not two wives? Then he must believe in communal husbands. It's you who are doing propaganda for communal wives and husbands. And we are fighting against this and sooner or later will win."

Wang-Iso-sin nearly burst with rage.

"Beat him, beat him!" he screamed hoarsely, striking the table with all his strength.

Yan-Ii-sen was beaten within an inch of his life. Wang ordered the prisoners to be taken to the cells and put in chains. The examination in court was over.

At that time Peng-pai, Ling-su, Pang-Han-yuan, Lang-Ising-tsin, Mo-Shui-chia, Ling-pei, Ma-an, Hun-chui, Li-Lao-tun, and others, a dozen men in all, were hiding in a small Yaoist monastery at the foot of the Yach-an Mountains. It was a very good spot for defence purposes, and besides all the local peasants were warm sympathisers of the Union. Soon after our arrival sentries were posted on the hills and near the passes. The superior of the monastery had formerly belonged to the party hostile to Chen-Chinumg-ming. In the fourth year of the Republic (1915), he was defeated and became a Yaoist monk. He received us warmly, particularly since our comrade Hun-hui was a former friend of his.

We called a meeting to work out a plan of action. Peng-pai suggested mobilizing the peasants immediately, advancing on Hai-feng and fighting a bloody battle. Most of our peasant comrades were in favor of this. Pang-Han-yuan was against it, however.

"We would all be delighted to finish them off, but the peasants would have to pay for it afterwards," he said. "If we decide to discontinue the Peasants' Union then I agree, but if we are to go on with our work we cannot attempt anything like that. Peng-pai's suggestion is simply called out by momentary indignation. In my opinion we should go first of all to Lao-lung and see Cheng-Chiung-ming—Cheng-Chiung-ming cannot, of course, approve the action of the members of the Peasants' Union; but the raid on the Union and the arrest of its members are not necessarily his doing. We must try and convince him that if the county authorities are going to use repressive measures towards the peasants instead of expressing sympathy with them in the calamity that has befallen them, this will greatly injure the reputation of the government itself. Besides this, Chang-Chiung-ming has more than once spoken of the Hai-feng Peasants' Union and of Comrade Peng-pai with great respect. This can be explained through the fact that he had long wanted to use us for his own purposes.

"I suggest that Peng-pai should go to Lao-lung and present the following demands to Cheng-Chiung-ming:

1. The immediate release of the arrested peasants.

2. The land-rent should be reduced according to the rules laid down by the Union.

3. That the Peasants' Union should be allowed to reopen.

4. That Wang-Iso-sin and the others should be punished. Even if the two first points are granted, that will be already a victory.

"The work of the Peasants' Union will have to be carried on secretly. The fourth demand will probably not be granted. Still it is worth while to make it. And if the first two are not granted, then there remains only—open rebellion."

Ling-su supported Peng-pai.

"Let Man-yuan and our present comrades get arms ready, and Peng-pai start out as soon as possible. If his journey proves fruitless, we shall resort to more drastic measures."

This resolution was approved. It was decided that Peng-pai, Ling-su, and Lang-Lsin-tsin should start out for Laolung that same day.

Laolung lies over 500 li from Hai-feng. The road runs over high mountains. It would be a six or seven days' walk.

A little while before that Ling-su had suffered from bad legs. To take on such a long tramp, it seemed, would be beyond him. But he hurried us all the time and paid no attention to his ailment.

We all dressed in tattered garments, like beggars, and took only ten Mexican dollars with us. Dozens of peasants came to see us off as we went out of the village and said goodbye.

"Fight for us! Fight well!" shouted the peasants after us.

As we were passing through the village of Iunpusai, we met a peasant. He was a member of our Union and knew me. He asked us to come in to his house and rest awhile. We did so.

He gave us tea and cigarettes.

"You can say what you like here, don't be afraid," he said.

"All the local peasants are members of the Union. Where are you going?" We told him.

"I thought so. Yes, you must go to Lao-lung," said one of the men sitting there.

Peng-pai began to tell them about recent events. The crowd of listeners grew. Even the women and children were indignant when they heard of the breaking up of the Union.

After dinner the host suggested that we have a good rest, and promised to wake us at midnight.

At midnight there was a knock at the door. . . .

Supper was ready in the best room.

We got up at orce.

After supper our host fetched a big umbrella and a lantern and led us to palanquins.

"Who are the palanquins for?"—we asked.

"Don't ask questions," said the peasant, "but get in. We want you to get to Laolung as quick as you can. Our lads will take you as far as Isin-tsin and then return."

We made no further objections.

"If it's like that, then we'd like to leave a little money to their families."

"But they are all comrades! Who will want to take anything? When you come back and the Peasants' Union has been set up again, then you can pay. And now you'll need money yourselves. Well, now, goodbye!"

We had to submit whether we liked it or not.

For fear of drawing the attention of the garrison stationed at Hao-tansu we extinguished the lantern and went on in silence.

Every time we passed a Buddhist temple or a shrine our hospitable host would light three incense-sticks and, bowing to the ground murmur:

"Lord, lord, help them to get safely to Laolung, restore the Peasant's Union to us."

It was beginning to grow light when we reached Hao-tan. We had breakfast with one of the local members of the Union, a man named Huang and started out again.

Huang and our host escorted us another 30 li and then said farewell to us.

The rain grew heavier. The road led over mountains. It was extremely hard to go on. Towards evening we got to San-Chia-kou. We had to cross three swift rivers. There were no boats, only rafts. When we had crossed, night fell. It was impossible to make out a face at two paces away. Not a human dwelling anywhere in sight.

Soon we came upon a peasant going along a narrow path with a pick on his shoulder. He decided that we were soldiers and took to his heels.

"Don't be afraid," shouted our bearers. "We aren't soldiers!" They shouted in the local dialect. I could not understand them well.

The peasant slackened speed a little, but hesitated about coming nearer to us. The bearers went up to him and began to explain something to him in excited tones.

A little later the peasant went off across the river.

"How about tonight?" I asked the bearers.

"It'll be all right, wait a little. He'll come back in a minute."

An hour passed. The peasant came back, with a lantern in one hand and a hen in the other.

"What's the hen for?" I asked.

"To eat, of course."

I gave it back to him as Comrade Ling-su had several pieces of meat with him. We went on another half-li and got to an inn. It had been deserted for several years now on account of the soldiers. It had been half-broken down by a hurricane. Still we found shelter in one room that had remained almost untouched. We cooked the meat we had brought with us and had supper.

The peasant began to tell us about the cruelty of Chan-Chiung-ming's soldiers.

"They steal everything they can lay their hands on. They take the men prisoners and rape the women. Even the souls of the dead fear the soldiers. When I saw you I thought you were soldiers and ran away. But when I found that you were members of the Peasants' Union, I was very glad."

"Then there are members of the Peasants' Union among you?" we asked.

"A good many. I didn't join the Union myself yet, but I sympathize with it."

We chatted for a few hours before we went off to sleep.

Next day we woke at dawn. We had breakfast and got ready to start. We gave the peasant two or three shillings for the firewood and rice.

The peasant took the money and after a pause, wrote something on a scrap of paper and put the paper and the money into my pocket as I was going away.

I pulled out the paper and read:

"You are helping the poor. You are trying to save them. You are doing your duty. I cannot take your money so I return it to you with best wishes for a safe journey!"

I read it through, then turned to him and said:

"We are working for the Peasants' Union. We are not saving any poor people. They will save

themselves. We have received orders and we carry them out with pleasure. If you don't want to take money, then we swear never to set foot in this house again."

The peasant, seeing that we were determined, took the money reluctantly. He walked a good bit of the way with us.

We spent all day crossing the mountain ranges. Nothing but woods and rocks all the way. In the ravines—the huge sky, hemmed in by the mountains, looked like an inverted cup. But we were afraid of nothing except meeting a tiger.

We hardly came across any even ground here. It would have been possible to ride in the palanquin. Comrade Lin-Su-sang sang all the way or told us good stories. We felt well and in excellent spirits. At 5 o'clock in the afternoon we arrived at Lun-Wo-si and halted for the night at a little hotel. There we learned that the county magistrate had arrived from Isi-isin to collect money and supplies for the army. The local tradespeople were extremely dissatisfied.

Next day—the eighth of the seventh month, according to the old style, we got up at 5 o'clock in the morning. After breakfast we sent away three of the bearers—giving them a few dollars for expenses. The fourth bearer stayed with us and we went on our way.

On the fifth day we arrived at Lao-Lun.

As soon as we arrived we went to see Chen-Chiung-ming and introduced ourselves as delegates from the Hai-feng Peasants' Union.

"Well, what is it? You've been making trouble I suppose," said Chen-Chiung-ming.

Peng-pai: "It is not we who have made trouble, but Wang-Iso-sin and Chun-Iin-tan. Are you aware, Mr. Chen, of the extent of the disaster and the suffering caused by it to the Hai-feng people?"

Chen-Chiung-ming: "No matter what the extent of the disaster might be and no matter who may have suffered, according to the old custom, the crops must be divided equally between the landowner and the tenant. And you offer only three-tenths of the harvest. You think that will do? What do you think you are—an emperor?"

Peng-pai: "No, I am not an emperor and I don't think you are, either. The landowners and officials are also not emperors. Why is it, then, that Mr. Chen can break the old customs of the Manchu emperors, and we are not allowed to break even those customs that were not introduced by the emperors. If we do away with an old custom according to which the farmer must surrender half the rice harvested even in a bad year, we do not act arbitrarily, but justly and with excellent reasons."

Now Chen-Chiung-ming was a proud man and regarded himself as extremely wise, so he only nodded his head.

"That's true, quite true," he said. "And still, they say that you started a rebellion. They succeeded, apparently, in seizing a great number of pikes, knives and flags. Isn't that so?"

Peng: "And do you really think that, at the present stage in armaments, it is possible to make a rebellion with pikes and knives? Knives were found in the Union, but, since nobody was killed with them it means there was no rebellion."

Chen: "Here is their telegram. Read it."

Peng: "From Chun-Sit-tan. The peasants and robbers of the county have got together, bought themselves arms and are preparing for a rebellion. This looks black for your base (Hai-feng). Awaiting instructions. Tin-tan."

The telegram from the county magistrate of Hai-feng, Wang-Isosin, ran:

"Peng-pai, Ling-su, Yu-Chuan-chi and others collected all the peasants, united with the Tu-fei and armed themselves with the intention of attacking the county-town on the morning of the 4th. I was responsible for keeping order. At dawn on the 4th, together with the detachments of the Divisional Commander Chun, I attacked the robbers' lair. The robbers opened fire and offered resistance. Fortunately, the soldiers threw themselves boldly into the attack and defeated the robbers. The ring leader of them, Peng-pai, ran away. Yang-Ti-shan, Huan-sin and others, about 25 in all were taken prisoners. Several score knives and pikes were found and also flags, a seal and a great many forms. I issued an order for the arrest of Peng-pai, Ling-su, Yi-Chuan-chi and others. This I respectfully bring to your notice. I shall keep you informed of the further course of events. Wang-Iso-sin."

"Do you believe this, Mr. Chen?" we asked.

Chen: "Of course not."

Peng: "Then I would ask you to satisfy the following demands:

1. To release the innocent peasants.
2. To telegraph the landowners that the rent should be reduced according to the rules established by the Peasants' Union.
3. The Peasants' Union to be opened.
4. That the Peasants' Union should be compensated for the losses caused by the police raid."

Chen: "You ask too much at once. This will set the landowners against you still more. I am very much afraid of this because my uncle is one of them. It would be better for a start to present the first demand. If that goes well, then we shall try the second."

Peng: "Very well, let us begin with the first."

Chen-Chiung-ming went into his study to make a rough draft of the telegram to be sent.

We went to the secret service department. The people working there showed me the telegram sent from Hai-feng by Ma-Yu-han. It read thus:

"Peng-pai is extremely energetic. Of all the younger generation he is one of those that show great promise. This recent incident, however, was not well thought out. In my opinion it would be a good thing to send Peng-pai to Russia for a while. He would then be of great assistance to us in the future. The Peasants' Union can wait."

The second telegram was from Peng-Han-yuan, and was addressed to "Peng-pai, c/o Cheng-Chiung-ming."

"After the raid on the Peasants' Union Wang-Iso-sin is sending soldiers all about the district and taking their membership cards from the peasants. Every peasant is forced to pay several dollars when he gives up his ticket. There is disorder everywhere on this account. All the Peasant Unions and the schools started by them, are in a ferment. The Union for the Defence of the Tax-Payers is demanding the payment of the rent. The masses are greatly incensed by this. If nothing is done soon to pacify the people, a rebellion is imminent."

Chen-Chiung-ming returned shortly and handed us the rough draft of the telegrams addressed to the county magistrate, Wang.

"It is natural for the peasants to demand a reduction of the rent in a bad year when crops have failed. The landowners, in demanding half of the harvest, place the peasant in too difficult a position. The peasants offer three-tenths of the rent. This also cannot be taken as a general rule. An arbitration court must be set up where both the landowners and the peasants would be represented. Lu-li-chao seems to have the best reputation for justice of any man in the district. He should be requested to organize the above named court. As regards Yan-Tin-shan and the other peasants who have been arrested, according to information obtained, they did not cause or take part in any disturbance, therefore they should be released at once to prevent further trouble. The contents of this telegram should be communicated to the Society for the Protection of Tax Payers."

When we had read it through we made a slight addition: "the contents of this telegram should be communicated to the Peasants' Union and the Society for the Protection of Tax Payers.

Cheng-Chiung-ming invited us to dinner. We agreed hoping to use this opportunity to make propaganda. During dinner we talked for a long time about the terrible condition of the peasants.

Next day it was decided to leave Ling-su in Laohin. In the first place he had dysentery and we hoped he would get better there, and secondly to keep in touch with the secret service and to make corrections or additions in any telegrams concerning us, sent or received by Chen-Chiung-ming. This he would be able to manage through our acquaintances in the secret service department among whom we had done some propaganda.

If the telegrams sent from Hai-feng were likely to discredit the Peasants' Union, they were to be kept back. If Chen-Chiung-ming's telegrams to the members of the Tax Payers' Society were worded too mildly, some expression were to be altered a little.

Peng-pai and Isun-sin returned to Hai-feng. On the fifth day we came to Wuhuo where we were delayed by the floods. After a few days we managed to get to Swatow.

On the fifth day we arrived at Lu-feng.

That night we set out for Hai-feng. We walked all night. Only at dawn did we arrive at Pan-Han-yuan's house.

This is what Pang-Han-yuan told us of the outrages committed by the county magistrate and the landowners shortly after we left.

"One of the peasants from the village of Pei-hunhu, in the Hung-pin district rented land from a Buddhist monk from the Wansi Temple. This peasant, who knew nothing of the abolition of the Peasants' Union, refused point blank to pay more than three-tenths of the rent. The monk complained to the Hung-ping police. The chief of the police, thinking to make some profit out of this, sent six police with a warrant to arrest this peasant. The police were severely beaten by the peasants and could hardly get home. The chief of the police could do nothing, since he had no other forces. Then he asked the collector of military taxes, Chan-Yun-sin, for help; Chan had four body-guards, armed with revolvers at his disposal. These he sent to arrest the peasants.

The body guards arrived in Pei-hunhu and opened fire at random before they saw anybody. They killed no one, the main loss was that of the cartridges. They did not arrest anyone, and returned empty handed. Chan-Yun-sin flew into a rage and a little later appeared suddenly in the village at the head of body guards and police and arrested four aged men. These he placed in the police station, hoping to obtain a ransom for them.

But none of the prisoners nor the villagers had a penny. Then the affair was referred to the county magistrate, Wang-Iso-sin. The latter immediately fined the prisoners 80 dollars. In order to pay this fine one of the prisoners had to sell his son, another his daughter and the third—his buffalo. When the chief of police heard of this he refused to release three of the prisoners. "But the county magistrate had decided our business," they protested. "Why are you arresting us again?

"You paid the county magistrate, but you did not pay me yet. Pay a hundred dollars' fine, or I won't let you go."

Only after the old men from the neighboring village had stood surety for them, were the prisoners released. They had to promise to pay 40 dollars in the course of a month.

Our comrades from the Peasants' Union who had been arrested after the raid were still in prison without food or money. Chen-su, Chi-yun and I began to support them. Every day we sent them food and a little money. A month passed by, and we learned that they had never received anything. Qang-I-san, the chief jailer, had taken the things for himself. Our comrades were kept in chains day and night. They had pawned all they had. The money collected secretly for them by the peasants was also finished.

When Chen-Chiung-ming's telegram arrived, I contrived to get hold of it and sent it to be published in the newspaper *Hai-feng Lu-an-bao*. The editor, Chen-Po-hua, delayed its publication purposely. Then the typesetters, out of solidarity with the peasants, let it through without permission.

When Chen saw that the telegram was printed, he flew into a frightful rage, ran into the printing press, cursed the workers and almost had a fight with them. Two typesetters were dismissed.

As regards the peasants' dispensary and clinic, they barely escaped being broken into. General Chun-Tin-tan had heard rumors that the Peasants' Union was keeping 4,000 dollars in the dispensary. He sent the military tax collector to demand the money, threatened to arrest the doctor and seal the premises. Just at that time Ma-Yu-han returned to Hai-feng and the affair was dropped.

Once Yan-li-shan's wife and Cheng-ming's daughter came to see me. They were both very class conscious women. They tried to calm my fears.

"Yan and Chen are in prison. But it's not so bad yet. Don't worry."

The Peasants' Union was officially dissolved but nevertheless continued to function. Masses of peasants from the villages came to see us daily. They were extremely anxious about the fate of the Union. After all that had happened the peasants did not seem to have lost their spirits, but on the contrary, to have become more militant than ever. That was very cheerful.

When Chin-Chiung-ming sent his telegram, we thought that would have some effect. But it was not so. Wang-So-sin paid no attention whatever to it. It was clear that Chen himself must have secretly sanctioned the dissolution of the Peasants' Union. He had simply sent the telegram for appearance's sake.

We discussed the situation and came to the following conclusions:

1. That Chen's influence was on the decline. He was already incapable of controlling his subordinates. Further, Chen obviously had something to do with the dissolution of the Peasants' Union. It was no use counting on his releasing our arrested comrades. Therefore we must collect all the money we could to help them and their families.

2. We must use Lin-Shu-feng, Huan-I and Ma-Yu-han to exercise pressure on Chen-Chiung-ming.

3. Peng-Han-yuan, Chen-su and Chi-yun should remain in Hai-feng to keep up the connections with the members of the Peasants' Union. A rebellion at the present moment would not be of any use and therefore there is no use in calling for one.

4. Li-Lao-hun and Peng-pai are to go to Swatow, and then to Hong-kong. This must be done in strict secrecy.

The day after these resolutions were passed Li-Lao-hun and Peng-pai left Li-feng secretly and went to Swatow. From there they went to Hong-kong.

It semed impossible to collect money in Hong-kong. In the first place we knew very few people and in the second, no one sympathized.

Once when we had nothing else to do, we went off to talk to the rickshawmen with the idea of doing propaganda. Most of the rickshawmen were declassé peasants from the county of Hai-feng. There were many former members of the Peasants' Union amongst them. They felt deeply for the comrades who they heard were arrested. We decided to make a collection among them. A peddler called Wang-Da-shui made a speech which contributed in no small degree to the success of the collection.

Some rickshawmen gave a few cents, others 20 or 30. Not a few gave even as much as a dollar. More than 80 dollars were collected. We were delighted and sent the money to Hai-feng immediately.

Lin-Shu-feng suggested going once more to Lao-lung to talk to Chen-Chiung-ming. It was no use staying any longer in Hong-kong. We started out. We arrived at Swabue via Swatow. There we borrowed 50 dollars for our expenses from Ma-Yu-han and in a week's time were in Lao-lun.

Chen-Chiung-ming was very polite to us, shook hands and offered us tea. Conversation began.

Peng-pai: "Mr. Chen, the Hai-feng peasants have been in prison for several months now. You have sent telegrams more than once but they are still not released. What is the reason?"

Chen: "These rotten Hai-feng gentry sent telegrams accusing me of being under your influence. A few days ago Wang-Iso-sin informed me that he had sentenced the peasants to six months' imprisonment."

Peng: "If you gave an order for their release and it was not carried out, then why have you not punished those who disobeyed it?"

Chen: "This is all the work of my uncle and my former teacher, Lang-Iso-sin. I am afraid of them myself. You must be aware of what an important part the gentry play in society today. It's very difficult to have any dealings with them. But wait a while, I shall soon be in Swatow myself and then we will settle this business together."

Peng: "All right. We shall wait till you come to Swatow."

Chen: "I have very few people here, especially those on whom I could depend. It would be very good if you could help me. Stay here a while. Then, when I go to Swatow, you will come with me."

Once the conversation came round to the revolution.

"The greatest Chinese militarist," said Chen, "was Juan-Shi-kai. He has vanished from the stage. Sun-Yat-sen was second to him. If Sun is not overthrown, Kwangtung will never enjoy peace again. Now he is for communism. He is making the same mistake as Lenin did. Lenin made private property public. I believe in the turning of public property into private. What China needs at present is guild socialism."

Peng: "There's no use talking about 'isms' in China now. The main thing is to free the mass of workers and peasants from oppression."

Two days later Chen-Chiung-ming started for Swatow. We took the same boat.

In Swatow we paid him another visit and raised the question of the release of the prisoners.

"For this it will be necessary to disunite the gentry," Chen announced. "I shall write first to my uncle and tell him not to meddle, and also to some of the more influential *shenshi*. When the latter are divided among themselves, it will be easier to act. I have been told that when you put yourself at the head of 5,000 peasants and released criminals by force, it aroused an unfriendly feeling towards the Peasants' Union. Besides, Yan-Isis-wei says you borrowed a revolver from him. Is it true?"

Peng: "Nothing of the kind occurred."

We felt that further conversation with him would be useless and went away.

In the meantime we started energetically on the organization of the Peasants' Union. We thought that by extending the movement we might be able to help the peasants of Hai-feng and, that, in the second place, it would be possible to collect money for our arrested comrades.

Soon we had to consider the question of calling a congress in Swatow of delegates from the counties of Hai-feng, Lu-fang, Huei-yang, Isitsin, Pun-sin, Husilai-ienghai, Ichowan-Chaoan and Wuhu.

The congress was called on the spur of the moment. We only let the Chow-mei military headquarters know of it and telegraphed to Chen-Chiung-ming indicating the awakening of the peasant masses and the rapid growth of the Union.

When Chen saw that the Peasants' Union was not confined to Hai-feng, but was spreading to the Chaon-mei district and had already several hundred thousand members, he resolved to pay more attention to Peng-pai. In order to keep up a connection with him he sent him frequent telegrams.

A month after the organization of the Huai-chow and Chowmei County Unions a telegram of about 600 characters arrived from Chen. It read as follows:

"Mr. Peng-pai! At present it is necessary to divide the Chinese Revolution into several stages. The first stage is that of military revolution, when the big militarists are overthrown and their power falls into the hands of the small militarists. A federation of self-governing provinces is usually organized at such a time. The second period of civil revolution follows, when public organizations are created and the small militarists are over-

thrown. It is necessary to act consecutively. It is a far cry to the period of civil revolution. Your disinterested action and energetic work calls for my admiration. I beg you to come to Huaichow immediately, in order that we may discuss the plan of the revolution. Be kind and do not refuse me this favor. Chen-Chiung-ming."

It was clear that my further stay in Swatow was regarded as undesirable. I sent a reply to the telegram, saying that it would be difficult to leave earlier than a week or two, and that I would wire the date of my departure.

Before the week was out, another telegram arrived from Chen.

"An affair of extreme importance demands our joint attention. Please come to Huaichow. Am anxiously awaiting you."

To delay going now would draw down suspicion on the Union and on all my comrades. Besides, Chen's telegram would allow me the opportunity of stopping on the way at Hai-feng and perhaps—who could tell, forcing the *shenshi* to yield. It was resolved, therefore, that I should go.

Li-Lao-hun and myself went off to Hai-feng. We transferred the management of the Huaichow-Chowmei Union to comrades Lin-su, Chen-kuei and In-Shi-pan.

Wang-Iso-sin learned of our arrival in Hai-feng, but did not dare to arrest us. He announced, shamelessly enough: "I have the greatest respect for Peng-pai. He is a near relative of mine. Why, I'm really an uncle, once removed, on his mother's side. It's a pity though, that he goes to extremes in his work."

In a short time a man called Pang, the trusted lieutenant of General Chun-Sin-tang, came to see me. He talked for a while and then said: "The Divisional Commander Chun holds you in high esteem. You have organized the Peasants' Union Swatow. The General regards this as not at all a bad thing. It is only our elders who do not understand this. It seems you are going to Huaichow. The General would like you to do him a favor."

Many of my comrades were of the opinion that Chun-Sin-tan wanted to decoy me to his place so as to arrest me. Still, I resolved to go.

Chun-Sin-tan shook hands with me and began a conversation. At first he asked about the Swatow Union and then as to the aims of my journey to Huaichow.

"The Peasants' Union," he said, "is by no means a bad thing on the whole. I strongly approve of it. I have also some knowledge of socialism and take a favorable view of it. But things must be done gradually. Supposing, now, that we want to go upstairs to the second floor—the most certain and reliable way of getting is to mount step by step. To try to jump the whole flight at once would only mean a fall. That is why I think you are too hot headed and in too much of a hurry. You must go slower. As for the closing down of the union and the arrest of the peasants—this was not done on my initiative."

"Quite right," said Peng-pai. "You cannot be blamed. Not only I understand this but also over 20,000 peasants can understand it. But still, the men have been kept in prison already six months. This may place you in an unfavorable light to the peasants. Wang-Iso-sin has already put all the blame on you. I hope that you will release them. When I am in Huaichow, I shall be able to report on this to the commander-in-chief."

The peasants were very glad when they learned that we had returned. They came to see us daily. We had hardly time to see them all; they told us many interesting things.

After the dissolution of the Peasants' Union the peasants of the second district (Meilung) had continued to organize under the leadership of E-Isi-sin.

Peasants from all parts demanded arms for self defence, and the opening of the unions and peasant schools. They were all in a militant mood. Some people said to the peasants: "Your folks have not been let out of prison yet and you are trying to set up the unions again. Where do you get the courage for this?"

And the peasants would reply: "We shall belong to the Peasants' Union, dead or alive. Even if we're chopped to pieces we'll stick to the Union."

We organized a congress of delegates from the district peasant unions. More than 40 delegates came to the congress. Peng-pai made a report on all that had happened since the dissolution of the Union. All the delegates voted for the immediate re-opening of the latter and for preparations for greeting the comrades who were soon to be released.

Two days later I suddenly received a letter from Chun-Sin-tan. When I opened the envelope I found General Chun's visiting card, and a few lines:

"The county magistrate, Wang, has sanctioned the release of the arrested men. Please find surety for them at once."

Our expectations, therefore, had proved to be correct.

This victory of ours still further strengthened the determination of the peasants to restore the Union.

Our journey to Huaichow was put off from day to day. Before a week had passed very good news came from Huaichow, that caused us to postpone our journey for good. It was a telegram saying:

"General Chen-Chiung-kuan died after a short illness. Commander-in-chief overwhelmed with grief. Is returning to Hai-feng in a few days. It would be better not to come."

Chen-Chiung-kuan, Chen-Chiung-ming's younger brother, was his most reliable supporter. On the death of his brother Chen-Chiung-ming's position naturally became even more unstable.

We took advantage of this opportunity to go about the villages carrying on propaganda, and put the affairs of the Union in order. We set up a provisional bureau in the premises of the Dessu-Shan-fan. Work went on apace. Everything got a start.

On the eve of Chen-Chiung-ming's arrival we called a small meeting of the comrades who worked in the bureau. The following resolution was passed:

"Chen-Chiung-ming must be forced to sanction the reopening of the Peasants' Union. We must, therefore, organize a welcome for him, and mobilize as many peasants as possible so as to impress him with our strength."

When Chen saw the masses of people that had come to meet him, he was delighted. He took off his hat and began to bow on all sides.

For the first few days after his arrival in Hai-feng Chen-Chiung-ming was engaged exclusively with the funeral of his brother. In the meantime

we carried on an extra amount of propaganda in the county. We decided to reestablish the district peasants' unions.

In the 13th year of the Republic (1924), in the first moon according to old Chinese style, Li-Lao-hun reestablished the Peasants' Union of the Seventh District at Isienshen. The official opening took place on the 4th of the first moon. More than 200 delegates and 2,000 peasant guests came to it. A demonstration was held and the lion dance was performed.

On my return from Isienshan, I went to see Chen-Chiung-ming, hoping to find out his attitude to the peasants' Union. Chen was living in the Boyehshanfan. I went upstairs and entered the reception room. Chen was sitting in a corner by the window, surrounded by more than 20 people. They were all landlords and gentry—our most deadly foes, and included Chen-Kai-tin, Wang-Iso-sin and Lin-Cho-tsun. When Chen-Chiung-ming saw me he rose and invited me to sit down. All the gentry had, of course, to do the same.

"Mr. Peng—you are really a fine fellow, and I have a great respect for you. But you go to extremes in your work. Iso suggests that the peasants should not pay their rent and should revolt—that is surely very wrong!"

Peng-pai: "Whether I am a good man or a bad one does not matter. As regards business, it seems to us that it is you who go to extremes and that we are too mild. Everyone knows how the peasants have suffered this year from the storms and floods. The landlords who invested in the land, suffered not at all, while the peasants' capital was blown away by wind and washed away in the floods. The peasant cannot retrieve his lost capital. What right then has the landlord to demand interest. Now, it might be asked who are the extremists—those who are advising the suffering peasants not to pay the interest, or those who are helping the landowners to squeeze the interest out of the peasants? And still the peasants have resolved to pay the landowners part of the rent. It seems that in this case they acted too mildly. You reported falsely that the peasants had made a rebellion, but even the commander-in-chief did not believe this. Still, you dared to defy public opnion so far as to close down the Peasants' Unions and to keep more than 20 peasants in prison for six months. That's what going to extremes means."

Chen: "That's true. The elders should instruct the young. Even if the younger are wrong, it does not do to use extreme measures."

Peng-pai: "But this is not all. There are other things which the commander-in-chief ought to know. After the arrest of the peasants Wang-Iso-sin sent soldiers to Lang-Isin-tsin's house and squeezed 20 dollars from his family. There is evidence to show for this. We have a detailed list of all that was taken from the other peasants as well. Wang-I-san got quite a lot out of the prisoners, and besides that he bullied their families on Wang-Iso-sin's orders. Every day the relatives of the arrested men came to plead with Wang-Iso-sin. Wang-I-San squeezed money out of them, demanded that they should bring him pigs' feet. He threatened that if 50 or 60 dollars were not paid for each prisoner, he would not only keep them in prison, but also put them in fetters. When a conflict arose over the rent between the peasants and the landlords in Hunping, the peasants were arrested. They had on two occasions to pay several score dollars before they could get free. Cases of this kind are so numerous that it would take more than three days to tell them all."

Chen: "But if this is true, the offenders must answer before the law. Why! This is bribery!"

Peng-pai: "As regards the pikes and knives that were found, it is quite true that the Peasants' Union possessed such weapons, but only for purposes of self-defence. We have killed no one and stolen nothing. If you believe the contrary, produce your evidence."

Wang-Iso-sin: "You would not admit it in any case."

Ling-Cho-tsin: "I was your teacher, you were my pupil. We should be on the best of terms. Why do you abuse me in the newspapers?"

Peng-pai: "That is ridiculous. To damage the interests of the majority of the population, as you do, is the greatest crime. In cases like this even one's father and mother should be disregarded."

Chen-Chan-ling (one of the gentry): "You're a good fellow, and the work you are doing for the Peasants' Union is also good. But it does not do to go to extremes on either sides. These questions should be settled peacefully."

Peng-pai: "Up to now you have been skinning the peasants daily and driven them to their graves. But the peasants are now becoming class conscious. You cannot fool them any longer. If you try it, you wil find out."

The conversation went on for some time, but around indifferent subjects. One by one the gentry left. Chen-Chiung-ming also left the room. Only two soldiers from Chen's body guard and myself remained. They came up to me.

"Mr. Peng," one of them began, "how you dressed them down! My blood fairly boiled to hear them talking! What blood suckers! They should all be done away with."

Chen-Chiung-ming again sent for me soon.

Chen: "Why are you holding theatricals. The county magistrate Wang considers that he is losing face and being disgraced. For three days he has not showed up at the yamen. May I ask you to stop this affair at once."

Peng-pai: "The peasant delegates resolved to hold the show. The actors have already been invited. Now it is too late to put them off. Besides there is nothing bad in this. It is simply that the peasants wanted some amusement. What is all this? The peasant works all the year round. He does not get enough rice to eat and now he is forbidden to look at a show. This is so unfair—no one could put up with it!"

Chen: "I don't agree with you. I beg you to transfer the theater to the village."

Peng-pai: "Who will want to do that? And to what village shall we take it?"

The conversation resulted in a deadlock. It was not, as might well be supposed a question solely of the theater. For long before that the landowners and gentry had never been off Chen's doorstep—insisting that he should give an order for the closing of the Union. Besides this they had tried to influence his mother, so that in case of her son's refusal, she would do this herself. They spread rumors that the Peasants' Union was connected with the Communist Party and Kuomintang.

"Very well, dissolve the Union," Chen agreed at last. "But do not have recourse to armed force at

the very outset." Next day Wang-Iso-sin issued the following order:

"The Peasants' Union stands for communal wives and communal property. It is defrauding the people. I, the county magistrate, dissolved it once. But there are people who still disobey me and try to stir up trouble.

"The Peasants' Union is strictly forbidden by law. I have received instructions from the commander-in-chief to dissolve the Peasants' Union immediately. In case of resistance the offenders are to be punished. It is to be hoped that the peasants will obey this order."

Wang-Iso-sin,
County Magistrate.

We called a general meeting of delegates of all the districts and informed them of what happened. It was resolved that as the Union was now driven underground Peng-pai and Li-Lao-hun should leave Hai-feng to establish connections with other counties and to work for the extension of the peasant movement. During their absence the local affairs will be conducted by Chi-yun, Han-yuan and Chen-su.

All important documents of the Union, as well as the registers containing the names of the members, were taken out of the town and hidden in a safe place. The peasants were extremely angry with Chen-Chiung-ming. Even at a mere mention of his name they ground their teeth.

Here Peng-pai's reminiscences are interrupted. The author was unfortunately unable to finish them. He was executed by the Kuomintang hangmen. Otherwise these memoirs would have included not only the early history of the struggle of the peasants in the first Soviet county that was set up in China, but would also have served as an invaluable source of information on the successive stages of the Chinese Revolution, which led to the formation and strengthening of Soviet China.

J. Stalin

Interview with Emil Ludwig

LUDWIG. I am very much obliged to you for having found it possible to grant me this interview. For more than 20 years I have been studying the lives and deeds of prominent historical personages. I believe I am a good judge of people, but, on the other hand, I do not know anything about economic conditions.

STALIN. You are very modest.

LUDWIG. No, that is a fact. That is why I will put questions to you that may seem queer to you. Today, here in the Kremlin, I saw certain relics of Peter the Great, and the first question I should like to ask you is this: Do you think there is any parallel between yourself and Peter the Great? Do you regard yourself as continuing the cause of Peter the Great?

STALIN. Not in any way. Historical parallels are always dangerous. The one in question is absurd.

LUDWIG. But Peter the Great did a great deal to develop his country and to transplant to Russia the culture of the West.

STALIN. Yes, of course. Peter the Great did a great deal to elevate the landlord class and to develop the rising merchant class. Peter did a great deal to create and strengthen the national state of the landlords and merchants. It should be added that the elevation of the landlord class, the encouragement of the rising merchant class, and the strengthening of the national state of these classes was effected at the cost of the peasant serf, who was bled white. As to myself, I am merely a pupil of Lenin, and my aim is to be a worthy pupil of his. The task to which I have devoted my life is to elevate another class—the working class. That task is not to strengthen any national state, but to strengthen a socialist state—and that means an international state. Everything that contributes to strengthening that state helps to strengthen the international working class. If in my efforts to elevate the working class and strengthen the socialist state of that class, every step taken were not directed towards strengthening and improving the position of the working class I should consider my life as purposeless.

You will see therefore that your parallel is unsuitable.

As to Lenin and Peter the Great, the latter was but a drop in the sea—Lenin was a whole ocean.

LUDWIG. Marxism denies that personalities play an important role in history. Do you not see any contradiction between the materialist conception of history and the fact that you, after all, do admit the important role played by historical personalities.

STALIN. No, there is no contradiction. Marxism does not deny that prominent personalities play an important role; nor the fact that history is made by people. In the *Poverty of Philosophy* and in other works of Marx you will find it stated that it is people who make history. But, of course, people do not make history according to their own fancy, or the promptings of their imagination. Every new generation encounters definite conditions, already existing, ready-made, when that generation was born. And if great people are worth anything at all, it is only to the extent that they correctly understand those conditions and know how to alter them. If they fail to understand these conditions and try to change them according to their own fancies, they will put themselves in a quixotic position. So you will see that, precisely according to Marx, people must *not* be contrasted to conditions. It is people who make history, but they make it only to the extent that they correctly understand the conditions they found ready-made, and to the extent that they know how to change those conditions. That, at least, is the way we Russian bolsheviks understand Marx. And we have been studying Marx for a good many years.

LUDWIG. Some thirty years ago when I studied at the university, many German professors, who considered themselves believers in the materialist conception of history, taught us that Marxism denied the role of heroes, the role of heroic personalities in history.

STALIN. They were vulgarizers of Marxism. Marxism never denied the role of heroes. On the contrary, it admits that they play a considerable role, with the provisos that I have just made.

LUDWIG. Placed around the table at which we are now seated there are sixteen chairs. Abroad, it is known, on the one hand, that the USSR is a country in which everything is supposed to be decided by collegiums, but, on the other hand, it is known that everything is decided by individual persons. Who really decides?

STALIN. No, single persons cannot decide. The decisions of single persons are always, or nearly always, one-sided decisions. In every collegium, in every collective body, there are people whose opinion must be reckoned with. In every collegium, in every collective body, there are people who may express incorrect opinions. From the experience of three revolutions we know that approximately out of every 100 decisions made by single persons, that have not been tested and corrected collectively, 90 are one-sided. In our leading body, the Central Committee of our Party,

which guides all our Soviet and Party organizations, there are about 70 members. Among these 70 members of the Central Committee there are to be found the best of our industrial leaders, the best organizers of distribution, our best military men, our best propagandists and agitators, our best experts on soviet farms, on collective farms, on individual peasant agriculture, our best experts on the nationalities inhabiting the Soviet Union and on national policy. In this areopagus, is concentrated the wisdom of our Party. It is possible for every one to correct the opinion or proposals of any one individual. Every one is able to contribute his experience. Were it otherwise, if decisions had been taken by individuals, we should have committed very serious mistakes in our work. But since we pay heed to such corrections, we arrive at more or less correct decisions.

LUDWIG. You have many years experience of underground work. You have had occasion to transport illegally arms, literature and so forth. Do you think that the enemies of the Soviet Government can learn from your experience and fight the Soviet Government with the same methods?

STALIN. That, of course, is quite possible.

LUDWIG. Is that not the reason for the severity and ruthlessness displayed by your government in its fight with its enemies?

STALIN. No, that is not the chief reason. One might adduce certain illustrations from history. When the bolsheviks first assumed power they adopted an attitude of mildness towards their enemies. The mensheviks continued to exist legally and conduct their own paper. The socialist-revolutionaries also continued to exist legally and had their own paper. Even the constitutional democrats continued to publish their own paper. When General Krasnov organized his counter-revolutionary attack on Leningrad and fell into our hands, according to the rules of warfare, we might at least have kept him prisoner. In fact, we ought to have shot him. But we released him on his "word of honor." What was the result? It soon became clear that such mildness was only serving to undermine the strength of the Soviet Government. It was a mistake to have displayed such mildness towards the enemies of the working class. To have persisted in that mistake would have been a crime against the working class and a betrayal of its interests. That very soon became only too clear. It soon became obvious that the milder our attitude towards our enemies, the more bitter their resistance. Very soon the right socialist-revolutionaries—Gotz and his like—and the right mensheviks began to organize the military cadets in Leningrad for the purpose of carrying out counter-revolutionary attacks, as a result of which many of our revolutionary sailors perished. This very Krasnov, whom we had released on his "word of honor," organized the white guard Cossacks. He joined forces with Mamontov and for two years waged an armed struggle against the Soviet Government. It very soon appeared that behind the white guard generals stood the agents of Western capitalist states, such as France, England, America and Japan. And so we became convinced that mildness was a mistake. Experience taught us that the only way to cope with such enemies is to adopt a ruthless policy of suppression.

LUDWIG. It seems to me that a large part of the population of the Soviet Union lives in fear and dread of the Soviet Government, and that the stability of the Soviet Government is based, to a certain extent, on that fear. I should like to know what feelings are aroused in you personally by the knowledge that in order to maintain the stability of the government it is necessary to inspire fear. In your relations with your comrades, of course, with your friends, you adopt quite different methods, and not methods of fear. Yet the population has to be inspired with fear.

STALIN. You are mistaken. Incidentally, your mistake is shared by many. Do you think it possible to maintain power and enjoy the support of millions for a period of 14 years by methods of intimidation and terror? No, that is impossible. The tsarist government knew better than any other how to intimidate. It had a long and vast experience in that field. The European, and particularly the French, bourgeoisie, helped tsarism in every way and taught it to terrorize the population. Yet, in spite of that experience, and in spite of the aid of the European bourgeoisie, the policy of intimidation led to the collapse of tsarism.

LUDWIG. But the Romanovs maintained themselves for 300 years.

STALIN. Yes, but how much unrest and how many rebellions occurred during these 300 years? There was the rebellion of Stenka Razin, the rebellion of Emilian Pugachev, the rising of the Decembrists, the revolution of 1905, the revolution of February, 1917, and the October Revolution. And I need hardly mention that the political and cultural life of the country is now fundamentally different from what it was under the old regime, when it was the darkness, the ignorance, the submissiveness and political subjection of the masses that enabled the "rulers" of that time to remain in power for a more or less lengthy period.

As to the people, the workers and peasants of the USSR, they are not so tame, so submissive and intimidated as you imagine. Many people in Europe have old-fashioned ideas about the people of the USSR: they picture the people of Russia as being, firstly, submissive, and, secondly, lazy. That is an out-of-date and fundamentally wrong conception. It arose in Europe in those days when the Russian landlords used to flock to Paris to dissipate the wealth they had acquired by plunder and to waste their days in idleness. They were indeed spineless and useless people. That is how the idea of "Russian laziness" arose. But that idea is not applicable to the Russian workers and peasants, to those who earned, and earn, their daily bread by their own labor. Strange indeed, to consider the Russian peasants and workers, who in a short period of time made three revolutions, smashed tsarism and the bourgeoisie, and who are now triumphantly engaged in the building of socialism, as submissive and lazy.

You just asked me whether everything in this country is decided by one person. No, under no conditions would our workers now tolerate the domination of one person. Individuals of the greatest authority are reduced to nonentities as soon as they lose the confidence of the masses and as soon as they lose contact with the masses. Plekhanov used to enjoy exceptional authority. And what happened? As soon as he began to commit political errors, the workers forgot him; they abandoned him and forgot him. Another instance: Trotsky. Trotsky also used to enjoy very great authority although, of course, not as much as Plekhanov.

What happened? As soon as he lost contact with the workers, he was forgotten.

LUDWIG. Entirely forgotten?

STALIN. They remember him sometimes—with bitterness.

LUDWIG. Do they all remember him with bitterness?

STALIN. As far as our class-conscious workers are concerned, they remember Trotsky with bitterness, with irritation, with hatred.

Of course, there is a certain small section of the population that really does fear the Soviet Government, and fight the Soviet Government. I am referring to the remnants of the classes that are dying out and being liquidated, and primarily to that small section of the peasantry—the kulaks. But in this case, it is not merely a policy of intimidation, a policy that is indeed being pursued. As you know, we bolsheviks in this case go farther than mere intimidation: our object is to abolish this bourgeois stratum.

But as to the toiling population of the USSR, the workers and the peasants, who represent not less than 90 per cent of the population, they stand for the Soviet Government and the overwhelming majority of them actively support the Soviet regime. They do so, because that regime furthers the fundamental interests of the workers and peasants. This is the basis for the stability of the Soviet Government, and not an alleged policy of intimidation.

LUDWIG. I am very much obliged to you for that reply. Please forgive me if I ask you a question that may appear strange to you. Your biography contains incidents of "brigandage" so to speak. Have you ever been interested in the personality of Stenka Razin, and what is your attitude towards him as an "ideological brigand?"

STALIN. We bolsheviks have always been interested in such figures as Bolotnikov, Razin, Pugachev and so on. We regard the acts of these people as the reflection of the seething unrest of the oppressed classes and of the spontaneous revolt of the peasantry against the feudal yoke. We have always studied with interest the history of these first attempts at revolt on the part of the peasantry. But, of course, no analogy can be drawn between them and the bolsheviks. Isolated peasant revolts, even when they are not of the unorganized and bandit character of that of Stenka Razin, cannot be successful. Peasant revolts can be successful only if they are combined with revolts of the workers and if the peasant revolts are led by the workers. Only a combined revolt led by the working class has any chance of achieving its aim. Moreover, when we speak of Razin and Pugachev, it must never be forgotten that they were tsarists: they were opposed to the landlords, but were in favor of a "good tsar." That was their motto. So you see no analogy with the bolsheviks can be drawn here.

LUDWIIG. Permit me to ask you certain questions concerning your biography. When I saw Masaryk, he told me that he was conscious of being a socialist already at the age of six. What made you a socialist, and when did you become one?

STALIN. I cannot assert that I was already drawn towards socialism at the age of six. Not even at the age of ten or twelve. I joined the revolutionary movement at the age of fifteen, when I became connected with certain illegal groups of Russian Marxists in Transcaucasia. These groups exerted a great influence on me and instilled in me a taste for illegal Marxian literature.

LUDWIG. What drove you to become a rebel? Was it, perhaps, because your parents treated you badly?

STALIN. No. My parents were uneducated people, but they did not treat me badly by any means. It was different in the theological seminary of which I was then a student. In protest against the humiliating regime and the jesuitical methods that prevailed in the seminary, I was ready to become, and eventually did become, a revolutionary, a believer in Marxism as the only genuinely revolutionary doctrine.

LUDWIG. But do you not grant the jesuits any good qualities?

STALIN. Yes, they are methodical and persevering in their work. But the basis of all their methods is spying, prying, peering into people's souls, to subject them to petty torment. What is there good in that? For instance, the spying in the boarding house. At nine o'clock the bell rings for morning tea, we go to the dining-hall, and when we return we find we have been searched and all our boxes have been turned inside out . . . What is there good in that?

LUDWIG. I observe in the Soviet Union an extreme respect for everything American, I might almost say, a worship of everything American, in other words, of the land of the dollar, of the most consistent of capitalist countries. This feeling is also entertained by your working class, and not only towards tractors and automobiles, but to the Americans generally. How do you explain that?

STALIN. You are exaggerating. We have no particular respect for everything American. But we respect the efficiency the Americans display in everything in industry, in technology, in literature and in life. We never forget that the USA is a capitalist country. But among the Americans there are many healthy people, both mentally and physically, who take up a healthy attitude towards work and towards practical affairs. We respect that efficiency, that simplicity of approach. In spite of the fact that America is a highly developed capitalist country, their industrial methods and productive habits contain something of the democratic spirit; and that cannot be said of the old European capitalist countries, where the haughty spirit of the feudal aristocracy still prevails.

LUDWIG. You do not even suspect how right you are.

STALIN. Perhaps I do. Who knows? In spite of the fact that feudalism as a social system has been destroyed in Europe, considerable relics survive in life and manners. Engineers, specialists, scientists and writers, continue to emerge from feudal circles, who carry the haughty spirit of the nobility into industry, technology, science and literature. Feudal traditions have not been completely destroyed. That cannot be said of America which is a country of "free colonists," without a landlord class, and without aristocrats. Hence the soundness and comparative simplicity of American habits in productive life. Our industrial leaders who have risen from the working class and who have been to America, immediately noticed this trait. They relate, not without a feeling of pleasant surprise, that in America it is difficult in the course of work to distinguish the engineer from the worker by mere outward appearance. They

like that, of course. But in Europe the case is entirely different.

But if we are to speak of our sympathies towards any particular nation, or rather to the majority of the population of any particular nation, then, of course, we must speak of our sympathy for the Germans. Our feelings for the Americans cannot be compared with our sympathies for the Germans.

LUDWIG. Why particularly the Germans?

STALIN. I simply mention it as a fact.

LUDWIG. Serious fears have recently been expressed by certain German politicians that the traditional policy of friendship between the USSR and Germany may be forced into the background. These fears arose as a result of the negotiations between the USSR and Poland. Should the present frontiers of Poland be recognized by the USSR as a result of these negotiations, it would cause severe disillusionment among the whole of the German people, who have hitherto believed that the USSR is opposed to the Versailles system and has no intention of recognizing it.

STALIN. I know that a certain dissatisfaction and alarm is noticeable among certain German statesmen, who fear that the Soviet Union, in its negotiations, or in any treaty that may be concluded with Poland, may take some step that would imply that the Soviet Union gives its sanction to or guarantees, the possessions and frontiers of Poland. In my opinion such fears are groundless. We have always declared our willingness to conclude pacts of non-aggression with any government. We have already concluded such pacts with a number of countries. We have openly declared our desire to sign a pact of non-aggression with Poland. And when we declare that we are ready to sign a pact of non-aggression with Poland, it is not a mere empty statement; it means that we actually do want to sign such a pact. We are politicians of a peculiar breed, if you like. There are politicians who promise a thing one day and next day, either forget all about it, or else deny that they promised any such thing, and do so without blushing. That is not our way. Whatever we do abroad inevitably becomes known inside the country, to all workers and peasants. If we declared one thing, and did another, we should forfeit our authority. As soon as the Poles declared their willingness to start negotiations with us regarding a pact of non-aggression, we naturally consented, and began negotiations.

What, from the point of view of the Germans, is the most dangerous thing that might happen? A change of attitude towards the Germans for the worse? But there is no foundation for that. We, like the Poles, must declare in the pact that we shall not resort to force, or aggression, in order to change the frontiers of Poland with the USSR, or to violate their independence. Just as we make such a promise to the Poles, so they must make a similar promise to us. Without such a point, namely, to the effect that we shall not resort to war in order to violate the independence or the integrity of the frontiers of our respective states, no pact could be concluded. Without that, a pact would be out of the question. That is the most we can do. Does that mean recognition of the Versailles system? It does not. Does it mean guaranteeing frontiers? It does not. We never have been guarantors for Poland and never shall be, just as Poland never has been, and never will be a guarantor of our frontiers. Our friendly relations with Germany will remain what they have been hitherto. That is my firm conviction.

Therefore, the misgivings of which you speak are entirely groundless. Those misgivings arose owing to rumors that were spread by certain Poles and Frenchmen. They will disappear when we publish the pact, that is, if Poland signs it. It will then be seen that it contains nothing directed against Germany.

LUDWIG. I am very much obliged to you for that statement. Permit me to ask you the following question. You speak of "equalitarianism," lending the term an ironical meaning in respect of general equality. But is not general equality a socialist ideal?

STALIN. The kind of socialism under which everybody would receive the same pay, an equal quantity of meat, an equal quantity of bread, would wear the same kind of clothes and would receive the same kind of goods and in equal quantities—such a kind of socialism is unknown to Marxism. All that Marxism declares is that util classes have been completely abolished, and until work has been transformed from being a means of maintaining existence into a prime necessity of life, into voluntary labor performed for the benefit of society, people will continue to be paid for their labor in accordance with the amount of labor performed. "From each according to his capacity, to each according to the work he performs," such is the Marxian formula of socialism, *i.e.*, the first stage of communism, the first stage of a communist society. Only in the highest phase of communism will people, working in accordance with their capacity, receive recompense therefore in accordance with their needs: "From each according to his capacity, to each according to his needs."

It is obvious that people's needs vary and will vary under socialism. Socialism never denied that people differed in their tastes, and in the quantity and quality of their needs. Read Marx's criticism of Stirner's inclination toward equalitarianism; read Marx's criticism of the Gotha Programme of 1875; read the subsequent works of Marx, Engels and Lenin, and you will see how severely they attacked equalitarianism. The roots of equalitarianism lie in the mentality of the peasant, in the psychology of share and share alike, the psychology of primitive peasant "communism." Equalitarianism is entirely alien to Marxian socialism. It is those who know nothing about Marxism who have the primitive idea that the Russian Bolsheviks want to pool all wealth and then share it out equally. It is the idea of those who have never had anything in common with Marxism. It was the idea of communism entertained by such people as the primitive "communists" of the time of Cromwell and the French Revolution. But Marxism and Russian bolshevism have nothing in common with the equalitarian "communists."

LUDWIG. You are smoking a cigarette. Where is your legendary pipe, Mr. Stalin? You once said that words and legends pass, but deeds remain. But you will believe me when I say that millions of people abroad, who know nothing of certain of your words and deeds, nevertheless know about your legendary pipe.

STALIN. I left my pipe at home.

LUDWIG. I will ask you a question that may astonish you greatly.

STALIN. We Russian bolsheviks have long forgotten how to be astonished.

LUDWIG. Ay, and we in Germany too.

STALIN. Yes, you in Germany too will soon forget how to be astonished.

LUDWIG. My question is as follows. You have frequently undergone risks and dangers. You have been persecuted. You have taken part in battles. A number of your close friends have perished. You have survived. How do you explain that? Do you believe in fate?

STALIN. No, I do not believe in fate. Bolsheviks, Marxists, do not believe in "fate." The idea of fate, of *Schiksal*, is a superstition, an absurdity, a survival of mythology, like that of the ancient Greeks, whose godess of fate controlled the destinies of men.

LUDWIG. In other words, the fact that your survived is a mere chance?

STALIN. There are internal and external causes, a combination of which led to the fact that I did not perish. But entirely independent of that, somebody else might have been in my place, for *somebody must* sit here. Fate is mythical, something contrary to natural law. I do not believe in mysticism. Of course there were reasons why danger passed me by. But there may have been a series of other chances, of other causes, which may have led to the contrary result. So-called fate has nothing to do with it.

LUDWIG. Lenin spent many years abroad as an exile. You did not have occasion to be abroad for long periods. Do you regard it as a drawback to yourself; do you believe that greater benefits were brought to the revolution by people who, having been in exile abroad, had the opportunity to make a thorough study of Europe, but who, on the other hand, lost direct contact with the people; or that greater benefits were brought by those revolutionaries who carried on their work here, but who knew little of Europe?

STALIN. Lenin must be excluded from that comparison. Very few of those who remained in Russia were as closely associated with Russian affairs and with the working class movement within the country as was Lenin, although he spent a long time abroad. Whenever I visited him abroad—in 1907, 1908 and 1912—I saw the heaps of letters he had received from practical workers in Russia. Lenin always knew more than those who stayed in Russia. He always regarded his stay abroad as a burden.

Of course, there are in our Party and its leading bodies far more comrades who have never been abroad than former exiles, and of course they were able to bring more advantage to the revolution than those who were in exile. There are very few —former exiles—left in our Party. There are about 100 or 200 in all among the two million members of the Party. Of the 70 members of the Central Committee not more than three or four lived in exile abroad.

As regards knowledge of Europe and a study of Europe, of course, those who wished to study Europe had a better opportunity to do so while living in Europe. From that point of view, those of us who have not lived long abroad, lost something. But living abroad is not essential in order to study European economics, technology, the leading cadres of the working class movement, literature—fiction and scientific literature. Other conditions being equal, it is of course easier to study Europe while living in Europe. But the disadvantage of those who have not lived long in Europe is not very great. On the contrary, I know many comrades who were 20 years abroad, lived some here in Charlottenburg, or in the Latin Quarter, spent years sitting in cafes and consuming beer, and yet did not study Europe and failed to understand Europe.

LUDWIG. Do you not consider that among the Germans as a nation the love of order is more highly developed than the love of freedom?

STALIN. There was a time when people in Gemany did indeed respect the law. When I spent two or three months in Berlin in 1907 we Russian bolsheviks used to laugh at certain of our German friends for their respect for the law. There was, for instance, an anecdote to the effect that on one occasion the Berlin Committee of the Social Democratic Party organized a demonstration fixed for a certain day and hour at which the members of all the suburban organizations were to attend. A group of about 200 from one of the suburbs arrived in the city punctually at the hour appointed, but they failed to appear at the demonstration. It turned out that they waited two hours on the platform of the station because the ticket collector at the exit was missing, and there was nobody to take their tickets. It was said in jest that the Russian comrades had to show them an easy way out of the situation, namely, to leave the platform without surrendering their tickets...

But is there anything like that in Germany now? Is there respect for the law in Germany today? What about the national socialists, who should be the first to guard bourgeois law and order, do they not violate the laws, break up workers' clubs and murder workers with impunity? I will not speak of the workers, who, it appears to me, long ago lost all respect for bourgeois law and order. Aye, the Germans have changed considerably in these days.

LUDWIG. Under which conditions will it be possible finally and completely to unite the working class under the leadership of one party? Why, as the communists declare, is such unification of the working class possible only after the proletarian revolution?

STALIN. It is easier to achieve the union of the working class around the Communist Party as a result of a victorious proletarian revolution. But undoubtedly it will be achieved in the main even before the revolution.

LUDWIG. Is ambition a stimulus or a hindrance to the activities of a great historical personage?

STALIN. The part played by ambition varies under different conditions. Depending on conditions, ambition may be a stimulus or a hindrance to the activities of a great historical personage. Most frequently it is a hindrance.

LUDWIG. Is the October Revolution in any sense at all the continuation and the culmination of the Great French Revolution?

STALIN. The October Revolution is neither the continuation nor the culmination of the Great French Revolution. The purpose of the French Revolution was to put an end to feudalism and establish capitalism. The aim of the October Revolution is to put an end to capitalism and to establish socialism.

December 13, 1931.

K. Selvinsky and P. Pavlenko

Open Letter To John Dos Passos

Dear Comrade,

Your two correspondents are Soviet writers who live in Moscow, on the other side of the planet, and are both attentive readers of your writings. As you probably know, many of your books have been translated in Russian, from *Three Soldiers* to *Manhattan* and *42nd Parallel; 1919* is in the press. Your works have played quite a part in our literary controversies. And this is quite comprehensible. The boldness and originality of certain of your artistic methods and your powerful devices for representation make necessary an analysis of their ideological significance, of the principles they involve. Why is this? All of us here in the lands of the Soviets feel that we are pioneers and bricklayers of the new communist culture. For the creative work of most of us there is one problem of paramount importance: what is the method of dialectical materialism in literature which would enable us to obtain the profoundest artistic perception of reality possible? We aim at verifying all aspects of literary productions—their themes, the choice of heroes, the methods of depicting these heroes and of drawing comparisons—from the viewpoint of their class significance. The influence of capitalism still survives in human consciousness and literary creativeness and we are all soldiers in the fight against these survivals. This struggle determines, today, our interests as writers.

We want from this standpoint to tell you about your *42nd Parallel,* while the impression it made on us is still fresh in our minds (it was recently published here. This book made a great impression on us. You relate the history of your heroes, famous Americans, with a skill truly wonderful. You have discovered a striking and exact method of recording phenomena in their ebb and flow. But in your efforts to be as objective as possible you tend to become mentally divorced from life. In striving to "catch the moment", you fall under the influence of James Joyce's *Ulysses.* The stenographic reports of daily happenings in your *42nd Parallel* involuntarily call to mind the empirical method of James Joyce, which attempts to make an inventory of the world like a sheriff or law agent in carrying out his duties. This is not our approach, but a bourgeois one. Our task is not merely to see the world. We don't want to be like ants, crawling from one speck of earth to another. Our task is to understand the true structure of the world in order to change it. The fact that an artist's vision is conditioned by a definite viewpoint is no indication of prejudice. This was very well understood by Goethe whose centenary is now being celebrated by the whole cultured world.

We are interested in all these artistic problems not for their own sake. For us they are closely bound up with the class struggle for reconstructing the world in which we want to fight with the weapon of our creative work. Your sketch on Harlan is a case in point. Here, also, as an artist, you are honest and objective. But you shed light on one enormous phase of contemporary life which the bourgeoisie hopes to conceal. The struggle continues. The terrible pictures you draw of Kentucky are for all the world like the incidents described by Bill Heywood in his well-known autobiography. Whole decades lie between these two stages of American history. But exploitation and the terroristic methods employed by the capitalists against the proletariat not only have not undergone radical changes but have become still fiercer. The struggle intensifies. Everything is full of this struggle. And the artist's creations, his inner world, cannot be something apart.

In all lands today, the capitalists have mastered a new tactic. Its essence is in camouflage. Loud speeches about prosperity while millions are unemployed. Diplomatic high masses at Geneva and the rattle of machine-guns in Shanghai. The blow struck by Japanese imperialism in the Far East gives rise to exceptional concern. The fact that peaceful Chinese are shot down and their lands seized with impunity—a state of war without its official declaration—is an eloquent example of imperialism's new tactic. These happenings are also one of the reasons for our writing this letter. It is difficult to separate creative writing from politics. The one is but the continuation of the other. The events in the Far East have no less right to the attention of the civilized world than the celebrations at Weimar, whither the bourgeois press hopes to turn all eyes (this it does with the express purpose of drawing attention from other matters). The lullabies of the press, the mumbling of the League of Nations, and Japan's policy of plunder—these are not isolated affairs but links in a single chain of imperialist machinations. The imperialists may quarrel among themselves. But they see a common enemy in the revolutionary proletariat and the Soviet Union, the land of the victorious proletariat. The fact that we are successfully building socialism is sufficient to make the capitalists seek every possible means to destroy us. We must not forget this. The bourgeois press loves to accuse us of being unduly suspicious. But the facts, unfortunately, have another tale to tell. We are surrounded on all sides by provocation.

That is why all who hold dear the cause of socialism, which the Soviet proletarians are building, must be active in exposing and fighting the policies of the capitalists. We regard you as our friend, that is, the friend of our cause. And it is our desire that you, like Romain Rolland, come out in the press against the new tactic of imperialism, which is planning a new world war from the East, which is planning to invade the Soviet Union.

We should greatly appreciate a reply to our letter and hope to keep up our literary discussion with you.

With fraternal greetings

K. Selvinsky

P. Pavlenko

Theodore Dreiser

War and America

In America, at this time there are two distinct phases to this threat and now clear possibility of another world war. One is that presented by the American people themselves, who do not really want another war of any kind anywhere, and most certainly not at the present time when their own economic and social conditions are so strained; the other, that of their government, manipulated as it is wholly and solely by and for the financial and industrial Gorgons of Wall Street, who see in the possible destruction of Russia—and that through the agency of Japan, backed as it is now by England, France and the non-national group of money-swine who now dominate this country—a way to make the world safe not for democracy or liberty in any form, but rather for a Caesar-like domination of everything for themselves. And if they can have their way, Russia will be destroyed, and every country of whatsoever size will have a petty and brutal little dictator whose business it will be to run the country and the people over which he presides, in the interest of the money-bags who desire only dominance and luxury for themselves and, of course, at the expense of every other. It is the truth. And we are seeing it here—just as such countries as Italy, Poland, Hungary, Rumania, the Argentine, Chile and nearly all South American countries as well as China, are seeing it abroad.

Money, money, money! More imperial ease and power for a wretched few, with no social or economic program which means anything for anybody but themselves, and poverty and long hours and ignorance and disease for the millions whom they so clearly hope to enslave or, rather, hope to keep enslaved, in order that they may continue to pose and strut and show off as they and their forbears of the same stripe have now done throughout the thousands of years of recorded history.

But will they succeed? I wonder. Is there at last enough sense as well as enough misery in the social state of the masses to permit them to recognize in part at least the sources of their economic ills? I wonder. For here is Russia, and the marvelous and humane program which it is demonstrating and, on the other hand, torn and hungry Europe and America and South America and, in short, every other land and spot on the face of the globe. Is there no real self-preservative wisdom in humanity? No sense of the value of self-helpful organization, after all the thousands of years of social disorganization, mass slavery and mass misery, as opposed to oligarchical ease and luxury? I wonder.

For here is war, with all its horrors, in China—thousands upon thousands of its workers and peasants and their families being slain—or already slaughtered, and for what? The glory of a military war group in Japan? Yes. The ease and security of the worldfi's profiteers and money masters everywhere, inside and outside of Japan? Yes. It is just that and nothing more. For I personally charge that there is now existing an absolutely fiendish conspiracy on the part of the money masters of the world—the great bankers, their industrialists, and the idle and pampered rich whom they have set up as a dominant class above the miserable many—to enslave those miserable many everywhere and keep them so enslaved. And joined with them is the Catholic Church, with all its lust of power, wealth and authority. And also every fool, everywhere on earth today, who imagines that by "preserving his individuality" at the expense of every other, he becomes something superior—an outstanding thing amid the great welter of human misery!

As for America and its particular money thieves, it now wabbles between a hostile attitude toward Communist Russia, which it so greatly fears, as well as such parts of China as have already turned communistic, and commercial fear of the subsequent growth and power of the present despicable war and money and power crazed nobles of Japan who wish not only to preserve but to extend their form of industrial slavery on which rests a medal-bedecked and power-and-authority-crazed set of numbskulls who wish to extend their imperialism over that of every other, and will do so unless they are checked.

For, whisper: We (it is our American money-masters who are doing this particular whispering) will let Japan invade Manchuria and capture and keep that so as to put a stop to the advance of Russia in the East. Next, in order to keep a possible Communist China from attacking Japan (in Manchuria) we will allow Japan to attack and hold as much of China as will safeguard her checking of Russia. But, lastly, once Communist Russia and China are warred upon and destroyed—if Japan does not then share the great loot of Asia with us, we will turn and attack her and so we ourselves become—or remain—the great money and imperial war lords of the world.

And so it is actually going here in America today. And you can see it on every hand. American capitalism, by its hostile attitude toward the Soviet Union, not only encouraging Japan in its war against China and its seizure of Manchuria, but hoping to see it fight and defeat Russia in order that later it may check or defeat Japan and so share. And so the present war situation is threatening to develop into another world war.

At the same time, American bankers and ammunition makers are already reaping profits from Japan's war against the Chinese people, and its war preparations against the Soviet Union. For although, during the month of January, the United States Department of Commerce announced that only $1,000 worth of ammunition was shipped to Japan, the truth was that Japan was compelled to send huge shipments of gold to the United States, and these gold shipments are certainly not payments for Christmas toys. Already, American munition makers are reaping their share of profits, and dreaming of even better days to come when their market will be limitless, as in the days of the World War.

But, worse, American admirals and generals speak openly of the inevitablity—once this Chinese-Russian opposition to capitalism is ended—of a war with Japan! And in the halls of Congress, one hears constant talk of the necessity for patriot-

ism and preparedness, for they know the rank and file of Americans do not like the present imperialistic overlords of Japan, and so might be induced to fight them, if not Russia, today. More, the American Navy has recently engaged on the Pacific in the biggest maneuvers in its history. Of course, this does not stop American speculators from selling munitions to Japan.

To be sure, the American masses are indignant against the imperialist cliques who are preparing for war against Russia and, later, Japan, and who, at the same time, are encouraging Japan in its war moves against the Chinese people. Yet American imperialism, in the midst of an economic crisis with 12,000,000 unemployed, walking the streets and country-side, and so threatening the very foundation of capitalism, still unable to forget the rise of a new society of workers and peasants in Russia, and, for the present, at least, doing its best to aid Japan. And, in consequence, our Hoover administration is clubbing and shooting workers demonstrating before Japanese embassies and consulates against the war in China and in favor of the defence of the Soviet Union. The hatred and fear of the Five-Year Plan of the Soviet workers and peasants has indeed united the rival imperialists both here and in Europe in a joint war move against the new Russia. And, in consequence, and for no other reason, Japan is invading China and taking Manchuria and Shanghai, for without the consent of England, France and America, she would not dare to.

Japan is now mobilizing its troops on the Soviet border, and once more the good old "atrocity" lie factories of our last great war days are working overtime. For now one day we hear from the Polish border of "atrocities" there, and the next from the Rumanian border. And the American capitalistic press avidly reprints all these lying stories to stimulate a war spirit against the first Workers' and Peasants' Republic.

More, the pacifism of the League of Nations and the Kellogg Pact should not blind anyone to the war horrors and the imperialistic nature of the "investigating" League of Nations Commission. The Disarmament Conference in Geneva, controlled as it is by England, France and America, but fought by all the lesser powers which sit there and want safety and peace, is already a battle field between the imperialists and a meeting ground for their general staffs of war against the Soviet Union. Only one voice, so far, at the conference has rung out as the voice of the people against war and war makers. This was the voice of Maxim Litvinoff, reaffirming the peace policy of the Soviet Union. There is reality in his proposals which not only remove the pacifist fig leaves of the war makers, but point to a road the opposite of Mr. Stimson's and Mr. Henderson's, who wish what I have outlined above, and nothing more and nothing less. And although Mr. Stimson announced his trip to Geneva as a mission of peace, the peaceful mission of the Secretary of State increases the war clouds. More reparations and debts are to be squeezed out.

The English socialist, Henderson, is the chairman of the Disarmament Conference. The Japanese socialists are absolving their imperialists from any murderous designs in the present war on China and their moves against the Soviet Union. And the American socialists are calling upon Hoover and Stimson to act as peacemakers in the Far East. Is it not correct, then, to consider the socialist pacifist as even more dangerous than the official pacifism of the capitalist government? I think it is. For it seems to me that the pacifism of the socialists is the greatest help to the imperialists in their ideological and intellectual mobilization of people for war.

None the less, and in the face of all this, hunger and misery are increasing daily in the United States. The army of unemployed grows. Yet the Hoover administration is determined to carry through to the bitter end its policy of favoring the plutocrats at the expense of the American masses. Even in the face of such conditions, they refuse to recognize the Soviet Union, a recognition which would greatly increase trade between the two countries.

But the economic crisis is an ever-increasing burden and so reality for American capitalism which sees the pillars of its house shaking and so desires to find a way out. And War, as a means out of the crisis, seems to be the main guiding line of the American capitalist mind. As the crisis deepens, there are only two roads open. The Russian workers and peasants, since they refused to continue an imperialist war and have established their own state, have provided the world with a concrete lesson which some Americans at least are beginning to note. On the other hand, here are our billionaire imperialists who, in communism, see their deadliest enemy. However much they may see that later, Japan, if they aid her now, must be dealt with by them, still now they will aid her, not openly as all can see, but secretly. We have treaties that read that Japan cannot do this and cannot do that—but she does them, she cannot take Manchuria, but she does. She cannot bruise and murder and hold parts of China, but she does. And in Washington, we have excuses, or just silence. And in our capitalist press, abuse of and lies about Russia and, on the other hand, dubious as well as pallid explanations of the "necessities" as well as the rights of Japan. Blah! Lies! The bull! They want Japan to fight Russia and then, if you please, in their turn to fight and beat Japan. But is that anything strange or difficult for a money lord? You do not know money lords, if you do not know that.

So in the face of the present war on China and a threatening world war, the plain, everyday American is faced with the problem of choosing between the bankers' way out of the crisis, and the one proposed and demonstrated by the people in the Soviet Union. To me, the answer seems inevitable. Workers and peasants the world over, and many intellectuals, are for peace, and against imperialism. I hail the Soviet Union and the announcement of the second Five-Year Plan heralding the final abolition of classes. This is the new and only important page in the present history of mankind.

S. Dynamov

Theodore Dreiser Continues the Struggle

It is not so long since Dreiser was exceptionally popular in the USA. And now the bourgeois press either ignores him completely (as happened when the whole of the cultured world celebrated his sixtieth birthday) or else joins in attacking this great author. It was none other than P. N. Miliukov who started these attacks at the time when Theodore Dreiser returned from the USSR and gave a favorable account of the Soviet Union. The attack launched by this white guard "ideologist" on Dreiser was the best proof that the great artist had taken the right path. The further writings of Theodore Dreiser showed that his visit to the USSR had marked a sharp turning point for him and was the beginning of a new stage in his development. In his book *Dreiser Looks At Russia*, the writer states that "with all his heart" he approves of the aims of the Soviet Government. In 1930 he spoke out in defence of the USSR, against new imperialist wars, against intervention: "I am against any conflict with the Soviet Union wherever it comes from," said Dreiser. A number of the writings of the author in 1931 brought him still nearer to the revolutionary position. He did not limit himself to newspaper articles on current political events, but lined up in the struggle of the working class, and the committee formed by him exposed to all the world the unbearable conditions under which the workers of capitalist America live. Public opinion in the Soviet Union in due course expressed its disgust at the attempts of the American bourgeoisie to bring the great American writer up for trial on a clearly framed up charge. But persecution did not stop Theodore Dreiser's progress towards the working class. He carefully examined American life, buried himself in official reports, in social and economic research, studied statistics, made personal investigations, and threw into the faces of the bourgeoisie his great book *Tragic America*. This new book of Dreiser's is, as it were, a continuation of his monumental two-volume novel *The American Tragedy*. Dreiser re-examined his past. His novel, written in 1925, was devoted to the personal tragedy of the average American. The edifice of capitalism seemed to the artist to be absolutely secure. American reality is presented in a different light in the new book *Tragic America*. Armed with hundreds of facts and columns of figures, with the keen insight and the genius of a great artist, Dreiser smashes the bourgeois and social fascist lie of American "democracy."

> "Liberty!" cries Dreiser. "No liberty unless your country's whim permits it . . . The strongest phases of our new American philosophy, an emanation, by the way, of this new bank and trust supremacy, are the desire for enormous business, more wealth and less liberty, more despotism and less freedom of education, which always accompanies the absolute rule of the few. Oligarchy!" (page 5).

In a chapter under the characteristic title "Our Banks and Corporations as Government," Dreiser shows that "the banks and trusts buy the laws they need and elect the officials they want." There can be no question that the trusts and banks can control the government, because they are the real government. Dreiser understands the true nature of American capitalism. He is in no doubt as to the connections between the government and monopolist capitalism.

> "In fact Government action which the financial lords want is encouraged and usually brought about, aided by the efforts of Government officials like Andrew Mellon, Secretary of the Treasury, who is himself a money lord. It was Mellon who went to Europe in the summer of '31 and saw that European financial conditions were so bad that German reparation debts to the U.S. must be cancelled for a year. But underneath, this is protecting private American bankers' loans in Europe. Now reparation cancellation for this year comes out as President Hoover's plan and it will probably come about . . . Then Hoover in a speech at the Pan-American Conference on October 8, 1931, said:
>
> "'The sole function of government is to bring about a condition of affairs favorable to the beneficial development of private enterprise.'
>
> "And private enterprise is no longer the individual's but rather the corporate money lord's." (page 67).

Summing up his tremendous material, Dreiser says:

> "Never, in short, is one important step taken by the Government without the approval of a John D. Rockefeller, Jr., a Walter Teagle, a Charles Schwab, an Owen Young, a William Loeb, a Walter S. Gifford, or his employers and superiors. And it is these men—not the Government—who actually rule. Do you wonder then that the regulation of capitalism is a failure? And that the banks and corporations are not going to and do not intend to either regulate or check themselves? As one of them once said to me, and that so blandly: 'Who's to stop us?' And I rise to inquire 'Who?'" (page 68).

The dictatorship of the banks is well shown up by Dreiser. He annihilates the lie that the bourgeois government is above classes. His whole book is a new proof that under the capitalist system the government is the executive committee of the bourgeoisie. Dreiser examines with particular care the results of the fusing together of the banks and monopolies with the Government. In this matter, the chapter "The Constitution as a Scrap of Paper" is of particular interest.

> "The American government today is not so much a government in the sense of managing for the many as it is in licensing for and to the few and with the privilege of getting all they can for their private purposes. The strongest and final hold of capitalism today in the Constitution is its guarantee of private property." (page 158).

Dreiser shows by a series of examples that freedom of speech and press, personal inviolability, etc., are mere words, mere scraps of paper without any significance in a country which is headed by the oligarchy of the banks.

> "In the present clashes of capital versus people, of government versus people, and of church versus people, education and public opinion are not only directed for the benefit of the trust and the church but in so doing education is stunted. It is stunted because it cannot speak the truth and hence cannot even seek understanding." (page 10).

Turning to justice, Dreiser in the chapter on the Supreme Court brings forward deadly material which shows brilliantly that the Supreme Court is simply a department of the banks and trusts. When two hundred workers joined a trade union for the class struggle as was the case in Connecticut, their action was brought under the Sherman anti-trust law and a fine of $220,000 was imposed. But when the American Sugar Company which controls 28 per cent of the sugar in the country bought up another four concerns which produced 30 per cent of the sugar and the case was brought to the Supreme Court, the latter decided that the Sherman law did not apply to it, and approved of this gigantic monopoly. There are many such examples in Dreiser's interesting book.

The writer mercilessly tears the mask from bourgeois charity, the aim of which is to preserve the capitalist order and not to help the workers. In the chapter "Charity and Wealth in America" he gives a typical balance sheet of a charitable mission in New York:

> "$15,000 for office expenses
> $15,000 for advertising
> $25,000 for salaries
> $44,000 for radio broadcasting for funds

and only $ 5,000 to feed the unemployed." (page 281).

It is equally characteristic that from the municipal fund of Minneapolis where there are thousands of unemployed, $8,000 were issued to teach well-to-do women the art of decorating their homes. In America, charity is a weapon of the trusts and banks, which control the doings of the various philanthropic societies and utilize them to break strikes and bring disunion into the ranks of the proletariat.

Theodore Dreiser mercilessly exposes the social-fascist American Federation of Labor, showing its close connection with fascism. Dreiser sharply criticises the AF of L policy of struggling against the recognition of the USSR, which, in his words, is "the only economic system which is striving and wisely striving to base society on proper economic, social, political, and cultural principles."

Turning to the culture of modern America, Dreiser sees here astounding poverty and stagnation. Over half of the population of the USA profess some religion or other, belong to some church or other. Of the 624 colleges and universities, over half are run by religious organisations. They do not teach, but train obedient slaves. "Science? History? Learning? Out! Let us have ignorant slave following ignorant master" (page 257). Such, in the words of Dreiser, are the tasks of these colleges.

"America is actually becoming weaker mentally, not stronger," (p. 255) is Dreiser's conclusion. The flourishing of "humanism" in America completely confirms this statement of Dreiser's. Humanism is the flag of fascism in America. The humanists lead the crusade against Darwinism. They call upon the natural scientists to turn back towards idealism, and give birth to the most reactionary priest rule. The bourgeois press in America loudly boasts of the blessings of American civilization, but it cannot hide the processes of decay which have seized on bourgeois culture in the USA. Of course, we may declare America to be ancient Greece, as was done by some paper in Oakland. "A small town in ancient Greece," wrote this bold journalist, "Athens, famous mainly for its artists and writers and not for its military valor or its commerce, occupied a firm place in history. We may now find an analogical case very near. On the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay the force of man and nature are so happily united that the town which has arisen there, Oakland, has become the haven of poets, novelists and artists, and can successfully rival (!) ancient Athens in glory." The *Courier*, published in New Jersey, is much more "solid" when it does not hesitate to bring to light productions of "art" of which mankind did not dream before that moment. "Who is the true creator of American literature?" asks the paper. And replies: "Not the Mark Twains and Whitmans, but those Americans who keep the debit and credit accounts in the banks and offices."

It is therefore natural that when the students in the University of the state of Arkansas were asked whom they considered to be the "greatest musician in the world," they voted unanimously for the leader of the jazz band, Paul Whiteman, and with equal unanimity they put Beethoven in the second place. Dr. Flaxner's *The Universities* gives a devastating picture of the degradation of higher education in America, and confirms the conclusions of Dreiser.

"Capitalism is a failure in America today" (page 408). With these words Dreiser opens the last chapter in his book. And he continues: "This denouement Karl Marx foretold by deductions of economic laws almost a hundred years ago" (page 408).

Dreiser is not sorrowful at the fate of capitalism. On the contrary, his whole book is directed against the existing order. In this courageous struggle he bases himself on the great historical experience of socialist construction in the USSR. All the time he contrasts two systems. Tirelessly he stresses the economic and political advantages of the Soviet system. With enthusiasm he describes the achievements of the USSR and shows up the degradation and decay of capitalism. Theodore Dreiser, after carefully studying the economy of the USSR shows that we have the most perfect economic system, that only in the USSR the proletariat is really the master and not the slave. In showing the way out. Dreiser draws upon the experience of the USSR, though he has not got rid of all his illusions and does not raise the question of a revolutionary way of escape from the crisis. It is instructive to note that the social fascist *New Leader* in an article on *Tragic America* does not say a single word about the attitude of Dreiser to the Soviet Union (issue of January 23, 1932).

There is much which Dreiser does not yet understand. He still has petty bourgeois illusions. I remember a heated discussion I had with Dreiser in 1927. He was not prepared to admit that a

narrow group of intellectuals could not be at the head of society but must inevitably come over to the side of one of the struggling classes. Dreiser still retains this feeling. In several places in his new book he states that the world must be ruled by the aristocracy of mind. I repeat that Dreiser has not yet completely remoulded himself, but that which he has done is tremendous and promising. The great master strikes boldly and devastatingly at bourgeois America.

Dreiser's new book is a new attack by the writer on capitalism, social fascism, religion, the dictatorship of the banks and trusts. The bourgeois press in America showed complete unanimity in reviewing this book of Dreiser's, carrying on the most violent and shameless slander of the author. "Dreiser advances the communist plan" was the shrieking headline of the *Times* review, in an effort to frighten the reader away from *Tragic America.* A certain Soskin directly charged Dreiser with being an agent of the Comintern. The hack writer Simon Strunsky, a pseudo specialist on Soviet questions, attempted to refute the book by picking on a few inaccuracies, and foamed with special rage that Dreiser was "moving to Moscow." The petty-bourgeois radical Otto Chase wrote on the same day as Strunsky in the *Herald-Tribune Books,* taking up the same position of discrediting the material in Dreiser's book. In his reply on February 14th, 1932, Dreised refuted these attacks and courageously stated that Chase's article was an unfortunate criticism born of the system which should be destroyed. The catholic circles also, of course, came out against the revolutionary author, and brought up their "theoretician" Rev. James Gilles, editor of the *Catholic World* for this purpose. This priestling wrote with overwhelming loftiness:

> "Theodore Dreiser is grouchy again or still. The man must be miserable. He has no peace within and he certainly does not find it without. In his new book *Tragic America* he vociferates his hatred of our country, our civilization, our banking system, our churches (especially the Catholic Church, from which he is an apostate), our schools, our police, our judiciary, our everything. North or South, he finds no comfort. All, all is rotten.
>
> "Now, Mr. Dreiser, you have so long and so exclusively paid attention to the baser things of life that you can neither see nor guess that there is anything else. You call your book *Tragic America,* an earlier one *An American Tragedy.* You really ought to ease away from all that heavy stuff. Shakespeare gave us, indeed, *Hamlet* and *Othello.* But being a real artist and a genuine genius he didn't imagine or try to persuade us to imagine that life is all that way. He gave us *The Merry Wives of Windsor, Twelfth Night* and *All's Well That Ends Well.*"
>
> "As Catholics, Mr. Dreiser, we lament the fact that you are a renegade from the faith. If anyone needs true religion, you do. With your sense of the tragedy of life, your hypersensitiveness about the injustice and savagery of this earthly life, you really ought to have, as a balance and comfort, the assurance of another and better life.
>
> "You rejected religion. And don't fool yourself about the reason. As a boy, when you went to mass, didn't you sometimes hear from the gospels 'Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God?' And with your active mind didn't you realize that contrariwise 'cursed are the impure in heart because they shall see only the devil!' That's your plight, Mr. Dreiser. You see all men as devils and all the earth as a hell inside you. It is not unkind or un-Christian to tell you this. You have said it yourself in your printed books a hundred times. In fact you really say nothing else in this unending series of long sprawling painful autobiographies."

Not being able to refute even one of the facts given by Dreiser, Gilles pathetically exclaims that there is in America something besides tragedy, but does not say what. Gilles ends his soul tirade with an appeal to Dreiser:

> "Snap out of it, Theodore. Look up at the sky. Take a squint at the sun. Go out on the hillside and inhale deeply. Get out of the gutters. Come up from the sewers. Be decent, be clean, and America will not seem so tragic."

Needless to say, all these lamentations did not move Dreiser in the slightest degree, but only strengthened him in his position. Dreiser attempted to publish a letter received from a Catholic on the subject of the article of the reverend scoundrel Gilles, but not a single big paper would accept it even as correspondence. We give this letter below in full, as it could not appear in America:

Brooklyn, N. Y., Feb. 8, 1932

Mr. Theodore Dreiser.

Dear Sir,

> My opinion is, Father Gilles figured that you would not see this mean attack. Perhaps he wouldn't want you to see it. What he probably does want is to injure your character and your books in the minds of three or four million readers of Catholic papers that will print his syndicated articles. It is a sad commentary on personal liberty when a fair-minded Roman Catholic like myself cannot sign his name for fear of business boycott.

Sincerely yours,

Catholic News Reader.

In reply to these wild attacks[1] the best representatives of the American intelligentsia like John Dos Passos and other writers and authors rallied round Dreiser. The well-known writer, John K. Powys sent a special letter to Dreiser on the subject of *Tragic America,* in which he clearly expresses the feelings of these circles of the intelligentsia. We give it here in full:

> "I have read through with intense interest this advance copy of *Tragic America* and let me hasten to tell you that I regard it as an epoch making book.

1 The late Moscow correspondent of the American bourgeois press, Rieswick, is trying to grab the "favorable" situation for the purpose of suing Dreiser for a large sum of money, claiming that the latter was one of the organizers of the invitation of the Soviet ballet which did not go to America. Rieswick, who took part in the invitation, wants to be paid for "moral" damage, which is an obvious lie. The Rieswick charge is completely unfounded.

"That you, our arch-individualist, the creator of *The Titan* and *The Financier* should have been driven by your study of facts to penetrate so deeply into the folly and the wrong of the unrestrained course of the individualistic doctrine is, it seems to me, one of the most significant things in our time.

"And that you should not only have diagnosed the evil so clearly, but even suggested a drastic remedy for it in the establishment of some sort of intelligent authority, able to correct this great abuse in the interest of a real equity in our organized society, is surely an event of no small importance. God! I could most gravely say: As a resident-alien of twenty-five years' experience of this country, so often puzzled and bewildered by what I have seen, I have found this book of yours more illuminating and revealing than anything else I have ever got hold of dealing with these difficult and complicated matters and such a saying would be less than the truth. So far it seems to me, the "artistic" rebels against the *status quo* have had more emotion in their protests than hard facts or than searching generalizations backed by hard facts. But this powerful book of yours, packed so full of irrefutable statistics, and supported by direct, first-hand evidence, is exactly what these dark times call for.

"People like myself, whose economic and financial experience—and insight too!—is necessarily very limited, will be able to get out of this formidable volume the solid weight of evidence to support their spontaneous instincts and natural reactions. I predict for this book a really momentous place in the history of our time."

Relying on the best and most advanced forces of the American working class, writing for and in the communist press in America, watching with tremendous interest the construction of socialism in the USSR, attracting the best forces of the American intelligentsia, Theodore Dreiser calmly and bravely follows his own path. His last article: "*War and America*"—published by us—is a bold accusation of international imperialism and a call for the defence of the Soviet Union.

Romain Rolland came over to the working class. Bernard Shaw returned from the USSR a new man. Theodore Dreiser, together with these writers, is a portent that the capitalist world is collapsing, that the world revolution is growing and strengthening.

S. Dynamov

Stacey Hyde an Artist of English Social Fascism

In the epoch of imperialism, the image of the worker in bourgeois literature takes on a new character. The artists of imperialism treat the worker as a mere component part of the production process. A kind of literary "rationalization," a peculiar "Taylorism" is characteristic of these artists of the bourgeoisie that is becoming fascized. *(Epopee of Rubber* by J. Lefevre). The worker becomes the hero of obviously fascist stories.

The fascist artists are beginning to deal more and more frequently with the living conditions of the working class. In Poland there is a series of fascist novels in which the heroes are workers, communists, and revolutionaries. The fascist artists, weighed down by the contradictions which confront them, are endeavoring to "understand" the working class in order to influence it. In England there was published a few years ago a utopian novel, *The Blue Shirts* by J. J. J. The heroes of this fascist "utopian" novel are mainly workers. The bolsheviks are depicted as wild beasts overrunning "good old England," whereas the fascist gangs represent the "real" English workingmen. They make a stand against the communists, fight against the socialist government side by side with the bourgeoisie, and eventually defeat the revolution. We find a similar fascist "solution" of the labor question in John Greely's novel *War Breaks Down Doors* (published in USA in 1929). The hero of this novel, a workingman on strike, deserts the strike to join the army. He is sent to the front where he wins the rank of major and returns to marry into a very rich and highly respectable Washington family.

I believe this process of "laborization" in fascist bougeois literature will gain increasing strength instead of dying down because this literature uses such "labor" themes as a weapon in the struggle against the working class.

There is no need to stress how miserable all these fascist "workers" are, how shockingly low the ideological level of these literary works. But the bourgeoisie possesses far finer feelers for influencing the working class—those of social-fascism, the capitalist agency that works not only in the sphere of politics and trade-unionism, but also in the realm of art.

The social fascist artists try to write, chiefly, about the working class over whom they are particularly anxious to extend their ideological influence. Their "labor" themes serve as sugar-coating for social fascist content. At the same time these "labor" themes are essential to the influence of social fascist literature on the working class; these "labor" themes are essential to the influence while pretending to write about the real life of the proletariat, social fascism really employs the labor themes as a means of "bourgeoisifying" the working class. Such "labor" themes are, indeed, mere phraseology, the same kind of phraseology that Lenin exposed in replying to McDonald's proposal for a merging of the two Internationals:

> "Fabian imperialism or social imperialism, it is one and the same thing: socialism in words, and imperialism in deeds, the evolution of opportunism into imperialism. Opportunism, or reformism, is bound to evolve into historic socialist imperialism, or social chauvinism; for imperialism has singled out a handful of the wealthiest advanced nations which rob the whole world and this enables the bourgeoisie of these countries to bribe, out of their monopolistic super-profits (imperialism is monopolist capitalism), the upper crust of the working class in these countries. The first deduction: the Berne International is in fact, by its real historic and political role, irrespective of the good will and pious wishes of its individual members, an organization of agents of international imperialism which convey through it the bourgeois influence, the bourgeois ideas, the bourgeois falsehood, and the bourgeois demoralization." *(On the Tasks of the Third International).*

Just as in politics, so also in literature the "agents of international imperialism" pose as friends and protectors of the working class: their chief concern is with the life of the proletariat; they even depict some of the seamy sides of life under capitalism; they speculate on their skin deep radicalism, but withal invariably affirm the eternal nature of the capitalist system as a whole. Thus, Patrick McGill, a "labor" writer, author of a score of books, never tires of depicting the lives of miners, carpenters, and laborers; nevertheless, while in the beginning of his career he could lay claim to a certain "objectiveness," at present he misrepresents the workers' life with arrogant candor. The direct agents of the bourgeoisie he depicts as veritable heroes (for instance, the Tolstoyan worker and religious fanatic in *The Carpenter from Orra).* In *Morelocks* James Walsh who started life as a miner, draws harrowing pictures of a revolution in England, thus lining up with the purveyors of fascist "utopias" (this new fascist *genre* is rapidly developing in Germany and England). Ethel Carney Holdsworth is not averse to posing as a "friend of the workers," but in this struggle she sees only a riot of slaves, a riot that is both unsuccessful and futile, since it breaks up capitalist society. (See her novel *Slavery).* Sean O'Casey and Liam O'Flaherty love to rummage in the psychology of traitors to the revolutionary cause. Instead of interpreting a revolutionary defeat as a step to subsequent victory, they weaken the desire for victory by their depressingly "profound" analysis. (In his book on the Soviet Union, O'Flaherty breaks completely with his sham radicalism). We shall return to these representatives of English social fascism in subsequent articles.

Stacey Hyde belongs to a group of artists connected with the "Labor" Party. There is not a single book from the pen of Stacey Hyde, not a single play or story, in which he does not write about the working class.

Stacy Hyde's first book, *Shopmates,* a volume of short stories, was first published by the "Labor" Party in 1924. Very characteristic are the titles of

these stories: "The Turner," "The Oiler," "The Laborer," "The Millwright," "The Foreman," "The Apprentice." The incidents in all these stories take place in the big metallurgical plant of Murray. In this plant Hyde breaks it up into small parts.

We have here a peculiar atomistic method: the phenomenon is not taken in its entirety, but is broken up into tiny particles with a resultant lack of unity not only in the picture of the plant as a whole, but also in the description of the separate shops. The author does not even give an integral picture of these shops, for he lacks an integral conception of the objects he depicts. Hyde is afraid of generalizations, of getting at the meaning of a capitalist enterprise. An empirical artist, he sees very little, and this little becomes everything for him and overshadows the profound significance of the object he depicts. The book gives no clear picture of the enterprise, of the working class; the individual workers drawn by Hyde never range themselves into a class, or social groups.

What is essential is not the form, not the fact that Hyde draws chiefly individual workers (for it is not the mass appearance of this form that matters); it is the content he puts into these proletarians that counts. Hyde shows us the petty-bourgeois elements among the workers whom he depicts as being representative of the proletariat as a whole. Therefore, Hyde's heroes are always isolated from their class; they are nothing more than separate individuals, mere insignificant, casual and entirely isolated characters. His aim is to describe details, and the casual element reigns uppermost in his artistic work. The inevitable result of this casuality of vision, of this empiricism, is that Hyde's works are encumbered by a mass of petty details and non-essential casual happenings.

In "The Turner," the author tries to delve into the meaning of the object and of the society with which he deals. I refer to the opening of this story where Hyde says that the hooting of the factory whistle governs our life in the present society. It is a sort of feeble hint at the slave status of labor under capitalist exploitation. Using this fact as a starting point, Hyde might have pierced the very core of capitalism and reached understanding of the capitalist system of slavery. But this promising start ends abruptly, in the form of a simple anecdote.

Hyde describes how a thief, disguised as a clergyman, secured employment in the Murray establishment and stole a tool-box from one of the workmen. Having thus risen to a giddy height (for him), Hyde instantly topples downwards.

In "The Oiler," he tries to demonstrate the injustice of capitalist society: the workingman, Bob, the hero of this story, does not get paid for the rationalization proposals he introduced in his shop. In this story Hyde displays a peculiar admiration for order and decorum. There is a rosy description of Bob's home life:

> "The years passed smoothly and swiftly. Bob, during the summer months, spent most of his spare time in the garden, where a profusion of vegetables, flowers and fruit rewarded his labors. His delight in his wife and admiration for her never wavered. He had a fixed idea that she had married "down" to him and was tireless in his good-natured efforts to make things as easy as possible for her. Her mother and sisters declared, not without envy, that Bob was as good as another woman in the house. The boys, when they could toddle about the garden, helping their daddie, were told to pick the largest sweet peas, the most perfect roses, to take in to their mother.
>
> "They adored him. On Sunday mornings he would set out, one on either hand and his girl perched, flying-angel fashion, on his shoulders, for the river bank, where he would run races with them in the fields, or play 'tip and run,' or sit and smoke and tell them stories of the brown-sailed barges or dirty tramp steamers that spread waving arrowheads of ripples in the quiet water as they passed noiselessly by . . ." and so on.

Such pastoral scenes have a peculiar fascination for Hyde. He takes pains to describe every detail of this orderly and decorous life. Hyde contemplates was merely as something which disturbs its tranquillity, and he simply passes by this subject. Nevertheless he cannot help noticing the wreck and ruin caused by the war. He cannot help seeing the misery and destitution of the working class in England. His hero, Bob, on returning from the war, finds himself in straitened circumstances. Hyde finds himself in a puzzling situation. He has to indicate some solution, some way out. We know the "way" that was found for the proletariat by the Labor Party: wage cutting, peace in industry, which means ruthless "rationalization" at the expense of the working class. Hyde, of course, cannot show up this way of robbing the working class; as a laborite, a representative of capitalism in the working class, he is one of the organizers of this and similar devices for enslaving the workers. At the same time he cannot afford to ignore unemployment, poverty, and starvation. But, in turning to these gloomy phenomena, the social fascist artist is bound to brush them aside as matters of little consequence, or to give a casual solution. In this particular case, the story ends in a criminal incident: the unemployed oiler gets mixed up in a fight and is sentenced to serve a term of imprisonment. Thus the story is brought to its casual end by no means casually.

In "The Laborer," Hyde gives us another pastoral picture, this time of Bill Clark, a worker, who shares lodgings with another workman, enjoying good meals, a clean bed and comfortable surroundings. It is apparently Hyde's idea that one may live well under capitalism if one but knows how. This is the main idea of the story:

> "He lodged with a fellow laborer whose house was, compared with anything he had known in his life, heaven. It was neat and clean and warm. His landlord and his wife were kindly people who did all in their power to make their 'lodger' comfortable. Their baby, a sturdy boy of two years, quickly found a way into Bill's heart; and never did he enter the house on a Friday evening—pay night—without a bag of sweets or a ball or some little gift for the 'nipper.' To sit of an evening, his feet on the fireguard and a pipe between his teeth, and listen to the tinkle of a cheap gramophone or play a hand of crib with his landlord was a state of existence that caused him often to close his eyes, lean back in his chair and ask himself seriously whether he actually were Bill Clark or no. And the luxury of sheets and blankets

over a spring mattress and good meals at regular hours seemed to him too good to be true."

Yet Hyde would not be a social fascist artist if he had given merely these rosy pictures. One of the basic traits of social fascism, and one of the conditions of its influence, is that it treats of capitalist contradictions. The social fascist writers quite frequently assume the pose of warriors against bourgeoisdom. In reality they have no intention of fighting against it. This is also characteristic of Hyde. He imparts a very gloomy coloring to the story. He depicts a consumptive worker dying from overwork and exposure. According to Hyde all these sufferings are due to the fact that Bill Clark is not quite normal mentally.

"But over all, intensifying his physical and adding to it much mental suffering, brooded the thought of Barton. Him he hated with a most intense and definite hatred. The unfortunate start the two had made in their relations with one another had been dismissed by Barton without another thought; but in Bill's imagination it had developed into a deliberate—and therefore unforgivable wrong. The smile he had caught sight of on the foreman's face and had applied to himself, had been the first accumulation to the snowball. Thereafter every little incident that brought Barton and him into contact was distorted and warped in his ill-balanced mind. How could it be otherwise? All the days of his boyhood he had to be on the alert, trusting nobody, fearing everybody. In the army he had been continually baited, because of his known liability to fly into an ungovernable fury. Kindness had not often been his lot; so, though he appreciated it greatly when he did need it, the whole bent of his mind was opposed to finding it...."

"So Bill moved about the shop in a nightmare: whenever he caught the foreman's eye he became selfconscious. However innocent or proper his action at the moment, it turned into something uncouth and disorderly. He lost no opportunity of pouring out his venom into whatever ear would listen; and to all remonstrances his answer was the same: 'It's no good, mate, 'e's god a' damn on me. But I'll 'ave me own back one of these days.' So monstrous did his obsession grow that the men began to shun him, which phenomenon he noticed and attributed, unreasoning, to Barton's malevolent influence. Only his freind with whom he lived realized a little of the truth and pitied him."

By the side of this abnormal proletarian, Hyde presents the foreman Barton who, though very strict, treats his workmen well. A comparison between Barton and Bill Clark is entirely in favor of the representative of capitalism. The reader's sympathy will unquestionably be on the side of Barton, and the whole gloominess of the story becomes dissipated. There can be no talk here of a critique of capitalist society.

Hyde reveals himself even more completely in "The Foreman." Here he introduces to us two types of workmen. Harry, an experienced turner who holds aloof from politics, is a heavy drinker. He beats his wife, forges a cheque and gets his mate, Jack Marsh, into trouble. The latter is active in his trade union where he holds a leading position, is an exemplary husband and father, and on the whole, a veritable hero. Jack Marsh is offered the position of foreman, to work in the interest of the master class. Hyde bravely "exposes" the treachery this involves. "It means to give up the union, to give up Harry and the other mates," Jack muses, "but it also means more money.... And here is Daisy and the kids.... I shall perhaps be able to send little Harry into a decent school. Yet, I do not know.... it looks like selling one's soul to the masters." But this "exposure" is only made for the purpose of justifying this very treachery, for the author fully agrees with Harry's wife.

Hyde does not rise above the level of Harry's wife who fully justifies her husband's desertion into the ranks of the bourgeoisie. The artist has taken up here a big theme, the transformation of a proletarian into a "labor lieutenant" of capitalism, but the big theme becomes paltry and insignificant in Hyde's hands and the edge of the conflict is blunted. Not only does he not tear off the mask, but on the contrary, makes it more formidable.

Hyde's method is that of eliminating the contradictions, conflicts and collisions that occur in real life. He fully justifies the climbing of the proletarian to the top of the social ladder. He sings the praises of downright treachery. The social fascist artist places his creative work at the service of his Party, and defends doggedly its right to betray the interests of the working class.

In "The Apprentice" we see another aspect of Stacey Hyde's creative method. This story deals with an incident in the struggle of the working class: a strike of the apprentices in Lord Murray's workshops. Hyde says: yes, it is hard work, but it is still harder to fight, and it were better to keep the peace. And he draws a series of gloomy scenes from the hard life of the strikers. As an artist, he conceives the strike as the rioting of slaves. This slavery complex is characteristic of all social fascist writing. Social fascist artists never realize the political sense of the proletarian struggle, its educational and organizational importance for the working class on the road to emancipation; on the contrary, in this struggle they see nothing but gloom and despair, and the disturbance of law and order. They are always on the side of bourgeois law and order. On comparing "The Foreman," who is depicted as a real hero despite his treachery, with "The Apprentice" where the leader of the strike is depicted as a lone, miserable and hunted personality, it becomes quite clear that Hyde puts two roads before the proletariat: one road leads to pleasure, happiness, and wealth, the road of the traitor Jack Marsh; the other road leads to poverty, misery and destitution, the road of the strike leader Peter Lane.

The same problem is taken up by Hyde in his play "Enterprise" (the play was not printed, we have seen it in manuscript form). The hero of the play is Harry Setton, a worker strongly devoted to his class who makes personal sacrifices for his workmates. Harry says that under capitalism the machine is the worker's enemy, for the introduction of machinery displaces labor. He is therefore opposed to his brother Jim who is a machinery salesman. It is characteristic that Hyde deems it necessary to give yet another reason for Setton's detestation of machinery: as a skilled engineer he fears that the mechanization of industry would deprive him of his present privileged position:

"*Jim:* Nobody's allowed to starve nowadays. And anyway you'll get a job long before anything like that threatens you.

"*Harry:* Shall I?

"*Jim:* Of course, you will.

"*Rose:* Oh, you will, Harry! Everybody knows what a splendid engineer you are.'

"*Harry:* But unfortunately they haven't any work to give splendid engineers to do. It's all being done by Jim's mechanical donkeys."

In this revolt, even in the few proletarian truths uttered by Harry, we see the basis, the ideology of the labor aristocracy. Harry has invented a dredging machine, but he keeps it secret, because each machine will throw a score of people out of work. Hyde shows the tragedy of the proletarian inventor whose creation can only be handed over to his enemy class, to those who own the means of production:

"'The whole thing is absurd!' exclaims Harry. 'Life is absurd! There isn't a single thing you can think or say or do that isn't silly enough to make you weep with laughter.... That isn't the only thing I could invent! My brain is crowded with them—ideas that lie waiting and growing and then are born in a flash and struggle to get free. My fingers are itching all the time for pencil and paper and tools. Things, good things, that would give old Mum and you and all of us an easier time, necessary things, essential things. And I daren't! I have to shove them back because I know that if I don't they'll turn evil on the earth and attack us and worry us and hound us down. I gave way once, and this is the result. Misery and hardship for a dozen people here around me, including my best friend.... Absurd? By Jingo, I should think it is! A fight to the death between me and my ideas. If I give them life, I go under. To live myself, they've got to be strangled.'"

Having barely hinted at the contradictions of capitalism, Hyde, as though scorching his fingers, suddenly shrinks back and draws the deduction: life always proves stronger than our wishes and desires, life can never be subdued.... Harry Setton eventually goes to work for the employers, gets a decent salary, and becomes a representative of the dominant class like his brother. The play winds up by stressing the futility of struggle and the skin-deep objectiveness of the first scenes merely lends emphasis to the play's real message which is one of utter hopelessness and despair.

Harry Setton is oppressed by poverty and unemployment only as long as he refuses to sell himself to capitalism. Until this moment, everything is depicted in gloomy colors. Hyde grudges no black paint. Yet, all this gloom instantly disappears when Setton joins the ranks of the "labor lieutenants" of capitalism: he becomes rich, marries, saves his sister from shame, her husband from jail, and his house from being sold under the hammer. What he fails to save, is his proletarian honesty and consistency, but, from the standpoint of social fascism, these are trifles over which one should not worry. When Hyde declares life to be hard and terrible, he promptly follows this up with the deduction that one should look for some way to climb out and secure one's personal well-being.

This peculiar trait of narrow self-interest characterizes the whole work of Stacey Hyde. He always remains within the bounds of personal and family interests and considerations. His first novel, *Simple Annals*, which appeared in 1925, was entirely built upon this plan. The heroes of this novel are the workingman Vivian and the woman worker Nora. Images typical of the working class are not the images chosen by Hyde. Vivian wants to become educated, he studies languages and etiquette. A petty bourgeois in the clothing of a worker, Vivian is anxious to get out of the ranks of the proletariat, and join the dominant class. He is opposed by Nora who protests against bourgeois society, and is dead against the snobbish philosophy of Vivian. Below is a typical passage from the novel, showing the respective outlooks of Vivian and Nora:

"'Oh, those people!' Nora's deep voice rang with scorn. 'They've got no ideas of anything. Alter the system, and they'll say just the same thing about that. It's no good worrying about them.'

'But that's my point. I say we can't alter it without worrying about them. As you said just now, you can't separate the system from the individuals. We've got to persuade them there's a better way of running things.'

'I don't believe they're capable of persuasion. They don't want to be persuaded! Look at the dirty lies they tell and believe so as to sidetrack discussion. Look at the papers they read'! exclaims Nora indignantly. 'When we try to talk about abolishing poverty and giving people a bit more freedom, all they can do is to yell: 'Bolsheviks! Murder! Robbery! Free Love! Torture! Nationalization of women! Blasphemy!' How can you persuade people like that? It's so abominably childish and crude! Suppose we started a yarn that capitalists eat a baby for breakfast every day? That's the same level—about the level they're up to. They've got no intelligence—can't have.'

'That's all,' said Vivian, 'Ignorance! Education! Teach them to think, educate 'em, that's the only way.'

'Then you think we've got to wait for the change of heart?'

'Change of heart? Not quite that—more a change of spirit. Self-dependence — Independence—it all comes back to a proper unbiased education.'"

These two conflicting lines—the opportunism of Vivian, and the radicalism of Nora, intertwine with a third line represented by the clergyman Raymond. From Raymond's standpoint, religion is the only salvation for the working people.

Here is his social catechism:

"'Since you admit the existence of the soul, you will at least be logical and admit that since it has got to live a very much longer time than the body, it is correspondingly more important.

But for all that, I'm not quite so other-worldly as you imagine. God didn't put men on earth to be ciphers. He meant them to live a full life, healthy in mind and body. But how can they do it, most of them? They are born into an environment that offers them no ideas except a vague futile hope of getting on! The world shrieks and bawls at them from a million paragraphs and hoardings that the law of life is to despise and fight with one another. They are given no conception of beauty, they are taught

no rules of mutual service, no pride of craft. Their education is not even rudimentary; instead of helping their minds to expand, it shuts them tight by instilling a distaste for using their brains, for the simple reason that what little they are taught has not the remotest relation to the life they've got to live. A meretricious propaganda that leads nowhere and is worth nothing is their daily food, and silly novelettes and stunt films their refreshment. They are herded into stuffy mean streets; if they live in the country, into ramshackle, insanitary cottages. Most of their food is adulterated and half poisoned before they get it, and most of their clothing is shoddy. Is that true?

'Where are we going to start in the welter and raise them? Education? Good but slow. And it's heart-breaking, and perhaps dangerous work, educating half nourished bodies. Improve their health by better wages, better houses, a high standard of purity in food and clothing? Good again, but slower than the other. Good for the race in the long run, perhaps, but for the living individuals . . . hopeless!'

'Yes,' said Nora, 'I'm afraid you're right. This generation can hope to achieve so little—poor things!'

'Why? You know the chief reason—apathy! They don't realize what there is to be gained—their strivings are vague, undefined—they don't know what they're after. But religion comes in to their aid.'"

The collision of these three forces begets no conflict, and the heat of the collision soon dies down. The atmosphere is cooled by the transformation of social contradictions into personal ones. Nora is opposed to Vivian, but her opposition is that of a woman after all: she has a child from Raymond, but is the wife of Vivian. Raymond is opposed to Vivian, but as Nora's lover. Thus the three social lines become purely personal. The novel gets smothered by these petty personal matters. The social aspect of the story dwindles into insignificance, as the artist skilfully manages to transform the social into the personal, to substitute the larger issue by mere trifles, to smooth down all the contradictions, and lead to a happy termination. These personal side-issues are deliberately introduced into the story in order to becloud the fundamental social problems raised in the opening chapters; the family is taken here apart from society as a whole, the individual is forcibly divorced from the social complex, and the personal element submerges the class struggle. With painstaking care Hyde magnifies insignificant events, investing them with the content which they lack and tying up "complex" psychological knots in the living experiences of his heroes, while zealously eliminating the essential social and class issues.

His novel *The Blank Wall* (1928) is completely given over to family problems. Here, even the remaining paltry vestiges of labor themes are dropped. The author seems to fight those of his heroes who disturb his scheme of peace and tranquillity. He revives Barton, with whom we got acquainted already in the "Laborer" and in the "Foreman." Barton alone denounces war, he boldly declares war to be unnecessary, he announces himself a defeatist, and is sent to jail. Once locked up behind the iron bars, Hyde leaves Barton to his fate and takes no further interest in him. In fact, he gives him no more than a few lines in the whole book. The workingman Bob fights the employers, and this suffices for Hyde to ignore him to the end of the chapter. Yet, Bob is a typical rank-and-file worker, conscious of his duty to his class. He personifies the elemental rebellion of the English workers against capitalism. He objects to his mother marrying an employer of labor on purely proletarian and nonpersonal grounds:

"'But, Mum, you can't marry him!'

'Why not?'

'He's a sweater; he's a twister!'

'I don't agree with you, Bob, the least tiny bit, and I know him better than you do. He's a thorough gentleman. He believes in everyone doing their fair share, and I admit he's more interested in the work than in the people who do it. But all the same he's absolutely straight and just.'"

For this very attitude, Bob is ignored through the rest of the book. Such genuine types of workers are quickly dismissed by Hyde.

Tom, also a worker, had gone to war and won the Victoria cross, but came back hideously maimed and crippled, a living indictment against capitalist society. This is sufficient reason for Hyde to "kill" him in the first air raid over England. Disturbing heroes are gradually weeded out, and the novel is turned into "pleasant" and dispassionate reading matter.

The factory is depicted in this novel as an unmitigated evil. A touching description is given of how Joe the workingman had lived before the factory was built. He had cultivated his own plot of land, raising lettuces, cabbages, onions, turnips, raspberries, black currants, roses, sweet peas, and all kinds of lovely flowers. Then the factory came. He gave up the land and became a factory worker and a habitual drunkard. All that comes from the factory, from the working class, is evil; all that belongs to calm petty bourgeois existence is a boon and is idealized by Hyde. True, the capitalist factory means the enslavement of the working class. But the slavery of the worker on "his own" plot of land is even more miserable and hopeless; for the factory is a parade ground for the proletariat, and capitalism creates its own grave-diggers. Yet, this is precisely what Hyde fails to see. The tangle of heroes and events in the novel follows a highly curious line of conciliation with capitalism. The structure of the novel is such that the front of the stage is occupied only by those characters that fall in with Hyde's social fascist ideology, while the heroes are led into the embraces of capitalism. Let us take Ellen, Joe's wife. Her life is one of constant worry: Joe drinks heavily, there is a big family, hard work, and destitution. But, as soon as she marries a capitalist, a life of perpetual bliss dawns on the erstwhile miserable working woman. Here is one of the numerous scenes of that happy life:

"Ellen smiled as she handled out the money on Friday nights. She did not smile from set purpose—to make herself agreeable, but because of the warm glow of beneficence with which the ceremony filled her. She felt as the august lady who had invariably distributed the prizes in the far-off days of school must have felt—very pleased with herself, very glad to be able to do something just a tiny bit spectacular that

gave pleasure to others. There was no doubt the men were glad to get their money—and the fact that they had earned it did not affect for a moment the beatific vision of herself as Lady Bountiful distributing largesse. And the answering smiles of the men full of gratitude for receiving their due, confirmed her in that vision."

Her daughter, the working girl Ethel, became the mistress of a bourgeois, and this inaugurates for her an equally pleasant existence. Peace and tranquillity invariably lead to the demoralization of the proletariat.

The gloomy ending of the novel—Ellen's return to her first spouse, now a blind and lame pauper —lends even more emphasis to the "charming" bourgeois existence of this working woman who had chased out her own son, a worker, who refused to accept the wage-cut ordered in the factory owned by her capitalist husband.

In his novel, *The Blackleg*, Hyde reverts to his pet theme of a worker who turns traitor to his class. The situation is rather curious: as the murderer is irresistibly drawn to the scene of his crime, so Hyde, the social fascist, is quite undefatigable in raising this "problem," perservering in his attempts to justify treachery. This novel developed out of a short story under the same title (the short story was not published in England). On comparing the novel with the story we find a peculiar process of evolution whereby the story grew into a novel. The story dealt entirely with the working class, there were no characters from other classes brought in; but, as already said, Hyde has really nothing to do with the working class: he either twists and distorts the picture of the workers' life or deliberately sidetracks the story into the groove of petty personal experiences in order to becloud the social conflict. Here we see this process at work. The nucleus of the story has remained the same—the transformation of a worker into a blackleg—but the plot has been considerably enlarged. Superadded to the hero of the story, the blackleg worker, we find here his bourgeois relatives and their lives dragged in, and this has enabled Hyde to make a bulky novel of the short story.

Hyde could not draw upon the working class for additional material, but had to borrow entirely from the petty bourgeoisie.

This novel breathes blank despair and resignation. The protracted strike, described by Hyde, upsetting the normal course of life, affords him another opportunity to point out the sufferings that are in store for the workers if they dare take up the fight against their exploiters. But Hyde is no simpleton; he lays much stress on the hardships of the strikers, he spares no details, he puts on his black paint in heavy patches, and poses as the friend of the strikers. But he has nothing to say about the conditions of labor in the capitalist factory; he passes by in silence the immediate cause of the strike; he does not show the inevitableness of the workers' fight, and he treats the workers' struggle after the manner of a petty bourgeois preacher. The meaning of his sermon is obvious: see what sad results accrue from revolting against exploitation, behold the terrible sufferings of the poor strikers! Indeed, to work at lower rates of pay under capitalist "rationalization" seems a boon compared to terrible pictures of unemployment drawn by Hyde. Consequently, the transformation of a trade union branch secretary into a blackleg appears not an act of treachery, but a natural and logical sequel. Hyde so paints the whole picture that the reader should feel not resentment, not repulsion and indignation, but affection and sympathy for the deserter and traitor.

With each new work, Hyde grows more and more into a bard of treachery, who extols the most mercenary and basest "labor lieutenants of capitalism," those who have become the most imbued with the bourgeois mentality. Hyde's evolution is directly related to the evolution of the British "Labor" Party which grows more and more reconciled to capitalism, which is shedding more and more its outward show of opposition to capitalist exploitation. Hyde has gone far, even from his own earlier stories, and is rapidly completing his social fascist metamorphosis. It is imperative for proletarian literary critique to ruthlessly expose social fascism in the realm of literature. It is absolutely necessary to point out clearly and definitely that the "labor themes" are merely a mask to conceal the treachery of social fascist literature.

Leopold Auerbach

A Great Man and a Narrow Philistine

(On the Centenary of Goethe's Death)

In 1828, *Moskovsky Vestnik*, a Moscow literary review, printed a letter from Goethe to the Venevitinsky literary circle regarding the translation of fragments of *Faust* into Russian. Goethe advised the members of the circle:

"Go on, in the same gradual way, to impart to your countrymen the things that are of immediate benefit to them. Having always in mind the Monarch and his wise and benevolent intentions, carry out the tasks allotted to you. What is possible for the honest, is useful; what is understandable to the simple-minded, will bear fruit. May always your encouraging reward be the approval of your own heart, coupled with the approval of your superiors."

The gendarmes of tsar Nikolai could feel satisfied with such a homily from the great poet, coming as it did on the heels of the December uprising of 1825. And it was not accident that Goethe wrote this letter. It contained, in effect, much of the "wisdom" Goethe attained to when he surrendered to the historic imbecility of the German bourgeoisie of his day.

What shall we do with Goethe—we who have made it our task to tear up the roots of capitalism from human consciousness, we who are the shock brigade of the proletarian world revolution?

Goethe was the poetical genius of the bourgeoisie in the period of its historic ascendancy. He is great as the interpreter of the new *Weltanschauung* which emerged as the antithesis to the epoch of feudalism and to the culture of the landlord and the aristocrat; as the artist and thinker who disclosed a number of contradictions in the nascent bourgeois individualism, who laid bare the historic limitations of "Faustian" activity, who involuntarily exposed the transient nature of bourgeois representation of the interests of all who had been oppressed by the preceding regime.

Goethe was a product of German conditions but became a mighty spokesman of the whole of the world capitalism. In the history of bourgeois thought, he may be put side by side with Hegel. Yet, how low he fell in reflecting and expressing the rise of his class. The French bourgeoisie had come into power through years of revolution, through the *Thermidor*, through the epoch of the Napoleonic wars. The German bourgeoisie was far weaker—it compromised, it bargained, it haggled; it crawled up to the historic arena on its belly, dodging and manoeuvering, cringing and whining.

Goethe was not, as Mehring would have it, part and parcel of the dominant class. A Weimar state councilor, a zealous courtier, a servant to the petty ruler of some insignificant dukedom—Goethe gave historic expression to the tactics of the bourgeoisie from which he had sprung; he became the victim of its political impotence; its cowardice and backwardness as compared with the advanced practices of the French bourgeoisie.

The letter to the Venevitinsky circle was penned by an octogenarian. He had witnessed the activities of the educationalists in France, he had led the Storm and Stress period in Germany; he had met the French Revolution face to face on his way from Italy, after his ten years sojourn and eventual escape from Weimar; he had followed the development of the class struggle in France step by step; he saw the rise of Napoleon and survived his death; he lived to see the new French Revolution of 1830; already as a mature writer, he witnessed the literary development of Schiller and Byron and lived to bury them; he was the friend of Hoerder, he corresponded with Hegel, he studied Kant, who was his contemporary, as well as Fichte, Jacobi and Schelling; he studied many branches of natural science and possessed encyclopedical knowledge; his work on light and color he prized above his literary work, and he was indeed an eminent natural philosopher. Pseudo-classicism, sentimentalism, *weltschmerz*, neo-romanticism, Heine—all these he had witnessed through his life-time.

In the 143 volumes of his works will be found numerous contradictions, demonstrating not only his direct evolution, but also his constantly changing points of view, and his complacent existence in a world of contradictory assertions.

A "quotation" method of approach in regard to Goethe is not only inadmissible—as is indeed generally the case—but also quite obviously absurd.

Let the various factions of the contemporary bourgeoisie dress up Goethe—now as a reactionary, now as a mediocre liberal, now as a humanist cosmopolitan, now as a rabid jingoist and nationalist, now as an ideological precursor of the League of Nations, now as a monarchist and conservative, now as an idealist-intuitivist, now as an empirical pragmatist, now as a forestaller of Darwinism, and now as the worst enemy of the theory of evolution—we alone are not interested in transforming Goethe into a dialectical materialist. Leninism gives us the possibility to comprehend and explain the logic and the substance of Goethe's life, of Goethe's creation, of Goethe's life work. Picking out quotations from his works or letters must not take the place of an integral and well-thought-out appraisal—a quotation serves either as the basis or the illustration of an analysis, it confirms the proof but does not obviate the necessity for proof. The bourgeois newspapers approach Goethe with quotations—we can make them a present of a great many quotations; nevertheless, they cannot cope with the whole of Goethe's legacy: a dying bourgeoisie is not equal to the task of coping with the classics of a rising bourgeoisie. To understand Goethe is to understand a good deal about the nature of the bourgeoisie and so to fight against it.

> "Goethe in his works takes a twofold attitude towards the German society of his time. He is hostile to it; he abhors it and tries to flee from it, as in Iphigenie, and generally during his travel in Italy; he rebels against it, like his Goetz, Prometheus, and Faust, he pours

on it the hot ridicule of Mephistopheles. On the other hand, we find him reconciled to it, at peace with it—in most of his shorter poems and in numerous prosaic works, extolling it in *Masquerade,* defending it against the historic movement rising against it, especially in those of his works which deal with the French Revolution. Thus, Goethe is now great, now petty; now the rebel genius that scorns and despises the world, now the cautious, tractable, narrow phlistine. Goethe, in all his greatness, was powerless to overcome the German bourgeois imbecility; on the contrary, it conquered him, and the conquest of imbecility over the great German is the best proof of the fact that it cannot generally be overcome "from within." Goethe was too universal, too active and mundane by nature, to seek salvation from imbecility in Schiller's flight to the Kantian ideal; he was too penetrative to fail to see that this flight amounted after all to swopping a shallow imbecility for a pompous one. His temperament, his powers, his mental trend drove him towards practical life, and the practical life around him was a miserable one. This dilemma—to exist in a living environment which he was bound to detest, and yet to be chained to it as the only one in which he could be active—this dilemma was constantly before him, and the older he grew in years, the more ignominiously the great poet retreated before the petty Weimar state councilor."

This remarkable characteristic of Goethe was given by Engels in a polemical essay against Herr Gruen, "a true socialist." This characteristic should be the basis for our analysis of Goethe's work. It imposes on us the necessity to trace the *evolution* of Goethe's contradictions and give a class appraisal of the contradiction between the great artist and his environment, between the bourgeois poet who made a deal with the aristocracy, and the social practices of his class.

The French Revolution was sharply denounced by Goethe. Eloquent testimony of this we find not only in his private correspondence and his conversations with Eckermann, but also in his artistic creation. His *Great Corta, Citizen General, Insurgents, Chats of German Emigrants,* the unfinished tragedy *A Girl of Oberkirchen* are in the nature of petty, slanderous, inartistic and unconvincing pamphlets against the great bourgeois revolution.

Was this fight waged, however, from the point of view of the feudal aristocracy and in the name of the "old regime?" Did it constitute an apostatic rupture with the German bourgeoisie? Or it was a propaganda for "peaceful" bourgeois evolution, without the extremes of the Parisian suburbs, the Jacobins and the Terror, without violent upheavals and cataclysms? This question is largely answered in *Hermann und Dorotea,* a poem written in 1797. Of course, this poem contracts peace and order with the "chaos" and "disorder" of revolution. Of course, it is an apology for "constructive endeavor" as against the "destructive" methods of France. But does it contain an exceptionally petty bourgeois and philistine idealization of the nobility, of the landed aristocracy, of the upper classes of the old regime? No, it is a rapturous panegyric to the petty burgher, to the prosperous rural small proprietor, to the customs and behavior of exemplary burghers.

Hostility to the French Revolution was common to nearly the whole of the German bourgeoisie. Goethe's views were in line with those of his class which preferred cringing before a host of petty dukes to following the example set by France. And did not the bourgeois Gironde prefer an alliance with the *émigrés* to one with the artisans and workmen, with the proletariat of the suburbs? Was not the bourgeoisie scared by the forces which it had released in its struggle against the old regime?

In Goethe's attitude towards the French Revolution may be seen a certain duality that is not peculiar to Goethe: it is the duality of the German bourgeoisie which aspired to national unity but had no forces for revolution and shunned the "plebeian" struggle.

This duality, characteristic of the evolution and status of the German bourgeoisie, is indeed the classical feature of the behavior of any bourgeoisie in any national revolutionary movement that stirs to life the lower ranks of labor.

It is true that Goethe often made too great compromises to feudalism, even from the standpoint of his contemporary bourgeoisie. Nevertheless he was far ahead of it in many other respects. For instance, Goethe held aloof from the "cleaning of Germany's augean stables by Napoleon," to use Engels' expression. Goethe clearly realized the historic significance of the Napolenoic wars which reduced the number of the German states from 300 to 39 and which led to the abolition of personal vassalage for the peasantry in many parts of Germany. Not for nothing was Goethe reproached for his lack of hate during the so called wars of liberation against the French. Goethe had none of the pathos of the fight against Napoleon—he did not believe that the German bourgeoisie could unite Germany and march at the head of its national development, although he knew that a victory for Napoleon could inaugurate "a new epoch in human history."[1]

Possibly, Goethe's attitude to Napoleon was partly the expression of his admiration for the pacifier, for the tranquillizer, for the strong power together with his apprehension of new social disturbances, new drastic changes in the correlation of forces, new historic cataclysms.

For Goethe was getting old by that time, and one may recall what he had said to Eckermann: "Much is spoken nowadays about aristocracy and democracy; but the whole problem is quite simple in our youth when we either lack possessions or are unable to appreciate their value, we are democrats, but, if during a long life we scrape together some property, we then want to make it secure not only for ourselves but also for our children and grandchildren who will inherit our possessions. That is why in old age we all turn into aristocrats no matter what views we hold when we are young."

What does Goethe chant the praises of in *Wilhelm Meister?* "A home life based on piety that is animated and supported by industry and order —a piety that is neither too exclusive nor too

[1] Cf. *French Campaign* by Goethe. After the battle of Valmi he says: "Hence and from this day begins a new epoch in world history, and you may say that we have witnessed its commencement."

broad, and most propitiously coordinated to capabilities and powers. . . . Here I see before me—limitation of desires and work for the future, circumspection and restraint, innocence and activity."

This does not sound as if Goethe respects the imbecility of his day; it rather proves how great was the victory of imbecility. Here we see the outcome of Goethe's path from *Prometheus* to *Pandora*, from *Goetz von Berlichingen* to *Egmont*, from *Werther* to *Affinities*, and from *Parafaust* to the closing verses of the second part of the last variant of *Faust*.

Yet, how does this sermon about a piety that is neither too exclusive nor too broad, about circumspection and restraint—how does this plea for philistine restraint and bourgeois smugness, how does this apology for moderation and the golden mean, tally with the usual conception of the insurgent Werther and the ever perturbed soul of Faust? Is the contrast really so sharp between the revolt of Prometheus against the gods and Werther's cosmic protest against reality on the one hand, and on the other the plea for resignation contained in *Wilhelm Meister*, for restraint and limitation in *Torquato Tasso*, and for humdrum practical activity in *Faust?*

The Sorrows of Werther was perhaps the most talked about work in the whole history of world literature. Napoleon took *Werther* with him in the Egyptian campaign and read it over seven times. When he met Goethe he was able to offer concrete criticism of the work.

"To be misunderstood, is the fate of people like ourselves," is Werther's plaint. Werther scored such a big success just because he was understood by the insurgent burgher, because it was the struggle for the "live man" in the nascent bourgeois society, because *in the form of admiration of nature and of the cult of heart and sentiment, the reader clearly saw a protest against the social realities;* because *Werther* contained the idealization of the inner nature of a hero that was new in literature and stood out in sharp contrast to the old types.

The right to *extreme individualism*—thus was conceived the basic line of *Werther*, which was fully in keeping with the spirit of the period of Storm and Stress that was looking for the big personality and for independent behavior and indomitable will.

The *weakness* of the German bourgeoisie as compared to the French, its *backwardness*, and its *narrow outlook*, accounted for the fact that in *Werther* the voice of social critical protest is muffled, that in *Werther* the force of the blow is levelled not against the system which hinders the formation of the bourgeois individualists, but against the world in general, against humanity as a whole, against the universe as such. Not in vain did Lessing protest against Werther and against his suicide: of what earthly use are you going to be in real struggle if you shoot yourself because of a disappointment in love? Supposing that Lotta had answered Werther's love, or that he had found solace with another sweetheart; then, there should have been an end to the world's sorrow—such would seem to be the deduction from this work in which a personal disappointment in love is characteristically the center of the plot and the hub of action.

The more abstract the revolt and aspirations the more nebulous—though majestic—the revolt against the environment, and the more cosmic its rejection, the more natural it would be to compromise when it came to a real fight, to shed all the fine plumes in the very first clashes with practical life.

Already in *Werther* the hero soliloquizes: "Rarely in life are questions solved by means of 'either—or.' Sentiments and models of action have as many shades and nuances as there are intermediate stages between an aquiline nose and a flat one. You will therefore bear me no grudge if, while agreeing with the whole of your arguments, I will nevertheless try to slip through between the 'either—or.'" Hence it follows quite clearly that if Werther had remained alive he would have turned—in full accord with Goethe's subsequent philosophy—from a democrat into an aristocrat; in other words, from a super-individualist into a philistine, reconciled to the world of tranquillity with an assured slice of bread and butter and a little house in the country, away from the march of history. [1]

It is precisely in the character of Werther that the evolution can be traced from the images of Moses or Mahomed which disturbed the mind of the young Goethe, to the image of Wilhelm Meister who finds solace in surgery, as the symbol of the honest, little, simple, limited and specialized life of socially useful activity.

In the recent Goethe Centenary Manifesto, signed by leading figures of bourgeois Germany, we read: "Goethe contained within himself all the contradictions of human nature, and from the passionate duality of his inner nature he arrived at the emancipating harmony."

All the contradictions of human nature! No, Goethe's greatness consists precisely in that he really proved capable of detecting not all the contradictions of human nature—supposedly eternal and unalterable—but many of the contradictions of the nascent bourgeois individualism of a Germany that was developing on capitalist lines, many contradictions of a definite social type, many contradictions which were as yet in the embryonic stage, many both real and supposed, both solvable and unsolvable contradictions (for them), which we ought to grasp, we who have begun to tear up the roots of capitalism in the minds of men.

"Emancipating harmony"—such is the view of Goethe held by present day exponents of that German imbecility which managed to get the better of Goethe. Of course, his "olympianism," his "classicism," his mask of cool composure, were not at all as many believe, the expression of Goethe's superiority over life's realities, of his mastery of them, of his eliminating them on the high plane of thought. They were more in the nature of a self-defensive acceptance of his environment. Yet, Schiller's programme—the road to freedom through beauty, did not solve Goethe's dilemma, as Engels pointed out.

Goethe was indeed drawn to practical activity; he possessed the great joy of a rich perception of life (see, for instance, his *Roman Elegies);* he strove after an integrated human nature; he clutched at everything to reinforce his inward and inherent optimism.

"In the beginning was the deed," thus Faust

[1] It is interesting to note that in the printed text of *Goetz Von Berlichingen*, Goethe did omit the allusion to the oppression and exploitation of the peasantry that was contained in the original variant.

The bill of the meeting held in celebration of the centenary of Goethe's death. The meeting took place in Moscow; it was organized by People's Comissariat for Education, Communist Academy, scientific, literary and social organizations.

corrects the Christian "In the beginning was the word." In practice, in creative human activity in great work does Faust find an outlet for his path-seeking nature.

Faust has long since become an adjective. We speak of the Faust man, Faust technique, Faust soul and Faust culture.

"Faust is the portrait of a whole culture," says Spengler. Even the chief theoretician of German fascism, Rosenberg, declares: "In Faust Goethe depicted our true nature, the eternal that lives in our soul in all its forms of manifestation." To this will subscribe Hauptmann, Rickert, Simmel, Ludwig, and any liberal publicist — they will only quarrel about the content of this concept; but the "Faust man" is for all of them the symbol of the inward substance of the man of the "new age."

The Faust man is the bourgeois individualist, it is Werther lifted to the plane of "eternal" problems and social activity. The problem of Faust is the problem of Faust's philosophy of life. Goethe here is not merely a brilliant portrayer of life, a master of realistic art; not a rhetorical fighter using Shiller's weapons of rhymed declarations about social phenomena. In Faust we see Goethe as a mighty poet-thinker, as an artist-philosopher, as a master of generalization and profound penetration. Human personality, the free personality, its fate, its why and whither, its possibilities, its place in the world — this is the theme of Faust. Thus does Goethe treat the bourgeois personality and he does so boldly, courageously, sharply, creating a set of historic symbols which retain their actuality for many decades, and the greatest conceptive value for centuries.

Comrade Lunacharsky had aptly observed that "Faust's dissatisfaction is nothing else but the thirst for an ever-increasing abundance of life."

"Athwart the world I have but flown,
Grasped by the hair whatever I did covet,
Loosed it, had I no pleasure of it,
Did it elude me, made no moan.
I did but wish, achieve, and then again
Did wish, and thus I stormed through life again,
First vehemently, with majestic passion,
But shrewdly now I tread, in heedful fashion.
The round of earth enough I know, and barred
Is unto man the prospect yonderward.
O fool, who thither turns his blinking glances,
And of his like above the clouds romances!
Let him stand firm, and round him gaze on earth.
Not mute the world is to the man of worth.
What need hath he to range infinitude?
What he perceives, that may be understood.
This let him journey down his earthly day;
When specters haunt him, let him go his way;
In onward-stirring find his bale, his bliss,
He, that each moment uncontented is."

(Goethe's *Faust*, transl. by A. G. Latham, London, J. M. Dent and Sons, part II, p. 317).

Faust gives up looking for answers to the questions and doubts which had previously tormented him. His only dream is of becoming simply human — not a trace is left of the god-making of the *Parafaust*. Let us see wherein Faust found solace?

"A marish skirts the mount, whose smell
Infecteth all the land retrieved.
To drain the festering sump as well!
Then were the last the best achieved.
I open room for millions there, a dwelling
Not idly sure, but to free toil compelling;
Green fields and fruitful, men and herds at home
Upon the earth new wrested from the foam..."

(Ibid. p. 321-322).

Faust undergoes such a thorough metamorphosis that in the end we seem to see another character, another Faust, who finds answers where the Faust of the first part saw but problems.

Faust's dream corresponds to Wilhelm Meister's resignation. It is not the daring victory of the proud spirit which Faust formerly was, and this

religious finale is by no means accidental. What Faust does is to abjure his former insurgency: he finds rather answers to the questions which had previously tormented him, not solution to the contradictions. Or to be more precise: it is in resignation that Faust finds the answers and the solution. Mephistopheles does not get Faust's soul; that is, Faust's line is vindicated and confirmed, not because Faust merges into the "we," finds abundance of life in collective toil; but rather because Faust becomes reconciled and gives up his path-seeking, having found the way to God. Yes, Goethe was tied to his environment, as "the only one in which he could be active." [1]

And here is what Goethe said to Eckerman after finishing *Faust:* "It is not given to man to solve the world problem; he can only find out where the problem begins, and then keep within the bounds of that which is accessible to his understanding. His faculties do not permit him to compass nature's activities: his desire to understand the universe, in view of his limited outlook, is a futile effort. Human reason and divine reason are two exceedingly different things."

Faust ends in tragedy. This is not a tragedy of human existence that dates from the dawn of time and is destined to last for all time; it is the historic limitation of bourgeois individualism and bourgeois practices. Faust does not end in "emancipating harmony," it ends in a form of practice, not as victory, but as defeat, not as happiness, but as a refuge, the "eternal" dissatisfaction is directed into a narrow channel. Limits are set to Faust's revolutionary spirit — from here to here. Thus, the apology for bourgeois individualism, the glorification of the strong, free, self-sufficient personality, leads either to the suicide of Werther or to the clipped wings of the Faust of the second part.

Supposing Faust were to continue his existence and survive to this day—then the image of Faust would become merged with that of Mephistopheles, and skepticism, ridicule, cynicism of a cheaper kind than those of Mephistopheles — would become an integral part of Faust's inner being.

The "Faust man" was a tremendous step forward in the evolution of mankind as compared with the men of the feudal epoch.

The "Faust man" proved capable of giving a mighty impetus to the process of man's triumph over nature and the development of technique. Nevertheless, the Faust man and the Faust epoch could not bring about the creation of that great and integral human personality of which Goethe had dreamed and whose existence he recognized as impossible in the "Faust epoch."

Says Goethe (in *Wilhelm Meister):* "It has been rightly observed that an all round development of human faculties is desirable, and that this constitutes perfection. But man is not born for such perfection, and indeed, everyone must develop as a separate being, while at the same time endeavoring to understand that which is common to us all... Yes, the time has now come for specialization and blessed will be he who understands this and acts in this direction both for himself and for others."

Gundolf justly observes that *"Faust* ends as a specialist, the same as Wilhelm Meister, whereas at the start, Faust was pictured as all embracing, like his brothers Mahomet and Prometheus." Gundolf does not even suspect what a blow this is to the "Faust man."

The problem of onesidedness is in direct relationship to the tragedy of Faust. Subdivision of labor and the growth of individualism are contradictory under a system of bourgeois individualism. Crippled personalities, the cursing of millions of talents, the suppression of the majority of people — such is the practice of the Faust culture.

In a most interesting book on the spiritual crisis of the bourgeoisie by Karl Jaspers, of which a third edition recently appeared, [1] we read: "The measuring rod of the human being has now become the average productivity of labor, therefore the individuality does not matter. There are no people that cannot be replaced. The world has fallen into the hands of mediocrity, into the power of people without fate, without dignity, without humanity; work is not related to individuality... The worker becomes part of the machine... Nowadays the great people have to make room for the men of business.."

Yet, wherein is the solution? Here is the reply given by Hitler: "The world outlook which, eschewing the democratic mass, endeavors to place this earth at the disposal of the best people, *i. e.*., of people of a higher order, must logically, within this people, submit to the aristocratic principle and secure to the best minds the leadership and the utmost influence. Thus it will rely, not on the idea of the majority, but on the idea of the personality."

Here we get logic: a chosen people — chosen personalities; one people to be the higher race, the other to be the common herd; the leading personalities at the top, and the voiceless mass at the bottom. Here is logic — the logic of capitalism driven mad by the apprehension of its impending doom; it is the logic of the beginning of barbarism, the logic of backsliding to medievalism; it is the logic of the historic crisis the solution for which is either in the eclipse of human culture, or — which is inevitable, which will be, and is coming, in the victory of the proletarian world revolution.

Hitler's reply in fact, is a brutally frank reply that can be given anyone who tries to reason on the basis of the bourgeois order. The answer to Hitler's reply is not the twaddle of those who wear the mask of liberal phraseology. The answer to Hitler's reply is the theory and practice of Leninism alone.

The order which begets bourgeois individualism has reached the end of its tenure. Our collectivism contains the prerequisites for the growth of personality. In "overcoming the survivals of capitalism in the economy and mentality of the people." *(Resolution of XVII Conference of CPSU),* in digging the grave of bourgeois individualism, we are clearing the paths for the growth of the human individuality. Communist labor over-

[1] Here is what Goethe previously said: "Faust — on the plane to which he has been raised by the new treatment of the ancient popular legend — is a human being who feels handicapped by the limitations of earthly existence and can find satisfaction neither in the loftiest knowledge nor in the enjoyment of life's greatest blessings, since they cannot even partially allay his torment: his spirit, which seeks escape in all directions, eventually turns back into itself, more unhappy than ever. Such a mood is akin to the spiritual state of human beings today."

[1] K. Jaspers. *Die Geistige Situation der Heutigen Welt.*

comes the onesidedness of capitalist specialization. Communism eliminates the contrast between mental and physical labor. Socialist technique overcomes the limitations of bourgeois technique; it contemplates, and is already producing a new type of worker engaged in the process of production. As the world is being changed, so our new human type grows ever stronger. There are no questions which this new man would fear to tackle. His revolutionary thought and practice solves not only all the questions which troubled the mind of the Faust man, but he raises also new questions that are far more intricate, profound, significant, and allembracing.

The crisis of bourgeois thought finds its clearest expression in the propaganda of the struggle against technique — a propaganda that is being carried on not only in words but also in deeds.

Goethe, who did not live to see even the first railway in Germany, maintained a twofold attitude towards technique. He realized the inevitability of its development and yet he feared it. In a letter to Zelter he wrote: "Speed and accumulation of wealth — these are the objects of the world's admiration and of everybody's striving; railways, express mails, steamships, convenient communications of every kind here in the civilized world is trying to excel and outshine itself, and owing to this it is *unable to rise above mediocrity* ... The present is the most propitious time for able heads, for shrewd practical people who, possessing a certain amount of agility, feel their own superiority over the masses, although they are themselves devoid of higher gifts."

Is it not clear that Goethe in his *Faust* showed not only the contradictions betwen the feudal traditions and the man of the bourgeois order? Is it not clear that the genius of Goethe was revealed in his rising to understand the intrinsic contradictions of the very type of bourgeois individualism and of the historic practice?

Mediocrity and *bourgeois individualism* are interconnected, the same as are *growth of personality* and *socialist comradeship in struggle.* Faust's discontent with his environment, his striving after great endeavor, his effort to change life, were the reflection of the rise of the bourgeoisie, of its robust youth. The bourgeoisie of today has nothing to do with these Faustian traits. These Faustian traits are in that legacy of Goethe which belongs to us alone — to the world proletariat in the country of victorious socialism, to the Party that is led by Stalin.

In Faust's dissatisfaction there is also an unwillingness to put up with the relativity of achievements. Yet, the very basis of the *contrast between relative achievements and absolute aspirations* is in itself *relative,* historically limited, and socially transient.

> "For Bogdanov (as for all the machians) the recognition of the relativity of our knowledge excludes the least admission of absolute truth. For Engels' absolute truth is made up of relative truths. Bogdanov is a relativist; Engels is a dialectician." *(Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* by V. I. Lenin, London, Martin Lawrence, V. 8, p. 106).

Our striving forward has no need to be spurred on by a longing for the unattainable absolute.

We often hear about Goethe's flight into the world of art. And he often declared himself that "as soon as anything monstrous and menacing appeared in the political world I obstinately fled to the most distant parts."

What did this "flight" signify? A refusal to participate in the practices of his class? Or a form of seeking the most useful way of serving his class? Were his distant wanderings a mere desertion? Or was this rather a peculiar way of serving those very historic problems that were being solved in the political world?

"A comparison of the German poeple with other peoples," said Goethe to Lueden after the battle of Leipzig, "arouses in us an unpleasant feeling which I try in every way to overcome, and now, in science and art I have found those wings which help me rise above it." The aim, according to Goethe, consists in that the German people "should not be frightened, should not turn pusillanimous, but should remain capable of taking up any great work when the day of glory comes."

Goethe understood quite well the historic tasks of the German bourgeoisie, but he also saw its weakness. He took a pessimistic view of its forces, realizing that after the revolutionary overthrow of feudalism a retrogression would be bound to ensue within the bourgeois order. He appraised his position in just and realistic fashion: science and art are a poor solace, to be sure; but is a better solace possible for a state councilor in Weimar? In common with his class, he had not grown up to the level of the French Revolution —hence his departure upon a course which seemed to him to offer the possibility of preparing the German people for a "great work when the day of glory comes."

The unity of Germany will be brought about by the railways, Goethe observed towards the close of his life. But he knew that by his literary work he too, served this purpose.

Goethe's creative work was a preparation for the bourgeois-national unity of Germany and a struggle for it. His role in this matter can hardly be overestimated. It is relevant here to recall Fichte's dictum: "Literature alone is the force which unites the nation. In the spiritual unity of its literature, our people sees the guarantee of its own spiritual unity and at the same time the assurance of its national regeneration." Goethe in this role seems to mock at the contemporary German bourgeoisie. Just as at the dawn of its development it was cowardly in the struggle for national emancipation; just as in the period of its ascendancy it waged such "liberation" wars against Napoleon as exchanged the domination of the French for the knout of the Russian cossack—so even now, when its last hour is approaching the German bourgeoisie are adding to their nation's humiliation, that nation which has been enslaved by Versailles and the Young Plan. He who ponders Goethe's work, must clearly realize that the role of Goethe's successor in no way befits the contemporary bourgeoisie. It inherits all his compromises and philistianism; it inherits all shortcomings and his fall—it is guided by these, it imitates them, but cannot rise above them.

"Goethe's name signifies for the German people a message which heralds inward peace," continues the above quoted Manifesto. They want "inward peace" so as to hinder the struggle for the national emancipation of Germany which can come only as the result of social emancipation—along the

road of proletarian revolution, under the leadership of the Communist Party.

They urge "inward peace" as a euphemism for their policy, their domination, their class oppression. They are honoring Goethe—not in order to reveal his historic mission, the struggle for Germany's national emancipation, but rather as a cloak for their cowardice and imbecility today. As for the heirs of that which made Goethe great —they seek no outlet or escape from politics "to the most distant part," they are strong, their cause is winning, their victory is assured. They are fighting.

In regard to creative method, Goethe gave a great deal of thought to the question of subjectivism versus objectivism. In contradistinction to the petty bourgeois subjectivism of Schiller, to his transformation of the personality into a mere mouthpiece of the "spirit of the times," and to his idealistic romanticism, Goethe strove after objective realism. To start out with reality, to proceed from the individual to the general, to struggle against an empirical approach to the individual, to consider the individual not as accidental, but to look for its "law," thus did Goethe conceive his problems, and in solving them he succeeded in discovering even the mobility of the object, rising at times—in *Faust*—to the dialectical treatment of a number of categories. Nevertheless, of course, Goethe was by no means a dialectical materialist, and creative method is relatively less valuable to us, than, for instance, the work of the great idealist Hegel is to our philosophy.

Goethe's lofty *Weltanschauung* in comparison with the level of the outlook of his class and his epoch was the basic source of his great art achievements. His creative practice is a striking testimony to the role played by an artist's philosophic outlook. Its richness and profundity determine the strength and fulness of the artist's perception of reality, of his penetrative observation and of his influence on the evolution of the realities of his time. On the other hand, the basic drawbacks in Goethe's outlook furnished the key to an understanding of his perception of the surrounding world, of his inclination to romanticism in his young days, and to allegorical symbolism in old age.

Goethe disliked the dialectics of Hegel. As against the development of contradictions, he thirsted for harmony. He strove after an integral perception of life—and it seemed to him that the objectiveness of perception, essential to this purpose, could be attained by a dispassionate, non-party and super party attitude.

Goethe told Falk that "Meyer so penetrates the object, and is so dispassionate and so free from the party spirit, that he always sees the cards in the game played with him by nature."

In the concluding part of his *French Revolution* he wrote: "It ought to be said, after all, that in all important political issues the best situation is held by those observers who side with one or another party: what suits their advantage they eagerly grasp, and what does not they deny or ignore, or even try to turn to their own good. But the poet, who is outside of party by his very nature and must be so, tries to put himself in the position of both contending parties."

Must the poet endeavor to conceive the whole of reality? Indeed, he must. Does this imply the negation of any "bias of passion," of any "party spirit," as the indispensable condition of such conception? Not in the least.

Goethe dreamed of such a conception of the world as would enable him to grasp the whole of its wealth, all its aspects, all its manifold manifestations, and not in detail, but as a whole. Therefore he fought against subjectivism to the tendenciousness of which he opposed his objectivism as the natural passport of the non-party poet. Yet, even if the poet does not work after the method of using "images" to illustrate his mental judgments, even if he does not endeavor to measure reality with his subjective yardstick, but rather to discover the logic of evolution of reality itself,— even then his work must perforce include an appraisal of the reality, as the principle of selection and analysis of his material, as the idea of the artistic work as a whole. The act of conception is determined and actuated by the practical attitude towards the object—the same holds good in the field of art conception. Does such a practical attitude, such an *appraisal*, imply loss of the sense and understanding of the whole—which worried Goethe and caused him to give even a series of intuitive characteristics of the creative work of a writer? Yes, such was and is the case with every bourgeois artist, but not with the proletarian artist.

Goethe is by no means less tendencious than Schiller. His objectivism is a *fiction*. In his propaganda for objectivism he was now great, now petty and insignificant. Nevertheless, his objectivism signified a protest against bourgeois tendenciousness which hinders the perception and conception of the world as understood by Goethe. His objectivism was the expression of his flight from the contradictions of reality, of his concern for his personal calm which he was anxious to safeguard against "earthly vanity." His objectivism never was nor could be one that stands altogether above party—in the best sense, it enabled him at a given moment to rise above a given bourgeois party upon a given question. To Schiller's partisanship he opposed his dispassionateness—yet this was another form of bourgeois tendenciousness. And this was realized by Goethe himself, who once wrote in a letter to Zelter: "Why, even the most common chronicle contains something of the spirit of the epoch in which it was written. Does not a 14th century story about the appearance of a comet convey more omens and anticipations than a similar story of the 19th century? Yes, in one and the same town, and about one and the same event, a different story will be told in the evening than in the morning."

And, of course, Goethe was not free from party bias in his appraisals of the realities in his art works—he was tendencious; he varnished—although not so clumsily and crudely as did Schiller —some aspects of reality while keeping silent about other aspects, and often this tendenciousness was the expression of the historically progressive role of the bourgeoisie. Yet, this *tormented* Goethe: he began to take a pessimistic view of the art of the future, and here he joined issue with Hegel in some respects. He did *discern* the connection between the contradictions of his creative method and the peculiarities of his class and its outlook upon the world. "How dull and weak has life itself become in these two preposterous centuries: where will you now find an open, original nature? Who will master the strength to

tell the truth and to show himself as he really is? Yet, all this has its effect on the poet: he must now look for all this within himself; for nothing will he find around him." And in another chat with Eckermann he said: "This is indeed the trouble of all artists nowadays: they cannot find any worthy themes. This is our common handicap, and I do not conceal that I also belong to this new period. . . all poetry is going to vanish more and more."

Goethe had every reason for his pessimistic appraisal of the future art of the bourgeoisie, of bourgeois literature and bourgeois poetry, in connection with the victory of the bourgeoisie in life, in connection with the growth of bourgeois characters, in connection with the cultural hegemony of the bourgeoisie.

Between the class practice of the proletariat and the objective laws of social evolution there is no contradiction. It is the only class which can and does conceive reality as it is. It is the only class whose subjectivism is the historic tendency, the objective result, and the law of human evolution. It is the only class whose theory and practice lead to the mastery of the objective truth.

Lenin spoke of the objectivism of the class struggle. This party attitude towards the world has nothing in common with that vaunted "proletarian tendenciousness" which degrades and vulgarizes the world historic activity of the working class,—ostentatiously "red" and high-falutin' piffle which poses as the acme of genuine proletarian art.

It is the good fortune of our artists that they are living today: new characters, new social relations, new life-full of joy, not dull, but energetic, not weak, but strong.

We are building a classless human society—we, the working class, in our class struggle and by our class struggle—and the expression of this practice of the proletariat is the fact that our artists can take, conceive, reflect, and remodel the whole of reality, needing neither the subjectivism of Schiller nor the objectivism of Goethe, neither bias nor dispassion. All they need is party passion in the struggle for communism.

M. Charny

The Cultural Revolution in the Soviet Union

Mensheviks, opportunists, bourgeois liberals, slobbery intellectuals, all this teeming tribe of pre-revolutionary Russian life, who harped so voluptuously on every string of the words "the people," "liberty," "enlightenment" and on occasions were even not averse to whispering with pompous stealth the word "revolution," as soon as it came to the matter of a broad mass revolutionary movement inevitably threw up their arms with a gesture in which it is difficult to say which was most strongly expressed—alarm, haughty disdain or hypocrisy.

"Look at the darkness and ignorance all around! For God's sake, wait until the people are more enlightened!"

In very truth, there was no lack of ignorance and darkness in the country of the tsar and the semi-Asiatic bourgeoisie. Alongside of the big centers of modern concentrated industry, on the basis of which a fine revolutionary proletariat had already been formed in considerable groups, there existed a gigantic country of steppes and villages, of Asiatic dispotism and medieval barbarism. Suffice it to say that in European Russia, North Caucasus and Western Siberia, *only 318 out of every thousand men and 131 out of every thousand women were literate.* In Eastern Siberia, Middle Asia and South Caucasus, a person who was literate could be found here and there as a rare prodigy.

No one paid more attention than Vladimir Ilyich Lenin to the question of popular education or to those concrete matters which would, so much better than hazy clatter as to the value of letters, help to raise the cultural level of the masses. On dozens of occasions Lenin emphasized that socialism cannot be constructed in an illiterate country. In 1913, when in a foreign country he was up to his eyes in the organization of party work, Lenin found time to write a special artiele on library work, by means of which he wished to help to utilize in Russia the experience of public libraries in New York. After the Revolution, as chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, Lenin personally saw to the reorganization of the distribution of books, wrote decrees and gave instructions unceasingly.

What a difference between this revolutionary, active and creative approach to the question of culture and the opportunist chatter as to the desirability of culture in general!

For reformists and liberals of all shades, the backwardness of the masses was but a further argument against revolution, but from the very commencement bolshevism could see a direct connection between the rise of the revolution and the struggle against ignorance, which was a direct continuation of the power of the feudal and bourgeois exploitors. In 1923 Lenin wrote:

> "Our opponents have often told us that we have thoughtlessly undertaken the realization of socialism in a country of defective culture. But they are entirely mistaken if they consider themselves justified in reproaching us for not having begun the work at that end at which, according to the theory (of various pedants), it should have been begun. For us, the political and social revolution was merely the forerunner of that cultural revolution on whose threshold we are still standing." ("On Cooperation" by Lenin, *International Press Correspondence*, Berlin, 1923, No. 47).

In the same year, in an article on the book of Sukhanov (then a menshevik, afterwards a wrecker), Lenin said:

> "If the creation of socialism requires a definite level of culture (although nobody ventures to say of what nature this definite level of culture should be), why should we not begin beforehand with the revolutionary capturing of the pre-requisites for this definite level, and then proceed further upon the basis of the workers' and peasants' power and of the Soviet regime to catch up to the other peoples?" *(International Press Correspondence*, Vienna, 1925, No. 7).

The working masses have no other way of winning for themselves the possibilty of cultural development except by rebelling against the decrepit order of capitalism and seizing power. As is well known, Kautsky takes the opposite point of view. According to him, "the victory of socialism is to be expected as the result of the moral, intellectual and political growth and strengthening of the proletariat." ("Materialist Conception of History," Vol. 2). Kautsky, who considers that it is so much the better for socialism that capitalism should be at the height of prosperity, proposes to the working class to trust to socialism coming by itself on the basis of "prosperous capitalism" and as the result of "moral, intellectual growth," etc.

There were other authors who spoke with sufficient clearness of the mutual connection between revolution, socialism and the new culture of the working class.

It was none other than Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels who wrote:

> "Both for giving rise to this communist consciousness on a mass scale and for carrying out the matter itself, there must be a mass alteration of the people, which is possible only in the practice of the movement, in revolution. Consequently, revolution is necessary not only because there is no other way to overthrow the ruling class, but also because the overthrowing class can only clean itself of the dirt of the old society in revolution and make itself capable of creating the new society." (Archives of Marx and Engels).

The viewpoint of Karl Kautsky is in direct conflict with the viewpoint of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, but on the other hand it is fully in agreement with all the opportunists and bourgeois liberals whose sole aim is to restrain the masses

from revolution at all costs and by all means—philosophic, economic or aesthetic.

The working class of the old Russia, having seized the power and consolidated this power in four years of war with the armies of counter-revolution and intervention, were faced with the problems of culture on a gigantic scale. The pre-requisites had been won, and Lenin spoke of the aims of the cultural revolution which was already at the door.

> "Once given complete cooperation, we should already have a firm foothold on socialist ground. But the attainment of these conditions of complete cooperation assumes such a state of culture . . . that this cooperation is impossible without a cultural revolution." ("On Cooperation.")

In this struggle for culture, Lenin had to overcome in the Leninist party not only the tremendous difficulties of the old bourgeois heritage, a difficult heritage in an ex-tsarist fatherland, devastated in addition by eight years of imperialist war and intervention. In the ranks of the revolution itself there were formed, as the result of the pressure of the hostile ideology of enemy classes, various theories and trends which deflected the struggle of the working masses for culture from the correct path to one side. We may mention the organization Proletcult which arose even before the revolution under the leadership of a group of bolsheviks and which wandered from the philosophical position of Marxism on to the reactionary path of Mach and Avenarious. In the first few years of the Revolution, Proletcult considered itself to be a special ("fourth") form of the workers' movement and set itself the task of "working out proletarian culture."

In Lenin's articles and speeches, he does not weary of explaining and stressing the harmfulness of an anti-mass sectarian approach to the problem of proletarian culture, or the danger of a boastful, non-historical and pseudo-revolutionary rejection of the riches of the old culture.

> "Proletarian culture is not something which sprang from no one knows where, it is not the product of the minds of people calling themselves specialists in proletarian culture. That is pure rubbish. Proletarian culture must be a regular development of the reserves of knowledge which mankind worked out under the oppression of capitalist society, of landlord society, of official society. . . . We can only build up communism from the sum of the knowledge, organizations and institutions which remain to us from the old society." (Speech at the Congress of the YCL, 1920).

Naturally, the bolshevik theory of Lenin on utilizing the old heritage in the realm of culture has nothing in common with the recommendation of the opportunists to appeal to bourgeois sources of wisdom. (See for example the remark of the patriarch Kautsky concerning art: "The task of artists and art connoisseurs lies not so much in revolutionary art as in making accessible for the masses the fine artistic works which up to the present have been the monopoly of the ruling classes." (Materialist Conception of History, Vol. 2).

At the end of the last century, Lenin wrote in a discussion with the Russian *narodniki:* "Of course, the disciples (*i.e.*, of Marx) will not guard their inheritance as an antiquarian guards an old paper." The revolutionary proletariat takes possession of the whole of the inheritance left to it by the previous development of man, receives it critically, throws out the unneccesary, adopts that which is best according to the new requirements of a new class, and creates the new. *The whole sense of taking the old and working it up is to create the new.* This is the real philosophy of a young class entering into the struggle for the construction of a new world. Lenin gives the example of Marx himself, who mastered all the achievements of political economy, philosophy and socialist thought, and worked over all this inheritance critically without leaving a single point untouched. And it is only international social fascism, the antiquarian of the world bourgeoisie, carefully guarding the foundations of capitalism, which hypocritically shrieks: "look at the wonderful productions of the past."

Nine years have passed since Lenin spoke of the cultural revolution "which now confronts us." Nine years, of which most were spent in healing the wounds inflicted by imperialist war and intervention and in restoring national economy. It was not till 1929 that the first year of the socialist Five-Year Plan commenced, but the cultural revolution had already developed with gigantic power. The Leninist Party which led the Soviet Union directed the cultural revolution on the basis of the fundamental principles of Leninism in this sphere:

1. Culture on a mass scale, calculating on millions and on tens of millions.
2. Assimilating the riches of the old cultures, critically analyzing them on the path to proletarian culture.
3. The closest and most constant contacts between science, art and the practice of the revolutionary struggle and revolutionary construction, because "without work, without struggle, book knowledge of communism from communist pamphlets and books is absolutely worthless."

We may draw some conclusions. The argument with the mensheviks and the opportunists of various countries has already passed from the realm of theory to the sphere of the gigantic field of practice. Everything cannot be checked up. It is not every growth which can be expressed in figures and shown by a diagram. But there are plenty of figures. The reader will remember the figures given above as to illiteracy in 1897. In 1920 they had not greatly changed. In the course of 23 years, the number of literate men had increased from 318 to 409 per thousand, and literate women from 131 to 244. On the initiative of Lenin, the liquidation of illiteracy was raised as a gigantic mass social and political campaign. At the outset, a million illiterates learned to read every year, in 1929 the number was 5 millions, in 1930 it was 5 millions, in 1931 it had risen to 17 millions. *Whole districts trimphantly celebrated the attainment of complete literacy. By the XV anniversary of the October Revolution, there will not be a single person in the RSFSR between the ages of 8 and 50 who cannot read and write.* Compulsory elementary education has been put into operation already. A tremendous network of schools has been

set up, as well as various kinds of courses and colleges. The workers and the toiling peasants have not only obtained the possibility of entering the universities, have not only radically changed the social composition of the old universities, but a great number of new universities have been formed. In pre-revolutionary Russia, there were 91 universities, and now, in the USSR there are 537 with 400,000 students. In White Russia, South Caucasus and Middle Asia, where there was not a single university before the revolution, there are now as many as there were in the whole of the old Russian Empire. In 1927 there were 289 scientific institutions, and now there are 1,600.

The tremendous scope of socialist construction and the reconstruction of national economy made it materially possible to carry on cultural work on such a scale. But this scope of construction demands the development of the cultural revolution and to a considerable extent depends on it. The slogan thrown out by the leader of the Party, Stalin, that "bolsheviks must understand technology" called into life not only new educational institutions but also tens of thousands of circles and courses of various types, where millions of workers study theory and practice after their working day is over, and raise their qualification. Around the factories are rising "educational combinats," and a new form of factory-university is being created.

When tens of millions of people became literate and the cultural level and the social activity of the masses rose, this had an immediate effect on the circulation of newspapers and books. We do not hesitate to give some figures, because these dry statistics are interesting reading. The number of books published on the present territory of the USSR was:

In 1912 . . .	100 millions
In 1929 . . .	393 millions
In 1930 . . .	854 millions

The number of book titles was:

In 1912 . .	about 22,000
In 1930 . .	about 49,000

Compared with 1912, the peak year of publishing in pre-revolutionary Russia, the production of books in the USSR in 1930 had increased 118 per cent in titles, 800 per cent in pages and 853 per cent in circulation.

Unfortunately, we have not at hand the figures for 1931, but undoubtedly the third year of the Five-Year Plan produced a still greater leap forward.

The number of newspapers and their circulation has grown out of all proportions. The daily circulations of Soviet papers is almost 31 million copies. The USSR has become the leading country in the world for the circulation of newspapers (the circulation of all newspapers in the USA before the crisis was 33 millions).

Various kinds of art have tremendously developed on a mass scale: amateur theatrical circles, musical circles, and the cinema, which Lenin considered to the the "chief of the arts." Before the Revolution on the territory of the USSR there were 1,045 moving picture theaters. By October 1, 1927, there were already 7,251, by January 1931 there were 22,704 and by January 1932 there were 32,000.

Such is the situation with respect to quantity. The quality of cultural work in the USSR, permeated through and through with deep ideological principles, with a realization of the social interests of the toilers, with a feeling of collective work, cannot, of course, be compared with pre-revolutionary times or with modern capitalist countries.

The principle laid down by Marx and Engels has brilliantly justified itself in the practice of the October Revolution. The USSR has already a tremendous increase of culture which cannot be expressed in figures, because the whole psychology of the people has been changed and they are being straightened out and forged into new people with a new outlook, with an insatiable thirst for science, with a firm belief in their strength and in the possibility of reconstruction in the whole world anew by the organized will of the proletariat.

The very system of socialist organized production provides enormous possibilities for an all-round cultural development of the toilers and opens up undreamed of perspectives.

The division of labor in capitalist society dooms the overwhelming majority of mankind to heavy, exhausting and soul killing labor, and all the blessings of culture are appropriated by the ruling classes just as they appropriate the surplus product. The division of labor is accompanied by the hypertrophy of the town and the "idiotism of country life," the development of bourgeois technique (conveyers, automatic machines) and converts the worker into a mechanical appendage of a self-acting machine, dividing labor into physical and mental.

Socialism, by destroying the abyss between private and public interests, creates the foundation for destroying this division of labor. The beginning was made in the first days of the October Revolution, because the worker ceased to be merely a worker and became a member of the class holding power, the dictatorship of the proletariat. Millions of workers and poor and middle peasants directly participate in the organs of the proletarian government. Every worker at any factory is connected not only with his own machine, but he thinks and knows about the whole factory, the whole industry. He takes part in production conferences and checks up on the results of socialist competition. This immeasurably widens the horizon of the Soviet worker, the master of his life.

The enlarging of the political and general horizon gives rise to demands for further development, for cultural recreation. Marx points out that the more exhausting and dismal the labor of a worker in capitalist society, the coarser are the recreations which he seeks. During the 14 years of the Revolution, there has been an unmeasurable increase in the demand for good books, theaters, schools and self-education, and high class music. In some workers' centers (*e.g.* Orekhovo-Zuevo) there are permanent opera companies of worker amateurs playing in the clubs.

Not long ago, the following took place in Leningrad. In the possession of the Music Trust there were a few dozen pianos in excess of the plan. How were they to be distributed? The management of the Trust thought that in such a big plant as "Red Putiloff" there were sure to be a couple of dozen workers who were particularly fond of music and who would be prepared to buy a piano. The price was over 1,000 rubles. A notice

was put up in the works, and in a short time the trust received 6,000 applications from workers who wished to buy a piano. Most likely, the manager of the Trust was panic striken, but the fact of the enormous rise in the cultural level and the cultural demands remains an indisputable fact.

In the realm of literature, we have recently had such a significant event as the call of the worker shock brigaders to literature. A combination of self-sacrificing physical labor and skilled mental work does not astonish anyone. It is still difficult. Much has to be learned and many difficulties have still to be overcome, but this is natural in a country which is constructing socialism.

The widespread collectivization of agriculture and the liquidation of the *kulaks* as a class is of truly colossal importance from the point of view of the prospects of development of socialist culture. In *Infantile Sickness of Leftism in Communism,* Lenin wrote:

> "So long as the bourgeoisie is not overthrown and subsequently until small economy and small production have not utterly disappeared—the bourgeois atmosphere, propriety (property-loving) habits, middle class traditions will impair the proletarian work from without as well as from within the labor movement, and not only in the sphere of parliamentary activity, but unavoidably in all and every sphere of social activity, in all and every branch of politics, culture and life without exception." (*The Infantile Sickness of Leftism in Communism* by Lenin, Moscow, 1920, p. 102.)

In the USSR, about two thirds of all the poor and middle farms are now collectivized. Small private commodity production is disappearing—this basis on which, as Lenin says, grow habits of ownerships, petty middle class traditions, greed and avarice, and the whole complex of "amiable" qualities created by the capitalist system. Big socialist agricultural production does away with the village as an old conception, abolishes the contradictions between town and village, puts an end to the idiotism of country life. Tens of millions of toilers, liberated from the servitude of the psychology of the small owner, are beginning to join in the new socialist culture.

When we in the Soviet Union are discussing our cultural matters, we inevitably point out our dissatisfaction, and indicate insufficiency and backwardness. We are not satisfied with our publishing houses — there are not enough books and sometimes they are bad. We talk of the continued backwardness of *belles-lettres,* and we are not pleased with the moving pictures in which there are serious shortcomings of quantity and quality. Our dissatisfaction is naturally not absolute but relative. It arises from the gigantic growth of demands beyond real, reasonable and compulsory prospects.

The struggle on the front of culture is also a severe struggle with the class enemy, with his agents of every kind within the proletariat. Socialist industry, the gigantic extent of socialist reconstruction in the country, is a powerful basis for the development and florishing of proletarian, socialist culture. The cultural revolution is spreading to ever new spheres and to ever new strata of the toiling masses. But the cultural revolution is only a revolution because it is taking place not as an automatic process but in an active struggle against all the relics of the old order, against its ideology, in whatever form it may be expressed.

The amount which has been performed is immeasurably small compared with what remains to be done. But the slightest attempt to draw a parallel between our culture and "theirs," between the tendencies to development here and "there," in the world of capitalism, throws a vivid light on the historic disposition of two camps, of two worlds — the old and the new. There are two lines of development, two sharp curves: one goes downward and the other upwards, to the summit which man can attain only when he has completed his previous history.

Upton Sinclair's New Novel

The Wet Parade, by Upton Sinclair, published by the author, Pasadena, Cal., 1931.

This new Sinclair novel appeared towards the end of 1931—in a period of a crisis of ever increasing intensity, in a period when the crisis which was at first ignored and denied became a stern reality confronting the whole of capitalist America. Nevertheless, while Sinclair the publicist has given his reply to the questions now forced by history upon the attention of every writer and responsible public man, Sinclair the artist—as demonstrated by his latest novel—does not even consider these questions, but coolly ignores them. *The Wet Parade* is concerned not with the crisis, not with the class struggle and the problems of the revolution, but rather with the problem of alcoholism and the "prohibition" amendment in America supposed to be the "cure" for it.

Sinclair has often taken similar problems for the themes of his books. In his creative work he has often dealt with the social anomalies of bourgeois society, questions of social and biological hygiene. Suffice it to mention *The Fasting Cure* (1911) and his well-known *Sylvia's Marriage* (1914). *The Wet Parade* belongs to this kind of his work.

Far be it from us to upbraid Sinclair for the frankly publicistic trend of his book—as is now done by some bourgeois critics in America who, in the name of "pure" art, decry the too "earthly" substance of his latest novel. On the contrary, in Sinclair the artist, we have always welcomed Sinclair the publicist above all. It is this publicistic character of his creativeness—the fact that in the majority of his works every line is imbued in one way or another with the spirit of struggle, albeit theoretically unreasoned, with the spirit of militant criticism of all aspects of capitalist society—this very fact has always caused us to consider Sinclair akin to us as a writer. But in the novel under review, the weapon of his social criticism is turned on problems which, after all, are bound to blunt its keen edge.

Alcoholism is one of the concomitant evils of capitalism which will inevitably vanish under the socialist system of society. Sinclair attributes undue importance to it. From one of the concomitant phenomena of social life in capitalist America, it is turned by him into a gigantic controlling factor. The whole of public life in America is described by Sinclair as colored—nay, even completely ruled by this influence of alcoholism.

"... you had not merely personal sufferings, poisoned nerve cells and a cirrhotic liver; then you had poisoned poetry and a cirrhotic soul! You had a whole society narcotized, you had drunkards' fiction, drunkards' drama, drunkards' art; you had drunkards' newspapers and editorial pages, drunkards' clubs and propaganda societies, drunkards' college presidents and statesmen—and two drunkards' political parties! In all the activities of these individuals and organizations, you observed the same phenomena of restlessness and irritability, baffled perversity and angry guilt—all symptoms of nerve cells benumbed, of hepatic tissue indurated and contracted, and stained yellow with bile pigments in the duct terminations!"

Sinclair treats alcoholism from the view-point of its biological nature rather than from the social standpoint, and endows it with decisive social significance: it is almost on a level with the laws of the class struggle as the determining factor of social evolution in America. This mechanistic reduction of the sociological to the biological, this treatment of the problem of the "benumbing of the nerve cells" due to alcoholism as the moving force of the American political struggle instead of dealing with the social class factors in the evolution of society, characterizes this novel throughout. Overestimation of concomitant, secondary phenomena causes him to ignore the real process of social evolution in America. Hence the whole fallacy that is embodied in Sinclair's novel.

Maggy May, a girl coming from a farmer family in the South, gives up all her privileges of birth and joins her husband, Thurlton, in the fight against alcoholism. The couple battle heroically against the "wet" forces, while Thurlton sacrifices his life at his point of duty as a federal prohibition enforcement agent. The whole of this story rings fundamentally false in spite of all its sentimental trimmings. Sinclair used to choose workers as the standard-bearers of the struggle for the ideals of the new social life—revolutionary martyrs like Jimmy Higgins, or at worst, Jesus the Carpenter with his "socialist" gospel *(They Call Me Carpenter)* In *Wet Parade,* the role of the social apostle is given to a federal prohibition enforcement agent, and the gospel of the new social order is ... the prohibition amendment to the US Constitution, which is hailed by Sinclair, through the mouth of Maggy May, as the "greatest forward step ever taken in America." (p. 302.)

It is true, even in this novel Sinclair does not lose entirely the sharpness of his social vision. He cannot help perceiving the cant and hypocrisy of the bourgeois solution of the drink problem as embodied in the "dry law"; neither can he overlook the endless abuses, the social injustice attendant on its enforcement. Sinclair gives a scathing satire on the "wets" and the abuses which take place in the enforcement of prohibition. He draws a full size picture of the financial gambler Richard Fessenden who makes a huge fortune out of the illicit liquor traffic and thus retrieves his financial position which had been shaken by the post-war crisis. These satirical passages are isolated and casual, and are not incorporated in the

architectonic structure of the novel. Instead of using the class inequality involved in the enforcement of prohibition as a means for ruthless criticism of bourgeois democracy in general, Sinclair tries to appeal to this very democracy to do away with the inequality. For instance, he describes with manifest elation the trial where Fessenden's criminal activities are brought to light, and tells us with satisfaction how the police destroyed the stock of liquor confiscated from him.

Interesting in this connection is one passage in Sinclair's novel where he shows us Maggy May delivering a "dry" lecture before an audience of workingmen and triumphantly "smashing"—at least, so it seems to Sinclair—all objectors in the meeting:

"... there came an impatient young communist, who wanted to make a speech and say that the question of prohibition was nothing but a red herring which the capitalist politicians dragged across the trail, to keep the workers away from real issues."

The communist is not allowed to speak, and Maggy—apparently, with the author's approval—declares that no one can shirk the solution of the liquor problem, and as an argument against her opponent—again, with the author's approval—she quotes ... Trotsky as an authority.

Here, in the words of the "impatient young communist," was the key for Sinclair to the correct solution of the question of the "dry law." Yet, he ignores it, and he goes on appealing to the non-existent phantom of bourgeois democracy, proving true to the traditions of reformism in advocating the enforcement of this "great" reform. It is precisely such an appeal that is conveyed by the closing lines of the novel in which Maggy May, addressing a meeting after the death of her husband, exhorts her audience to organize themselves for the fight against the saloon keepers and the bootleggers, to inaugurate a "dry crusade" under a slogan with which Sinclair concludes his book:

"Prohibition has not failed!
Prohibition has not been tried!
Try it!"

One cannot help recalling the characteristic of Sinclair given by Lenin way back in 1915, in connection with one of Sinclair's anti-war pronouncements: "Sinclair is naive in his appeal ... for he ignores the premises for the growth of revolutionary actions when the situation is objectively revolutionary and a revolutiona organization exists. This cannot be replaced by 'sentiment.' No rhetorics can obviate the stern and ruthless struggle of the mighty currents in socialism—the opportunist and the revolutionary current." (Lenin, Vo. XVIII, p. 142, 3rd Russian Edition).

Equally naive is the appeal contained now in Sinclair's *Wet Parade*, which leads in the long run to wrong deductions, and is socially misleading, despite all the vehement eloquence of the author. Sinclair's novel sounds utterly false, and this basic falsity could not be concealed by Sinclair's pathetic description of martyrdom for the sake of the "dry law," nor by his excursions into the realm of medicine in the quest of prohibition arguments, nor by romantic portrayal of the patriarchal traditions of the South which serves as the background for a considerable portion of the novel.

A. Elistratova

Willi Bredel and his Book

N. and K. Machine-Building Works. A novel about everyday proletarian life.

This is the modest title of the first book to appear in proletarian literature written by a genuine proletarian on the life and struggle of the workers of an actual enterprize. The book was published in the cheap series of mass literature *Der Rote 1 Mark-Roman.* The author is Willi Bredel, a metal worker from Hamburg, a German bolshevik who fought in numerous class battles, graduated the "Spartak" school, took a hand in the civil war (including the Hamburg barricades of 1923) and has to his credit years of practical work in industrial enterprizes, in the Party committee and the editorial board of the Party newspaper. Already twice has he been in the "independent" grip of the class justice of "Hindenburg's" republic. The last sentence was passed when he was assistant editor of the Hamburg Party newspaper. The notorious Leipzig tribunal "for protection of the republic," which so generously distributes thousands of years of prison terms and hard labor to the revolutionary German workers, characterized two of his articles in the Hamburger Volkszeitung as "preparing grounds for high treason." Since January 1930, Willi Bredel has been serving a two-year term in prison.

Locked up in a stone cell in the most civilized of democracies, Bredel refused to enjoy the "privilege" of forced rest. He attempted to sum up some of the experiences of the class struggle of recent years and the result is *Machinenfabrik*, written during the first months of his confinement. A novel simply but boldly written, it is at the same time a document of class struggle, a summary of experience and a clear outline of perspectives—a guidance for future revolutionary activities.

A sixteen-day strike of 300 metal workers in the small machine building plant of "Negel and Kopp," a strike which was crushed, betrayed and drowned in blood by the joint efforts of the employers, social democrats and the Hindenburg-Kautsky police force—such is the central episode of the book. It is doubtful whether the author had to add anything to the facts he already knew. The enterprize which he describes actually exists, and Bredel himself was once connected with it. The book is full of concrete material written up very vividly. Bredel does not hesitate to deal with "trifles" provided they illustrate some aspect of social reality. Hence the reader's attention is directed to these "trifles." However, the "trifles" described by Bredel do not impress the reader as such: in the picture that he describes the petty swindlings by which the exploiters humiliate the workers are closely interwoven with the most astounding tragedies of wage slavery.

The disgusting condition of the mess room; the carpenter Elmer whose fingers are cut off (rationalization) by a rip-saw, the dingy dressing room and the mutilated "public toilets" of the factory (the administrative technical personelle and social democratic members of the factory committee have a special toilet room for themselves with a "private" sign over the door) and the suicide of old Johann Holt who was fired on the fiftieth anniversary of his faithful service, or rather slavery—all these and other facts are only separate links in

a whole chain of capitalistic barbarism which becomes fiercer and more destructive with the progress of "rationalization" and "democratization" with the blessing of Kautsky and the practical support of all the rotten gang of social fascism.

Bredel ushers the reader into the "laboratory" of capitalist exploitation without fear of boring him with figures or technical and organizational details. It cannot be otherwise: he must show how the boss cheats the worker in counting his wages and robs him of his money when working out the rates of payment for piece-work, he shows by actual facts that capitalist rationalization is only an improved and up to date method of destroying the muscles, nerves, lungs and blood of the proletarians.

It is rather instructive to compare Bredel's book with the "works" of Joe Corry. This author has a habit of bewailing the misfortunes of the proletariat. He attempts to convince the English and Scotch miners that they are a crowd of impotents, miserable paupers, whose only hope is god and the submission of English and Scotch coal kings to the morals of Christianity. He confines himself to extremely moderate and cowardly wishes which smack of Mr. MacDonald's Sunday sermons. In his poems he openly takes the platform as preacher of evangelical introduction of praise to his second book of (we must say) bad verse. It is interesting to note that the theme of the first story in his *The Last Day* is almost identical with the tragic history of old Holt in Bredel's novel, with the only difference that while the latter comes to distinct revolutionary conclusions, Corry sheds tears of Christian love, begging the bourgeoisie not to forget about justice and the requirements of humaneness. The thought of revolutionary struggle, of violence against the bourgeoisie, of course, makes him wince.

Bredel's concreteness is of a completely different nature, being based upon bolshevist Leninist principles: it educates the masses politically because his "trifles" disclose the very nature of the social system, and incite the masses to struggle. It points out the necessity for destroying the system by revolution and replacing it with socialism. Bredel's general approach to the subject may be described thus: an abundance of concrete facts elucidated with the rays of bolshevik conceptions based upon an abundance of concrete facts.

The events described in the book are evidently related to the period preceding the present crisis, but viewed in the light of the present struggles of the German proletariat, the book lacks nothing in interest or value. Of especial value is the exposure of the true role of social democracy in the class struggle during the "third period," an excellent concrete illustration to the corresponding analyses and decisions of the Comintern. Yet but a few years ago the gentlemen of the Second International boasted that only the social democrats, as against the communists, were capable of defending the real economic interests of the workers. The further development of class struggle proved, however, that this democracy passed from the stage of shamefaced defense of capitalism to that of open support and active construction of capitalism; from phrases about the class struggle to the "preaching of industrial peace;" from "protection of the fatherland" to preparations for war against the USSR, etc." (excerpt from resolutions of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern).

Since the sixth congress the fascization of social democracy, its coalescence with the governmental machine and the organizations of the employers, have made a gigantic step forward. Bredel reveals this general tendency, as exemplified in the case of a seperate enterprize, and shows that even there the treacherous counter-revolutionary role of social fascism remains unchanged. The author breaks off the back of the social democratic watch case, revealing its mechanism of treachery, corruption and betrayal. He shows the system of its connections and movements: — "Colleague" Peters, the representative of the reformist metallists who threatens to deprive an old worker of his pension for oppositionary utterances; Kuhn, the chairman of the factory committee, a "Goliath with the voice of a eunuch," a cowardly villain who is valued by the firm at his increased wages, plus 20 per cent; the career-chasing Shmachel; Olracht, the informer and spy of the administration who carries out his functions with the approval and in accordance with the instructions of the social democratic big bosses of the enterprize; Fass, the organizer of scabs, and finally the inevitable "left" social democrat Scharf, who allows himself to say a few loud words about the "regeneration" of social democracy when there is no danger in sight, but immediately assumes a position of thoughtful neutrality whenever action is required; in this gallery of characters are certain individual peculiarities but nevertheless their common social nature is sharply brought out as a thoroughly corrupted gang of "minor" lackeys of capital.

The collective portrait of the social democrats has for its elements their practical activities. Various forms of strike breaking are employed in turn. First the social democrats make arrangements with the firm, without the knowledge of the workers, for the introduction of a daily two hours overtime work for the turners. The communists succeed in organizing the turners for counteraction. The next question to be brought up is that of wages. Again the reformist bureaucrats agree to the reintroduction of the former wage scale. Thus explosive material begins to accumulate. During the elections to the factory committee, the social democrats are heavily defeated. The red list of communists and the revolutionary opposition gets four times as many votes. The administration, upon the initiative of the social democrats, responds by discharging the most active revolutionary workers. This starts the strike which lasts 16 days, under most trying conditions. The social fascists and reformist trade union bureaucrats not only refuse to support the strike, but also systematically prepare its defeat. Bredel characterizes very exactly the "subdivision of labor" among the various participants in the anti-proletarian bloc: the bourgeois manufacturer whose personal interests are involved, takes upon himself general command, and the governmental machine (police) is a tool for practical execution of capital's orders, while social fascism assists organizationally and morally in preparing the attack of capital on the workers. Kuhn, Peters, and their crowd, themselves select victims from among the workers for dicharge, recruit strike breakers, and instruct the police whom to trotect, whom to beat up and whom to shoot.

But Bredel not only deals a blow to the vile social democratic bureaucrats, he also struggles to win over the rank and file of social democratic

workers. The inexorable logic of the class struggle plus the explanatory work conducted by the communists can and must show the true revolutionary path to the rank and file social democrats and to any other worker duped by the bourgeoisie, unless, like Kuhn, he has sunk to the very bottom, unless he is entirely corrupted by the "charities" of the bourgeoisie. Bredel not only knows this but illustrates by concrete examples, how this is brought about. A social democrat turner by the name of Blekman begins his political life by friendship with Kuhn's gang and bitter attacks on the communists but finishes it as a candidate to the factory committee on the red list of the revolutionary trade union opposition—the second list of candidates offered by the opposition after Kuhn and his associates had betrayed and broken the strike. A similar change takes place in the conscience of an old social democrat named Drezen. At a meeting, another worker, whose name is not given, throws away his social democratic party membership ticket in disgust—and this after being in the party for 18 years.

A very strong impression is made upon the reader by the evolution of Arnfeld, a worker nicknamed "*der gottsucher*" (god seeker). Bredel ridicules mercilessly the christian doctrines of Arnfeld who preaches the removal of class contradictions by such methods as love and forgiveness. The cobweb of bigotry woven by priests around the god seeker's head, is dispersed by the logic of bare facts and communist criticism. The man who but yesterday was an involuntary confederate of the boss, today takes his place in the ranks of strikers as a conscientious soldier of the proletarian cause. It was he who was pierced by a police bullet. Mortally wounded and rapidly losing consciousness, he is still able to mumble a few words to his recent opponent, a communist named Melmster; "Still, I would very much like to join the Party." However, it is necessary to read this entire chapter to appreciate its simple but powerful pathos.

In vivid and forceful language, Bredel demonstrates the necessity and feasibility of organizing leading role of the communists in this task, the powerful influence of illegal factory literature which penetrates the very depths of the masses, (very striking are those passages of the book devoted to the newspaper *Roter Greifer* (The Red Vice)—the heroism, alertness and self denial of the fighting proletarians—all this is described by Bredel simply but convincingly. His book is loaded with the dynamite of revolutionary optimism. His confidence in the inevitable triumph of the proletariat is boundless. The strike is crushed, over 200 metal workers are thrown onto the street and replaced by strike breakers. Not more than 80 strikers were left in the factory. But is even this not a victory? Before the strike there were only 29 communists in the factory, all the other workers were under the influence of the social democrats. Now there are 80 fighters for the cause, who had 16 days of schooling—worth a decade.

The struggle continues. Under this slogan the "80" resume work. And truly: the Negel-Kopp-Kuhn clique had barely time to rejoice over their victory when the current issue of the *Roter Greifer* appeared, dealing with and summarizing the experiences of the strike and calling upon the workers to prepare for new battles . . . This was a heavy blow for the exploiters and their assistants.

Willi Bredel

Confusion, helpless rage, new administrative and police measures, but nevertheless, the first signs of fomentation even among the strike breakers, a good many of whom are, after all, just crushed, deceived and duped workers. And with every right Bredel concludes his book with: "Melmster and the carpenter, Old Drezen and the thin Blacksmish, and all 80 proletarians, with the conviction that the power of their class is unconquerable, marched through the streets while the cobblestones roared under their firm tread." And the reader closes the book with the impression that one of the iron battalions of the unconquerable class had just marched before his eyes.

Bredel's book will no doubt do a great service to the proletariat at the present moment when new and great class battles are developing. Non-German workers should also be given a possibility to read this book in the nearest future. But it is precisely because of the enormous political and revolutionary significance of this book that we should point out its faults and mistakes, which partially lessen its significance.

The first drawback is that Bredel, in his desire to put in the foreground a specific enterprize, did not show all the ties connecting the struggle led by the communists of a separate enterprize with the whole Party organization of the country, city and district. Only by the way does he make reference to the connections with the district Party committee. One might think that the proletarians in the "Negel and Kopp" plant fought in complete isolation. This, of course, is not true, because the struggle in each particular enterprize is the con-

cern of the whole Party and primarily of its local organization. If, in this particular case the Party organization's help or leadership was poor it is necessary to criticize the mistakes of the organization, and tell how it should have done and how these could have been avoided.

Bredel should also be reproached for his somewhat abstract description of the communist nucleus in the factory. The developments, struggles, and triumphs of the latter are represented as an almost ideal straight line. It is true that the German Communist Party has been very successful in winning over the masses, but this is the result of the persistent and hard work done by the Party, and of its uncompromizing struggle against right and left opportunists. In Bredel's book, however, the process of internal growth of the communist nucleus is not demonstrated. This means to underestimate those difficulties which the German Communist Party must overcome.

It is also necessary to remark that according to our viewpoint, Bredel is wrong in the way he formulates and solves the question of how a revolutionary worker must regard the process of production in a capitalist enterprize. This is illustrated by the argument which the author puts into the mouth of Melmster, the communist. Dora Timm, employed in the office, says to him: "'You must be a bad communist since you are considered (by the administration—M. H.) as a good worker.'"

Melmster replies:

"'Every communist must try to be a good worker.'

'Does that mean that it is necessary to sweat for the capitalists?'" inquires Fritz (a member of the Young Communist League) in astonishment.

"'That sounds as though it is my communist duty to become an eficient carpenter,'" continues Fritz Baldov in the same tone of doubt.

Melmster once more repeats his thought: "'It goes without saying that it is one of your duties as a communist.'"

Fritz: "'I consider it more essential to devote my attention to a fundamental study of Marx and Lenin.'"

Melmster: "'Without that you would not be a communist, but you must also be a good skilled worker, because on the day following a victorious revolution, when the building of socialism begins, you will have to become a red director and specialist.'"

It is not difficult to see that such reasoning could cause confusion in the mind of the reader. Communists should regard the process of production in a capitalistic enterprize not as a problem of special principle but of concrete tactics changing from time to time, but always and invariably subordinated to the problems of revolutionary struggle against capital and the violent overthrow of bourgeois rule and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Only on the day after this is done, in socialist enterprize the attitude of the worker toward the process of production becomes a question of principle, a matter of honor and valor for the working class. Bredel's mistake lies in his abstract representation of the very process of production: he forgets that from the viewpoint of a capitalistic enterprize, a good efficient worker is a worker who not only knows his business well but who is also tamed, does not indulge in politics, does not participate in strikes, is ready to act as strike breaker, and in general is ignorant of revolutionary questions.

It is just this type of a worker that the present social fascists attempt to bring up for their bosses (each day, however, brings them less and less success). And it must be said that in dealing with the problem, Bredel was unable to express with sufficient clearness the communist point of view in contrast to the social democrats' apologetic viewpoint on "production" in general, which really amounts to an apology for the capitalistic method of production.

Nevertheless Bredel's weakness does not destroy the merits of the book as mentioned above. He describes types and events briefly and sharply and is already acquainted with the art of revolutionary incitement. Bredel's first book underlines once more all the great significance of the struggle which is led by IURW for the organization of a solid workers' nucleus in the international movement of revolutionary literature. We are also happy to remark that the enormous militant experience of proletarian literature in USSR has left a noticeable trace on Bredel. The new forces in world proletarian art base their studies on this experience, and in turn bring rich contributions to the pioneer experience of the Soviet proletarian literature. As a matter of fact, some of our proletarian writers who suffer from petty bourgeois reflection ought to learn what is most important from Willi Bredel: irreconcilable hatred of the class foe and the ability to fight bravely and passionately for the proletarian revolution, for the cause of communism.

M. Helfand

Petty Bourgeois Ideologians and the Crisis

A Contribution to the Analysis of the Process of Fascization in Literature

1. THE MAN OF ART

In No. 352 of *Berliner Tageblatt*—the leading organ of the German democrats—one of the editors, Fred Hildenbrandt, defines the attributes and tasks of the type of artist that suits the capitalists. He writes:

"In speaking of Men of Art I have in mind that circle of our contemporaries that lacks even the slightest idea of what is going on nowadays... men who are little concerned about the stern realities of life... They sit at their writing tables and compose novels, verses, or plays... The best part of them take but little interest in the practical and material side of life. They hold aloof from everything, and devote themselves exclusively to their art... When a catastrophe occurs, or when the rumbling of coming events is heard, they lend their ear, and then, naively, protesting the greatest surprise, glance around and ask what is really happening again?... As a rule, however, they immediately lose interest in what is happening, and again they submerge themselves in their art, since in the majority of cases they fail to understand anything in the passing events."

Hildenbrandt goes on to say that this peculiar human being, devoid of a critical mind, whose heart does not throb for this world's events and whose sentiments are childlike, is justified in failing to comprehend life's realities for the very reason that he is an artist. Amid the profoundest of calamities, Hildenbrandt's Man of Art "calmly and superbly looks around." He contemplates that divine power which transcends this commonplace, humdrum life, and begins to smile. . . .

"For they (the men of art) are so built that even when they have to die of starvation, a smile, heavenly and full of trust glimmers in their last, flickering glance."

Such is the portrait of the Man of Art drawn by a democratic apologist of the capitalist system. Of course, the artists of the capitalist world do not always conform to this type. Nevertheless, such rank imbeciles may sometimes be found in the obscurantist apparatus of Ullstein & Co. Many of them including, no doubt, Fred Hildenbrandt, the writer of the above quoted marvellous definition—know quite well what is taking place in the world, and for this very reason they hide their scared faces behind a mask of supermundane innocence. In this guise they render filthy, yet lucrative services to the capitalist system by endeavoring to lull and mislead the masses, especially those intellectual workers who want to line up with the working class.

The numbers of proletarian intellectuals are steadily increasing in direct ratio to the progress of economic and political development. The unchecked intensification of the crisis is continually throwing out of employment ever larger masses of brain workers. There is growing up a huge mass of people who look for a way out of poverty, and who are approaching the revolutionary solution of the proletarian class struggle. Recent events in Germany have shown the development of this trend among people engaged in the fine arts. Symptomatic in this respect is the organization of a revolutionary Trade Union among the actors, and the beginnings of a similar organization among all the revolutionary elements in the ranks of the writers.

Obviously, the bourgeoisie is alarmed at this prospect. Naturally, it watches with tremendous misgivings the revolutionization of its henchmen who used to manufacture the capitalist ideology by art means, who have hitherto lulled and sidetracked the masses without murmuring. It stands to reason that the capitalists, directly or indirectly, are ordering their intellectual underlings to restore discipline and obedience in the ranks of the proletarian artists.

It behooves us, Marxists, to watch these spokesmen of capitalism with particular attention, because quite frequently they come forward with pseudo-revolutionary slogans. The old and tried method of the Eberts and the Scheidemanns—to get at the head of revolutionary movements in order to stifle them—is now being practiced in the domain of literature by social-fascists of all shades and leanings. And it is quite essential to unmask their real nature, as the ideological agents of the ruling class, before the petty bourgeois elements in our movement.

In the present article we propose to analyze the petty bourgeois reactionary current, as a branch of that literature which aims at throwing dust in the eyes of the masses—a literature that extends from fascism of the purest brand to the democratic phraseology which bears the imprint of fascist ideology.

2. THE WAY TO GOD

When a ship goes down to the bottom, the poor-spirited clutch the Bible. Suddenly they become reminded of the Almighty Providence, and having lost their own spirits, they entrust themselves to the "holy ghost."

It is this kind of shipwreck panic that has gripped the petty bourgeois spokesmen of capitalism. In mortal fear and agony, they now recite prayers in the place of pompous and highfaluting words of wisdom. Thus, lately there appeared three messiahs: *Franz Werfel, Gottfried Benn,* and *Alfred Döblin.* They address themselves to physicians, lawyers, theologians, economists, function aries, writers and artists, showing them the road to salvation—they address themselves to everybody, yet to nobody. For, after all, their tracts are more or less in the nature of private apologies for their own existence, and a mirror-like reflection of their troubled consciences. Besides the authors themselves, no one is going to read these tracts to the end. The authors, however, seem to be immensely pleased with their own philosophy, imagining that the catastrophe will be averted if they will shut their eyes and sing psalms.

Or, maybe they do not think so?

Maybe, they are doing this because they want to escape from the realities of life, and because lying is more profitable to them?

We review their works not on account of their intrinsic value, but because they represent grave symptoms, convincing testimony to the perplexity and mortal fear that are the marks of capitalist literature today.

Realism and the Inner World[1], such is the title of the first of these books. It has a subtitle: "An Ardent Appeal by a Great Artist," as the author describes himself. This writer commands amazing attention among the German petty bourgeoisie, especially among those literary critics infected with snobbism. As regards his "greatness," it appears to us to be as chimerical as the "revolutionism" that was ascribed to him by some critics in an earlier period. Werfel's poetry has its roots in religion. He hails from that circle of lyricists who begin with social religious themes (Paul Zech etc.) and end with anti-social religious. (This renders him akin to the snobbish petty bourgeois poet Stephan George). In the first period of his work, between 1912 and 1917, he tried to sound the social and absolute laws of human existence, looking for the roots of misery and suffering *(We Are, One Another,* etc.). In the intermediate period of his creative activity, between 1919 and 1923, the echo could be perceived of the social revolutions in Russia and in Western Europe. An element of revolt in his work *Ship's Bottom,* and his attempt to handle broad social themes (in his *Mirror Man)* seemed to imply that Werfel was trying to deal with revolutionary problems. The truth is that he was for a short space of time scared out of his philosophic complacency by the brilliant flare of the stirring events of the period, and what is more,

[1] Franz Werfel, *Realismus und Innerlichkeit,* Paul Zsolny Verlag Berlin.

the book market at that time called for literature with a "revolutionary flavor." Even in *Mirror Man*, the hero of the novel—Thamar, a Faust, according to Werfel who endeared himself to the petty bourgeoisie, in looking for an escape from the world's misery and injustice, finds refuge within the walls of a monastery. In his *Death of a Petty Bourgeois*, Werfel frankly gave up all sentiment of social revolt and returned to the heaven of a smug and pious respectability. This return to the fold has left its mark on all his later writings. His *Barbara and Piety*, his dramatic and other works—with which we are not concerned here—and finally, his last work, *Realism and the Inner World*, lie approximately on the same level of spiritual evolution.

The stand taken by Werfel in his last work is downright reactionary, narrow-minded and anti-proletarian. Of course, he admits the existence of an economic crisis (really, there is no denying this deplorable fact), and he writes:

> "While God causes splendid wheat to grow in Canada, he allows people to die of starvation elsewhere; while in Brazil there is a bumper crop of coffee, there is an equally abundant crop of suicides in New York."

So far, so good. One has to envy Canada her benign God while deploring the fact that Germany's God turns out only iron and bullets. Yet, where does the author fix the blame for economic anarchy and misery?

He fixes the blame on the "realistic trend of thought," on "capitalist and communist tenets of faith," which he mixes into one jumble. "Technique is our fatal fiend, away from realism and reality," is his slogan. "The man of fact, the man of action, the producer, the creator of tangible things, is nearly always bereft of the real everlasting life. On the other hand, the man who is favored by the muses, holds the keys of the kingdom of heaven that lies within ourselves."... Logically developing this idea, our philosopher naturally concludes that communism is the worst enemy.

Vituperating against the working class and against materialism in general, Werfel is more considerate in regard to another kind of "materialism." He says:

> "The most valuable product of material worship in the domain of party politics, the European social democracy, has rendered immortal services to the human race (despite its tragic failure at the time war was declared)..."

The social democratic policemen in Germany ought to be pleased with their defender, as he no doubt is pleased with them. In his polemic against materialism, Werfel declares:

> "If it were merely a question of eating, and not of enjoying, materialism would probably be right... But our art appetite, our palate for sublime things, springs from the deeper source of our soul's struggle for liberty and individuality . . . When we assimilate a morsel of food, a physical process, we at the same time assimilate it psychically, *i. e.*, we impart to it a reality which it does not possess of itself..."

The writer of this twaddle should be sent to a Labor Exchange. He should be made to experience, himself, all the sufferings of the millions of starved and impoverished people who clamor for food. He would then realize that "eating" comes before everything else, that the "morsel of food" is essential to the palate. Werfel has his own idea on this subject. He says:

> "Now I ask: would not the sum total of happiness on earth be tremendously increased if every man should be given the possibility to feed on melody?..."

An economic bill of fare, to be sure. Let us hope that the German Reichskanzler Bruening is not going to try it out this winter.

Yet, in all these nonsensical ravings, there is some system. It reflects the panicky flight of the petty bourgeois spokesmen from the stern realities of life. The crisis of capitalism drives the petty bourgeois to hanker after the congenial sphere of mystic soul searching and god seeking, or, as Werfel puts it:

> "...*in ourselves alone* reposes the kingdom of heaven, the possibility of redemption..."

He can see but one way out of the world's economic crisis, one way to avert the catastrophe—a miracle!—and he believes that . . .

> "Man can live only for the sake of a miracle . . ."

3. THE ROAD TO NOTHING

The second book is called: *A Summary of Perspectives*[1]). It was written by Gottfried Benn, a venerological physician. This same Gottfried Benn wrote in 1929, in his *Prose Compositions:* "I am 37 years of age and am thoroughly life-weary; I read nothing, I write nothing. . . ." Well, the first part of this sentence was obviously correct. The book under review shows indeed that Benn is weary of life. Yet, the appearance of this book does not prove his consistency as regards giving up reading and writing. On the contrary, he reads a good deal, and being confused himself in his reading, he goes on to confuse his readers.

In Benn's writings there is a good deal of frank and courageous descriptions of the experiences of an honest petty bourgeois intellectual whose profession brings him into touch with the horrors and catastrophes of human existence, with birth and death, with sickness, suffering, and decay. Benn depicts harrowing scenes of hospital life—the screams of women writhing in pain, undergoing surgical operations. Benn's literary material consists mainly of the sufferings of the masses, and his book deals with social as well as biological tragedies, the former *relating* chiefly to the war and post-war period. We have here an exposition of the point of view of a man who finds no other way out of real human sufferings than by escaping into the domain of cosmic, extra-temporal philosophic speculation in which the experiences of the individual, the things that are real, pale into insignificance. Nevertheless, the road which leads from his poems ("Morgus," "Meat"), from his stories ("Brains," "Diensterweg") and his other works, to his *Summary of Perspectives*, is a retrogressive one. It is a road which leads a man of honest intentions, who is imbued with a mood of revolt but finds no proper way out, to write a book that is objectively

[1]) Gottfried Benn, *Faschist der Perspektiven*, Gustav Kiepenheuer Verlag, Potsdam.

reactionary and anti-proletarian in the class sense of the term.

In his latest book, Benn describes again the tragic sufferings of our period. Here again we see the pictures of decay, disintegration, and catastrophe. A few random extracts:

"In Berlin there are 36,000 homeless people in an advanced stage of tuberculosis. In Germany, every year 40,000 women die of illegal abortion..."

"Five proletarians sleep in one bed... One-fifth of the pupils in the elementary schools leave their homes in the morning without breakfast, owing to poverty... A family of 11 souls: the father drinks; the mother is preparing to bring into the world her tenth child. The 14-year old boy buys a pennyworth of blood from a butcher and smears with it his breast, simulating a hemorrhage in order to get away from the crowded tenement into the consumptive ward. . . . Sorrow, tears, innocent sufferings... Does the artist take a peep into these scenes?"

It might be surmised that these harrowing scenes were picked by the author in order to arouse a sentiment of revolt. The words, "does an artist peep in?" might be taken as a rhetorical query that expresses the author's profound disgust with neutral observers who do not rise in protest against a system which causes extreme distress and poverty of the masses to exist side by side with affluence and luxury for the few.

Nothing of the kind. To the query of "does the artist peep in?" Dr. Benn replies:

"Yes, the artist does peep in... He who knows that the undeserved sufferings of the world can never be overcome by means of material improvements..."

So, here we have it. Another homily on divine dispensation, but in a more subtle form. To be sure, the divinity is not introduced here in the crude form in which it is presented by the literary preacher Werfel. God is to be seen here between the lines, behind the vague musings of Dr. Benn, who wants to imbue his readers with the idea that the system that is based on the domination of the few and the slavery of the many, has been divinely preordained for ever and ever. At this moment of imminent catastrophe, the capitalist class can be well pleased with its new prophet who gives it a certificate of immortality. The artist and venerological physician thinks exclusively in terms of cosmic eternity. To things of this world he deigns only a shrug of his shoulders. Thus, he writes:

"Social movements have always existed. The poor always wanted to climb up, whereas the rich never cared to climb down. Already in ancient Egypt the traffic in incense was monopolized by a predatory capitalist world, while credit operations were inaugurated already by the Babylonian bankers, who charged 20 per cent interest on loans... There were always counter movements: the hordes of helots in the tanneries of Cyrena, the slave riots in Rome... The poor are anxious to ascend, the rich do not wish to descend... It is a depressing world; but after these 30 centuries, we may perhaps arrive at the idea that we have here neither good nor evil, but merely pure phenomena."

Taking such a vast perspective, the philosopher overlooks the realities of today. Confusing cause and effect, he repudiates the idea of human intelligence intervening in the course of events. Does this mean humble submission to fate, political inaction? Not at all. The ostensibly non-political theses of Dr. Benn are thoroughly impregnated with politics. In common with all the make-belief non-political preachers, he cannot forego the temptation to take a fling at the fatherland of the toilers of the world—the USSR. He opines:

"It seems to me that after these ten years, after all the things we hear about the situation in Russia, we can at last look her squarely in the face and see what is really going on in that country. What is typical in the proletarian process, what is immanent in the revolutionary concussion, is that the realignment of the social forces has taken place while the imperialist and capitalist tendency has been maintained..."

What a mixing up of conceptions? What a short circuiting of all logical thinking? A thorough perusal of Dr. Benn's book furnishes an idea of his philosophical system. It is an up to date brand of mediaeval philosophy compounded with all possible and impossible results of modern investigation in all aspects of life. It is a hodge-podge of numerous theories, a dilletant excursion into all the branches of science, a danse macaber of mystical and metaphysical dogmas originated by Freud, Drisch, Kretschmer, Gelddegger, Planck, Einstein, and—Nietzsche. These investigations, so dilligently collected by Benn, would bamboozle any one who is unable to organize them into a uniform system. The anarchy of capitalist economics and political life is reflected also in the contradictory nature of all deductions made by capitalist scientific investigation, hawever valuable the material operated upon. Materialist dialectics alone can really build up an integral philosophy of the universe.

Benn has no such philosophy. He sees only wreck and ruin all around him. His book ends in a lament of utter despair:

"The end of the white race has come. Technical wizardry, standardization, statistics,—such was its last dream... Countries without bread, idle mines, deserted docks. Who will sound the dirge of the departing race? . . ."

4. A PERPLEXED PETTY BOURGEOIS

The third book, entitled *Science and Change* belongs to Alfred Döblin.[1] Those who have watched the progress of this author will be much disappointed by his latest book. While Döblin has been an onlooker and a confirmed idealist in all his previous works, he nevertheless displayed a tendency to reject religious and metaphysical speculations for a consistent materialistic viewpoint. Yet, we find that in devious ways he has finally come back to where he started from. He began with metaphysical and religious reasoning like the following:

"Artists, to whatever category they may belong, must give up spiritual sciences and turn to nature."

[1] Alfred Döblin, *Wissen und Verändern*, P. Fisher Verlag, Berlin.

Or:

"To the prime source, to the sense of life, to religion!"

Next, he wrote *Three Leaps of Wan-Lung, Mountains, Seas, and Giants,* and *Berlin-Alexander-Platz,* in which he dealt with social problems, albeit in a masked, conflicting, and fallacious form. Now, in his latest book, he submits his deductions, which are all the more dangerous because they are presented in a radical garb, in a tone of affection for the proletariat. Of all the books examined in this article, the last one is the most impregnated with politics.

It consists of a series of open letters addressed to a certain young man, but virtually to all young people and to the intelligentsia as a whole. The medical practitioner and poet Döblin deals here with the crisis of the present social system and tries to draw deductions. The young man to whom the letters are addressed, Gustav Hocks, had asked his "leader," Döblin, which side should now be taken by the intellectual worker in the struggle for common human ideals? Döblin's reply is exceedingly vague, and painfully pedantic:

"The question arises—should we put ourselves on the side of the exploited and oppressed? Following the first impulse, one should answer: 'Yes,' and no afterthought can alter that 'Yes,' in principle . . . Nevertheless, we must . . . carefully consider, what can the workers gain by the class struggle . . . A bitter class struggle may bring justice, but not socialism. Look at the example of the Russians: do we see there a movement in the direction of socialism or communism? . . . They have made big strides forward as compared with the Western countries, they are carrying out a highly rational and well organized system of state capitalism. They are going to set up a most modern state machine, organized as a despotic rule of arch-Prussian type, and will really be able, relying upon it, to overrun Europe or Asia . . . Yet, this despotic state capitalism, imposed upon the masses from without, like its predecessor, has nothing whatever in common with socialism or communism . . . I warn you of this fraud . . ."

All this was borrowed by Döblin from the social fascists: "Red imperialism! European nations, protect your most cherished treasures!" Herr Döblin warns the youth. His patriotism will most assuredly be appreciated in the proper quarters. But, which is the true path?

After stating that the capitalist system is based on "anarchy, poverty and oppression," Alfred Döblin advises young Hocke:

"You should not align yourself with the power that creates all this misery and disorder, as the capitalist system has no value, no sensible idea, except the vain idea of profit making and the chaotic production of commodities."

This constitutes a clear pronunciamento against capitalism. If capitalism is no good, what then?

"Hence, you would be prepared to join the party which accepts the class struggle. Yet, a contradiction arises here: the German proletarian parties—at least in their present shape—are no place for an intellectual young man."

Döblin holds aloof of all political parties, and he states his reasons for his attitude as follows:

"Access to the people is barred by the political parties in Germany. Instead influence is being exercized by the intelligentsia, the economic groupings hold sway, yet some folk have the nerve to invite the intelligentsia to join their parties."

But why is Döblin debarred from access to the people? Would he not manage his work well? And here Herr Döblin lets us into a little secret. You see, Döblin denounces capitalism, and also the class struggle and the political parties, because he wants socialism. You are astonished at this, but Döblin's socialism is of quite a peculiar brand. He says:

"Socialism must frankly be separated from the class struggle, and regenerated as an utopia . . . Such is the task, such is the general line of the movement which I advise you to join."

This puts us on our guard, lest Döblin too has some sort of a "god" up his sleeve. Another eclectic theory of socialism within the individual soul. Socialism of the spirit, socialism as an utopia. Again the road back to mediaevalism, an alliance of the gods of Werfel, Benn, and Döblin.

Does the young man now know his path? He is advised to choose the path of tranquility. Döblin goes into an analysis of Marxism, and with estimable generosity admits its great services. He does not want to destroy Marxism, but to improve it. Döblin wants merely to eliminate the "materialistic fallacy" out of the monumental work of Marx.

"The elimination of the unquestionable constructive mistake in the Marxian system of economics constitutes an improvement," he says. According to Döblin, the spiritual, psychic factor was entirely ignored by Marx. He is opposed to the "herd ideal of economics" and to the "historic and militant materialism," taught by Marx.

Every book has an ending. Young Hocke will surely not follow the shallow thinking Döblin into this mystical rope dance above the "desert spaces of time . . ." Döblin feels constrained, after all, to show the inquiring youth his path, and he concludes:

"The proletariat is a programme; we do not accept it. We do not go over to the side of the proletariat, but we approach the working class . . ."

Having uttered this contradictory nonsense, he advises young Hocke:

"to dedicate his strength only to the old cause of mankind, to true socialism . . . Do not worry your head over these things, and you will soon learn what must be done . . ."

Thus the book ends. If young Hocke had really tried to carry out Döblin's advice, he would have surely become an egotistical, politically "neutral" philistine like his mentor. You will search the book in vain for any indication of a way out of the crisis, out of the misery and distress of the masses. The perplexed petty bourgeois spokesman lands into a blind alley. He sees the doom and decay of the present system of society, but he dares not openly and courageously join the ranks of those who are fighting for the new world of justice. Too strong are his ties to the capitalist world, and he continues to serve it even while cursing it. Yet, the masses of intellectual workers have already discovered the true path. They are struggling for the "old cause of mankind, for true socialism," joining the front of all the toilers.

It remains to be observed that all three books (latest productions of the German market), despite differences as to details, are at bottom imbued with one and the same spirit. They contain the same stock of arguments, and they draw quite analogous deductions.

In the collapse of the capitalist world, which is expressed in a worldwide economic crisis and in widespread misery of the masses, their authors see the "peril of the West" and the "end of the white race." When faced by the inevitable anarchy of capitalist production, they arrive at the conclusion that "technique is our greatest evil." This at a time when the proletariat of the Soviet Union, by its gigantic work in the building of socialism, demonstrates quite convincingly that technique combined with planned economy and with a just and reasonable social order, constitutes one of the greatest achievements of mankind, as it emancipates the toiling masses from the primitive brute struggle for existence and opens to them the possibilities of creative development.

There is yet another common feature in these three books: in one voice they denounce and calumniate the Soviet Union. At present, when decay and construction, capitalism and socialism, stand opposed to each other as two world systems struggling for supremacy, every thinking man can be appraised by his attitude towards the Soviet Union. His stand constitutes a touchstone which shows whether he wants to work for the future, for human progress, or choose the more lucrative path of serving the dying cause of reaction.

It is in this momentous epoch that we are offered a return to the religious mental derangements of the past. Reason, science, and knowledge, are substituted by soul, god, and cosmos. Here the petty bourgeois ideologians meet on common ground with the official high priests of fascism.

Werfel, Benn, Döblin—three fugitives from reality, three quacks trying to mislead the oppressed workers who are struggling for a better life. Three whining voices of dying capitalism, none too loud, none too audible. Three empty voices that will meet with no echo; nevertheless, they will be noted by militant historical materialism as symptoms of the incurable disease of the capitalist system and of the total collapse of its ideology.

O. Biha

Anti-war literature in Spanish

Recently there has not been a great quantity of anti-war literature written in Spanish. True, the works, especially the novels, of Spanish and Latin-American writers contained passages which one might regard as an attack on war. We may find such passages in the works of D. Ramon del Valle Inclan (for instance, in his *Tirano Banderas)* of Pio Baroja, Blasco Ibanez and others. It cannot be said however that any definitely anti-war novels appeared until 1929 when the sharpening of the class war both in Spain and in the countries of Latin America reached its highest pitch, and when the revolutionary movement had developed into a revolutionary crisis bringing in its train more furious onslaughts of world imperialism (Nicaragua). It was in 1930 that the first Spanish anti-war novels appeared namely *The Magnet*[1] by Ramon J. Sender and *Blood in the Tropics*[2] by Herman Roblet. Neither author is a proletarian writer although Ramon J. Sender undoubtedly belongs to the extreme left wing of bourgeois literature and his novel in many parts has a revolutionary ring. The author does not only describe the horrors of war; he also raises with the greatest insistence the problem of the responsibility for war, or as it is put by the hero of his novel "the question of the injustice of it." Moreover although both writers belong to a bourgeois set it does not prevent them from describing with great penetration, each in his own way, the events of the revolutionary period. Ramon J. Sender does this, laying the greatest stress on the responsibility for the war incurred by the Spanish governing circles, while Herman Robleto dwells on the responsibility borne by world rather than native imperialism, and especially that of the United States. Altogether apart from their political and social importance of both these novels they have a very great artistic interest.

Ramon J. Sender chose a very promising theme, namely the war in Morocco of 1921—24, when the Spanish army was suffering its greatest defeats. This was the time of its defeat at Annual which had the same significance for the Spanish government as Zusima and Mukden had for tsarist Russia. Ramon J. Sender's hero is equally well chosen. He is neither a general nor an officer but a common soldier, who has himself endured all the horrors of the African war. Any page of the book *The Magnet* will give a vivid idea of what these horrors were like. Besides the chief hero there is a secondary one who is the center of the story in parts—and this hero is the author himself. Thus the artistic idea running through the novel is closely intertwined with the relation of actual experience and this gives the novel special interest and documentary authenticity. As a background to these two heroes stand the masses of plain soldiers—that is 200,000 Spanish soldiers who have been through the Moroccan war—a diverse collection of people who are nevertheless united by one ruling idea which may best be expressed by the words "down with war."

The author tells us of the hero's past as well as of his present. Viance—that is the chief hero—is a proletarian by birth. His father is a peasant—one of those poor peasants of whom the Spanish countryside is full and who represent the basic type of the Spanish agricultural proletariat. The whole life of Viance's family consists of a bitter struggle for land which is not theirs but only rented—a bitter struggle for the harvest. His whole family came to grief in this struggle, first his mother, then his sister and finally his father. Viance himself in spite of his extraordinary faculty for attracting every kind of misfortune (it is on account of this that the novel is called *The Magnet)* manages to struggle to the surface. He moves into the town where he becomes a metal worker. But even here things do not go well with him, as indeed they could not be expected to be, considering the terrible conditions under which the Spanish workers live. First of all his strength continues to be absorbed by the country where his family is slowly being ruined, and then the girl

[1] Ramon J. Sender *Iman.* Madrid. 1930.
[2] Herman Robleto *Sangre en el Tropico.* Madrid. 1930.

to whom he is engaged is seduced by an officer. Finally he becomes a soldier. The army turns him into an automaton. The only live feeling remaining in this human machine is hatred for the officers. This gradually strengthens and develops into hatred for the whole ruling class who are responsible for sending people to this awful war. The "responsibility" theme which is closely linked up with the idea of injustice and gradually gives place, as the story develops to the "settling of accounts" or the idea of revenge, occupies a more and more prominent position in the novel. First of all he formulates certain general questions:

"'What have we done that we should have been driven into such a frightful hole?'" Viance asks one of his trench companions despondently. "'In Spain nobody knows what is going on out here. The newspapers occasionally say, in order to displease the government 'our soldiers are dying in Africa,' but both the people and the ministers are used to that. What does it matter to them? Africa is so far away and anyway those soldiers are fighting for their country. Listen, mate, do you know what that means—your country?'" and the other does not answer. Viance goes on pressing the question and his companion eventually answers:

"'The sergeant explained to us when we were recruits but I don't remember what he said.'"

But Viance had already found an answer to the question.

"'I'll tell you what your country is—your country is a business company belonging to its shareholders.'" The arousing class consciousness on the part of this soldier, brought to a state of semi-idiocy by army routine and the brutal treatment of the officers reaches a very high pitch at a moment when disaster threatens and he makes an attempt to escape... He does not seem to realize how near he is to death and so the idea of revenge keeps haunting his brain with peculiar insistence.

The following is an extract from his conversation with the mortally wounded cavalry man. The latter is speaking:

"'Here even God will not hear us. I believe that a revolution has already started in Spain, that they have already strung up the kings, the dukes and the bishops on the gallows. But it is all the same to me. It shan't last out till morning. How long can your Christian soul live when there's a wound in your abdomen. Perhaps a little longer in the hospital, but here not more than six hours.'"

The cavalryman feels his wound and rubs his fingers together.

"'See,' he said 'it's stopped bleeding already.'"

He crept up to the bushes and rested his head on them. Viance looked at him in silence.

"'If you come out of it, find the person who's responsible and give him what he deserves. You see what life is. It can only be worth anything at all if amongst all this filth you can find the smallest trace of justice. If other people don't see that there is justice, see to it yourself. Look at this cartridge, how clean it is. Keep it for yourself so as to put a bullet through your brain. You will be here in any case so what does it matter? Keep it and remember what I've said. Find the person who's responsible and give him what he deserves.'"

Viance took the cartridge and put it away. He couldn't collect his thoughts. The thought of revolution was piercing his brain like a nail. That meant that they were also stringing up the count to whom his native village belonged. He laughed.

As time went on he began to awake more and more to class consciousness.

"'Look here,'" he said one day to his platoon commander who had joined him in his flight, "'we are strong—we are well armed. Why do we let these rotters get the better of us? (Viance is referring to the Riffs—F. K.) I know why—it is because they have the right on their side. That makes a big difference. What about all going over to their side and making for Melila?'" (the center of the Spanish Administration and Army Headquarters—F. K.).

Coming amongst his own people Viance becomes the same automaton that he was before, but the mental crisis has not been passed through for nothing. He is subjected to new ill treatment at the hands of the officers, he is given overtime for quarreling with the doctor who declared him to be quite healthy, and he feels himself deeply injured. When Viance returns home, he is no longer the down-trodden creature of former days, but is a man, with a lively sense of social and class injustice.

"'You have two sons,'" he says to a peasant he meets in the train, "'try to prevent them going to the war.'"

"'But what am I to do?'" the peasant asks doubtfully.

"'It would be better to kill them.'"

The realities of Spanish life merely strengthen this mood. His village no longer exists. All round there is unemployment. There is only one way out—suicide. But the author merely mentions this solution, believing that life itself will show some other way. The events of 1931 proved that he was right.

The second anti-war novel in Spanish is *Blood in the Tropics* by Herman Robleto, written on the theme of "war brought about by foreign capital." Hence the sub-title of his novel, "A novel about the war of intervention of the Yankees in Nicaragua." The whole atmosphere of this novel is quite different to that of *The Magnet* by Ramon J. Sender. The author, it is true, is by way of being an enemy of war and his book abounds in horrible scenes, but in spite of this he obviously represents the interests of the bourgeoisie from which he springs. A prominent politician and journalist who has become well known through his articles and pamphlets published for the most part in the Mexican press, assistant to the minister of national education in the liberal government of Juan Bautisto Sagasta, overthrown by the conservatives by the instigation of the United States, Herman Robleto could not but feel hatred towards foreign exploiters, but in the settlement of the Nicaraguan question he takes up a definitely conciliatory attitude.

The subject of the novel is the Civil War of 1925—26, in which the author himself took part. His novel is quite a good example of the "literary reporting" style for which Spanish and Latin American critics foretell such a great future. There is a love theme in the novel but this has a quite unimportant and subsidiary character. The novel is divided into separate episodes. The author begins by describing the journey of a group of young volunteers from Mexico to Nicaragua. They are crossing the Caribbean Sea in the motor sailing ship *La Carmelita* to come to the assistance

of the liberals. Then he cuts his story short in order to describe the doings of the North American marines, who are being sent into Nicaragua ostensibly for the purpose of protecting the interests of American citizens by creating neutral zones, but really to try to give the conservatives an opportunity of recovering from their defeat and recuperating their strength. This part of the book gives the author the opportunity of describing the slavish conditions of toil on the famous notorious banana plantations, and also to depict scenes of the acts of violence perpetrated by the North American troops on the native population (the rape of a girl by the acting commander of the troops, sergeant Wilson). In the following chapters the struggle between the liberals and the conservatives is very vividly drawn as also the story of the end of two young North American officers, shot down by the rebels with a machine gun, and also the movement of the liberal column across the marshes and through the jungle. Finally in the last chapters of the novel in which the author wishes to symbolize the conciliation between the races, he quite unexpectedly makes one of the chief heroes of the novel, the liberal intellectual Hector go over to the American lines while in a state of delirium, there to be received with open arms, and the second hero sergeant Wilson marry the girl whom he has violated.

This artificial ending rings very false. The very obvious way in which it is tacked on to the end of the novel shows up Robleto as a bourgeois pacifist, who is indignant at the oppression of the local Spanish population by North American imperialism, but goes no further than the usual liberal compromise impartially considering the interests of the enslavers and the enslaved on the basis of more humane methods of exploitation. On the one hand the author does not neglect to fulminate against the North American policy of neutral zones in Nicaragua and even devotes a whole section of his book to describing the atrocious way in which the army of occupation treated the native population, but this does not prevent him from taking up an undisguisedly conciliatory attitude. He puts his views into the mouth of a young liberal, taken prisoner by a North American captain and by him cured of his wounds. "We are not enemies of the United States. We do not wish to fight against civilization, but we want that civilization to be founded on justice. Justice was not observed in the dealings with Nicaragua, and the reason is that nobody sees to it that men of independent judgment, humanitarians, are sent to us. We will not tolerate merchants, bankers and foreign soldiers. Let fair minded people without prejudices be sent to us and in a very short time the results will be seen. Let even those same bankers and merchants come to us, without conscience and without feeling, if only they have a sense of justice. Then we shall understand one another and Nicaragua with its wonderful natural resourses which she cannot exploit by her own unaided efforts will need the United States to help her play her historic role in the interests of humanity. This solution of the Nicaragua problem according to the wise principle of "the sheep are safe and the wolves full" shows Robleto to be virtually an agent of American imperialism in the literary field. Alarmed at this realism in describing the horrors of war, the author hastens to smooth over everything in his book which might wound the self esteem of the American people.

How can the success of Robleto's novel be accounted for. The moral of conciliation between the races did not meet with approval in the bourgeois Latin American press which took up a generally hostile attitude towards the United States. The Spanish literary critics condemned the ending of the book as intentionally false and tendencious. The autor's skill is shown exclusively by his descriptions of war scenes in those pages which have a definitely anti-war character. And here we must give Robleto his due as a writer. He is able in a simple way and without a mass of unnecessary details (such as are found in Ramon J. Sender's work) to describe the horrors of war in the tropics. The true anti-war novel, disclosing from the proletarian point of view the origin of imperialist wars and showing the way to abolish them, has yet to find its author in Spanish and Latin-American literature. Ramon J. Sender does bring out the class basis of war (where he says "your country is a business company belonging to its shareholders") but throughout his novel the feeling of the helplessness of the individual in the clutches of the bourgeois state machine turns people's attention away from the possibility of organizing a revolt of the oppressed classes against their oppressors, by turning the imperialistic war into a civil war. Sender's anti-war novel on the other hand, although it is not a proletarian novel, nevertheless shows up the true cause of war—namely the bourgeois state—and this gives it a definitely revolutionary value.

This distinguishes it sharply from the virtually counter-revolutionary novel of Robleto which is nothing more than liberal pacifist chatter having the aim of keeping the enslaved masses from the revolutionary struggle against the imperialism that keeps them in subjection. Pacifists of the type of Robleto resign themselves to new imperialist wars without the least difficulty. Their high-sounding anti-militarism comes down in the end to a protest against the use of dum-dum bullets and poison gas as inhuman methods of warfare. The task of proletarian literary criticism is to show up these apostles of peace (who are always above all apostles of civil peace) before the toiling masses of their country.

F. V. Kelin

Left No. 2

Almost a year has passed since we published Comrade Helfand's review of the first issue of *Left*. We submitted to a thorough criticism the mistakes contained in the first issue but at the same time we expressed the hope that the magazine would rehaul itself on revolutionary lines. The pre-requisites for such a rehauling were already then discernible to some extent, and we concluded our evaluation of the first number by saying that "we wait with impatience the next numbers of *Left*."

Subsequent events have largely justified the hopes placed by our journal in the best section of the leadership of *Left* whom we urged to admit and criticize the basic mistakes of *Left* No. 1 that were pointed out in Helfand's review, and to break

completely with those social fascists who managed to find a place among the magazine's contributors —from Poulaille and Calverton to Alexander Kaun inclusive. In a letter to the Secretariat of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers, Jay Du Von, Marvin Klein, and George Redfield, the editors of *Left*, on the whole express their full solidarity with the criticism of the first issue of *Left* that was given in Comrade Helfand's review. Below we reproduce a portion of that letter:

"We have read your review of the *Left* No. 1, signed by Comrade M. Helfand, with great care and we should like to take this opportunity to answer it, point by point, to show how the second number of the *Left* has corrected the larger portion of the errors of the first number, and to explain by reference to our plans for subsequent issues to what extent your valuable advice and suggestions are being followed.

"1. We accept and admit your criticism of the incompleteness and abstractness of the editorial contained in the *Left* No. 1. In explanation we can only restate our admission contained in our first letter to you: that at the time of bringing out the first number we were . . . not sufficiently *en rapport* with the various branches of the revolutionary movement. At the present time this last has been remedied to a large extent. . . .

"2. We accept and recognize your criticism of our error in publishing the extract 'Gorky and Lenin' from Alexander Kaun's *Life of Gorky*. Please note that the second number of the *Left* does not contain a second chapter from the book as announced in No. 1.

"3. In a previous letter to the IURW we have acknowledged our mistake in publishing 'French Letters, Left Face' by Harold Salemson. In view to exposing the many fallacies in Mr. Salemson's article we have written to Comrade Louis Aragon, asking for an article which will definitely refute Mr. Salemson's and give a true estimate of revolutionary literature in France.

"4. In regard to Mr. Calverton: In our previous letter to the IURW we stated that we were entirely severing our connections with him. His name is no longer listed among our editors and there are no contributions by him or received through him in No. 2.

"5. We have read with the greatest interest your comment on the "fellow traveller" movements. It is a part of our own experience that the radicalization of certain elements in the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia is accomplished with extreme difficulty and that boulders of bourgeois viewpoints, prejudices and illusions block the process all along the way. And we confess that the *Left*, as characterized by its first number is possibly an excellent example of a social fascist attempt to win over a revolutionary trend and nullify it, *i.e.*, that the insinuation of Calverton, Kaun et al into the *Left* is an example of such an attempt.

"But upon this we insist: that our intention from the first has been to provide an organ for genuinely revolutionary work, and that our editorial (fragmentary and unnecessarily laconic as it was) nevertheless showed a firm and sincere desire to carry out this task."

We warmly greet this healthy self-criticism which serves as proof of the sincere desire of the leading comrades in *Left* to achieve a revolutionary reconstruction of their magazine. The facts referred to by the editors in their letter to the IURW indicate that this reconstruction has already been started to a certain extent. Unfortunately, the second issue of *Left*—which we are here reviewing—came out before the editors had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with Comrade Helfand's review. Nevertheless, the second issue of *Left* indicates already an undoubted change for the better in the general political physiognomy of the magazine. The achievements of *Left* consist not only in its rupture with such social fascist "theoreticians" as Alexander Kaun, Calverton, etc., but also in that the second issue of *Left*, as compared with the first, proves by its contents to be concerned with the basic problems of the revolutionary movement in the USA. This finds expression first of all in the fact that the whole of the literary material in this issue is linked up with the practical life of the revolutionary movement in America, with the problems of unemployment, strikes, revolutionization of the American farmers, with the agricultural crisis, and with questions of Soviet socialist construction *(e.g.,* Falkowsky's sketch "The Red Dynamo"), and also in the fact that the theoretical part of the magazine touches upon a number of vital problems of immediate concern to the revolutionary cultural movement of the USA.

Needless to say, in the handling of these important questions the magazine still reveals a large number of more or less serious defects, in the domain of principle. In spite of these defects, we find it possible to give a positive evaluation of the second issue of *Left*, which demonstrates the earnest desire of its editors to follow the road of genuine reconstruction, the road of strengthening their ties with the revolutionary movement of the working class. We anticipate that the third issue of *Left* will mark a fresh step forward along this road.

As our space will not permit us to give a minute analysis of the literary features of the magazine, we must note as one of the best works printed in the magazine, the fragments of a play by the noted American revolutionary playwright, Paul Peters, entitled "Dirt Farmer." This play, in common with Peters' other plays ("Men of Steel," "The Wharf Nigger," "Halleluja, I'm a Bum")—have not yet been published in full, a fact that is much to be regretted. From the few scenes published in *Left* some idea may be gained of the play as one of the first and very rare attempts in American literature to give a real revolutionary solution of the problem of the ruination of the small farmers under the pressure of the agricultural crisis.

While dealing with themes that are of considerable moment, a considerable portion of the literary material in the second issue of *Left* suffers from defects more or less characteristic of American revolutionary literature on the whole, defects that may be traced to inadequate mastery of the militant Marxist-Leninist outlook, which finds its expression in the absence of a sufficiently revolutionary, concrete political approach to the social questions, in an empirical recording of isolated events, in a contemplative chronicling of facts, without outlining the ways of their revolutionary transformation. This applies especially to Jon Cheever's story "Fall River" and to Albert Halper's "Looking for a Job," both of which deal with the problem of unemployment. Halper treats the subject of unemployment as a casual fact, in its out-

ward form, without developing its inner content, without raising it to the level of a social phenomenon. Unemployment as the consequence of the universal crisis of the capitalist system, unemployment as a mighty factor for the revolutionization of millions of toilers—all this escapes Halper's field of vision. Hence the general unconvincing impression of the story, the impression of incompleteness, of the fragmentary, non-typical character of his images in which the class nature is not sufficiently developed.

The basic defect in Jon Cheever's "Fall River" —a story on the subject of crisis and unemployment in a factory town—is in his method of passive contemplation. Like Halper, he lacks a clear-cut class conception of the nature of unemployment, of the nature of the capitalist crisis, and this leads in the long run to the complete blunting of the revolutionary tendency of his story. It is rather characteristic that the basic contradictions upon which the story is built are not those due to the class order of society, not the contradictions which determine the development and intensification of the capitalist crisis, but contradictions which amount to a humanistic contrasting of humans "generally" to nature. The contradiction between the depressed and gloomy mood of people in connection with the general crisis on the one hand and the advent of spring on the other, forms the ground work of Cheever's story. At the same time, while the jobless in Cheever's story are in a depressed mood, and the advent of spring only emphasizes the contrast and accentuates their plight, almost the same picture is drawn by Cheever of the capitalists:

> "In Boston the wealthy people were nervous. It was spring but it would make no difference. They were terrified at the possibility of having to live through another season. Of having struggled through the winter searching for the pleasures of previous winters. . . . It was wrong to accuse them of injustice. They could not accustom themselves to the necessities. They were nervously fumbling, handling enormous conditions that had been thrust into their hands."

Especially characteristic is the closing part of the story which entirely ignores the problem of unemployment as a social problem, by going into the study of nature and of 'human," purely biological experiences connected with the arrival of spring:

> "On Sunday Paul came in his new shining car and took us out to the farm. Paul was prosperous and his business was doing well. He showed us the speed of his car and the splendid little wheels that turned beneath the hood. Then we went down the long planes of the country road and circled the enormous gravel driveway. The large white farmhouse with the river on its left and the orchards running to the river was the same. Mani came to the door in a long pale dress and took us out to her flower garden. There were firm yellow sprouts breaking through the hard earth. Mani swore a little and said that it was spring. The sky was heavy. The birds were crossing it like a high dome. At the end of the river the mills were still and the boats were shifting on the tide waiting for a cargo. Mani said that it was spring again and stamped her cigarette out on the edge of the garden. It is spring again, Mani said."

It is necessary to devote particular attention to the theoretical section of *Left* which comprises a whole series of articles. All who are interested in the theoretical situation of the American revolutionary literary movement will follow with close attention the activity of *Left* in this field, if only for the simple reason that the size of the magazine (about 100 pages) enables it to give more space to theoretical and special critical articles than, for instance, *New Masses* which has but lately been enlarged from 24 to 32 pages.

Theoretical work continues to be a rather neglected field not only in the literary, but also in the general cultural revolutionary movement of the USA. The relative youth of this movement on the one hand, and on the other hand the disdainful attitude towards theory that is characteristic of American bourgeois culture as a whole—having evolved its "creeping empiricism" into a system in the shape of pragmatism, with William James at the head—an attitude which was bound to prove contagious to some extent also for our revolutionary movement in its early stages—all this has conditioned a quantitative shortage of theoretical cadres for the revolutionary cultural movement, as well as a generally inadequate theoretical level of preparation. The consequence of this theoretical weakness was revealed again and again in paralyzing the class vigilance of our movement in America. In a number of cases the proper resistance was not shown to the manifestations of fascist and social-fascist ideology on the literary and cultural front that were distinctly hostile to the proletariat, or the resistance was considerably belated. At the same time the development of the multi-form cultural organizations of the workers has gone on to a considerable extent, and is still going on, rather spontaneously, without adequate systematic theoretic leadership, without summing up the whole experience of their work. To do away with this general theoretical backwardness, is the most urgent task of the American literary and cultural movement which is already now making certain steps in this direction. Thus, for instance, under the sign of doing away with theoretical backwardness, the *New Masses* is being reconstructed to a considerable extent, and in its recent issues we find the evidence of some achievements in this direction.

From this point of view, among articles on theoretical questions published in the second issue of *Left*, worthy of special attention, are the following three articles: "The Long Road," a sociological essay by Murray Godwin; "Tinker Pound and Other Italian Legends" by Donald McKenzie, who denounces the fascist poet Ezra Pound, and an article on Plekhanov by Leon Dennen—three militant articles by their subjective tendency, although suffering from a number of mistakes which ought to be criticized.

Leon Dennen's article on "Plekhanov and the Marxian Approach to Art" which is directed against the American social fascist critics, especially against Calverton and his article in *Left* No. 1, has great value, and as far as we know, it constitutes the first attempt made in America to utilize and assimilate Plekhanov's legacy in the field of literary criticism. Nevertheless, we must warn our American comrades right now of the dangers connected

with a non-critical attitude towards the system of Plekhanov's ideology as a whole, from which Dennen's article suffers. A wrong attitude of this kind towards Plekhanov is not new in the history of the development of the international proletarian revolutionary literary movement. Notably, such a mistake was once committed by Russian Association of Proletarian Writers in 1929 when in fighting against the literary idology of Pereverzev, one of the literary ideologians of the Second International, advanced the slogan of "struggling for Plekhanov orthodoxy."

The erroneous character of such an approach to Plekhanov becomes fully evident from the standpoint of the Leninist phase of literary criticism.

In a fragment "On the Question of Dialectics," Lenin gives the key to an understanding of the fundamental error in Plekhanov's philosophical conception. Pointing out that "the division of the one and the knowledge of its contradictory parts is the essence (one of the 'essential' aspects of being, its fundaments, if not *the* fundamental characteristic) of dialectics," Lenin observes that "this aspect of dialectics customarily received very little attention (*e.g.*, by Plekhanov): the identity of opposites is taken as the sum total of *examples* (for example, 'a seed,' and for example 'primitive communism') . . . and not as the law of *knowledge* (and as the law of the objective world)." And further: ". . . in any expression one can (and must) reveal as in a cell the embryo of all the elements of dialectics, showing thereby that dialectics is in general the characteristic of all human knowledge.

"And from its side, natural science shows as (and here again it must be demonstrated in *any* simple instance) the objective nature with the same qualities of the transformation of the particular into the general, of the contingent into the necessary transitions, nuances and the reciprocal connections of opposites. Dialectics *is* the theory of knowledge (of Hegel and) of Marxism. It was exactly this aspect of the matter (it is not a question here merely of the 'aspect' but of the essence of the matter) to which Plekhanov paid no attention." (Italics by Lenin).[1]

Plekhanov the non-dialectician and mechanist, and Plekhanov the menshevik theoretician of the Second International are two sides of one and the same coin. It were the profoundest mistake to draw a strict line of demarcation between them to distinguish between Plekhanov the theoretician and Plekhanov the politician. Plekhanov's "endeavor to look for answers to concrete questions in the simple logical development of common truth" referred to by Lenin in characterizing Plekhanov's political position in 1905, Plekhanov's menshevik elimination of the revolutionary essence of Marxism in the shape of dialectics, was bound to affect and did affect his whole outlook in the field of literary criticism.

Abstract logic, detachment from history, divorcing of theory from practice, mechanism—all these characteristic features of Plekhanov's methodology were what led to his mistakes in the field of literary criticism, mistakes all the more dangerous in that Plekhanov offered them under the name of orthodox Marxism.

The menshevik, opportunistic nature of Plekhanov's methods finds its expression already in his famous "Five Points" formulating the relations between the "foundation" and the "super-structure," a formula which is dealt with by Dennen. It is no accident that the class struggle, the driving force of the whole "written history" of mankind, is not included in Plekhanov's formula which is rigid, immobile and profoundly non-dialectical by its nature. In this connection it is equally important to observe that Plekhanov's formula takes no account of the active social role of ideology, as one of the forms of the class struggle, and ignores the possibility of the ideological super-structures reacting upon the socio-economic basis.

Plekhanov's concrete researches into literature are characterized precisely by this objectivism of his and as a rule confine themselves to establishing "objectively" the connections existing between works of art and the socio-political conditions which determine them.

This "objective" methodology finds its expression in that detachment of theory from practice, that opposing of art to publicist writing which is so typical for Plekhanov's literary criticism. As a highly eloquent example may be mentioned, for instance, Plekhanov's evaluation of Gorky's *Mother*, one of the first and best works of proletarian literature, an evaluation which was distinctly negative, fully answering the general menshevik views of Plekhanov.

"Gorky considers himself already a Marxist," Plekhanov writes, "for in his novel, *Mother*, he advocates already Marxian views. Nevertheless, this very novel proves Gorky to be highly unsuited for the role of a propagandist of these views, because he completely fails to understand Marx. . . . On the whole, it is useful and pleasant to understand Marxism. As for Gorky, such understanding will be of special value to him, because he will then realize how the role of the propagandist, *i.e.*, of the man who speaks chiefly in the language of logic, is little suited to the artist, *i.e.*, to the man who speaks chiefly in the language of images. And when Gorky comes to understand this, he will be saved."[1]

One must welcome the fact that Comrade Dennen in his article in *Left* breaks with Plekhanov's view in emphasizing the militant role of revolutionary art as one of the forms of the class practice of the proletariat. Nevertheless, he should have openly stated here that this conception of the practical class function of art is incompatible with the menshevik objectivism of Plekhanov.

Does it follow from the foregoing that we must fully renounce the legacy of Plekhanov in the field of literary criticism? Of course not. Lenin pointed out that the theoretical works of Plekhanov would remain a lasting acquisition and that no "factionalism" should blind us to this. Our task is, while taking whatever is of value in the Plekhanov legacy, to approach it from the the Leninist standpoint, to oppose the revolutionary dialectics of Marxism to Plekhanov's non-dialectical method, the Leninist doctrine on Party literature to the menshevik objectivism of Plekhanov, and the living concrete class practice of the proletariat to Plekhanov's abstract detachment from history.

Of course, the scope of this review does not permit us to give anything like an exhaustive critical appraisal of the whole of the Plekhanov legacy in the field of literary methodology. This should be

[1] Lenin, Vol. XIII, pp. 321-326.

[1] Plekhanov, Vol. XIV, p. 192, Russian edition.

the subject of a special article. Here it is necessary only to mention Plekhanov's formulation of the two phases of materialist criticism, since Dennen in his article quotes Plekhanov on this question without comment. Plekhanov divides the process of criticism into two "acts," the finding of the social equivalent of any given work of art and its esthetic evaluation. This formulation is the inevitable consequence of the non-dialectical character of Plekhanov's outlook and leads, in the long run, to a departure from the monistic method, the basis of dialectical materialism.

Donald McKenzie contributes an article on "T(h)inker Pound and Other Italian Legends," which is in the nature of a satire upon the well known American bourgeois poet Ezra Pound[1] who has lately been living in Italy. McKenzie tackles the problem of exposing fascism in literature.

While criticizing the position of Ezra Pound in connection with his reply to an article by Michael Gold in the October 1931 issue of the *New Masses* and while correctly linking up this criticism with an exposure of fascism as a whole (especially of Italian fascism with which Pound has become more closely connected by his constant sojourn in fascist Italy), McKenzie in the long run does not base his criticism and his appraisal of fascism upon revolutionary premises, but proceeds rather from a petty bourgeois point of view. It is characteristic that the basic crime of Italian fascism, according to McKenzie, is that every shopkeeper has to pay an income tax.

"The high percentage and the lack of any reasonable low income taxation—these are the things which will break Italy," he concludes. Such a criticism of the fascist system clearly misses the mark. Fascism as the method of counter-offensive by the world imperialist bourgeoisie upon the revolutionary proletariat, fascism as "preventive counter-revolution," with all its specific class policy, is practically ignored by McKenzie. Although he admits that Mussolini's "methods besides inhuman . . . must eventually lead to his defeat on economic and social grounds" nevertheless, the whole of his article amounts after all to a protest against fascism as against tyranny in general. This typical bourgeois superficiality in McKenzie's approach to fascism is combined with characteristic ignoring of the revolutionary militancy of the proletariat in the fight against fascism. McKenzie not only underestimates the growth of the Italian revolutionary labor movement (which is developing in spite of all persecution, even working illegally), and the heroic struggle of the Italian Communist Party. He fully denies the existence today of a mass revolutionary movement in Italy. Speaking about the treacherous role of the leaders of Italian social democracy during the rise of the revolutionary movement in post-war Italy, McKenzie maintains that this betrayal of the social-democracy has paralyzed the revolutionary activity of the working masses in Italy. "There is no *belief* left in them. For the time the great masses are dead. They are returning to the church and reaffirming the pallid beauty of death." (McKenzie's italics). Deductions of this kind, liquidatory by their nature, can in the long run bring nothing but harm to the revolutionary movement of the Italian proletariat, lowering its significance, and ignoring its militant capacity.

Finally, as to the third article—"The Long Road" by Murray Godwin.

Judging from his letter to the editor which appears in the same issue of the magazine, the writer of the article, the same as McKenzie, has taken up the task of combating the fascist ideology, especially the fascist theory which sanctions the bourgeois dictatorship as the inevitable result of the "natural hierarchy of nature" under which "the weak must submit to the strong." In his letter to *Left* Godwin says that he has made up his mind to "come out squarely, uncompromisingly, against every hint that the spirit of the movement *Left* has as its object is the 'protection of the Weak against the Strong.' This weasel way of implying that Virtue (in the Nietzchean sense) now tops the heap by force of its superiority, and that the mass of men is congenitally inferior—these are mere self-preservational bourgeois drivel; they enable the liberals of all stripes to refer to the Soviet program as a 'drastic experiment' and to pretend their own program differs from it simply in degree. . . . "

There is no need to belabor the importance of the task taken up by Godwin. Its significance rises particularly in connection with the fact that those bourgeois "theories" of the class struggle that are spoken of in the above quotation are still reflected in the ideology of a certain section of fellow-travelers that are standing close to us revolutionary writers.

Nevertheless, it has to be observed that in polemizing with bourgeois theoreticians on the question of the nature and origin of the state as the weapon of the class struggle, Godwin in the long run lands almost into the camp of his very opponents.

Instead of showing how the class struggle is determined after all by the development of the social forces of production, instead of drawing, upon this basis a picture of the disintegration of the primitive communist order as a result of growth in the forces of production, and showing the consequent development of subdivision of labor, accumulation, the birth of private property, the division of society into classes, with the inevitable formation of the state as the apparatus of class domination; instead of this, Godwin proclaims conquest as the only decisive factor which originated the class struggle and conditioned the birth of the state in primitive society. This theory—which, of course, contains nothing new nor original—compels Godwin to drag in the footsteps of bourgeois sociology which saw—at least, for instance, in the person of the famous German sociologist of the end of the 19th century, Ludwig Gumplowicz—the basic cause which conditioned the birth of the state in the vanquishing of the race by the representatives of another.

"Never, in the history of a primitive society," says Godwin, "has an individual or a group of individuals within the boundaries of that society been able to raise itself to a position from which it could extort tribute from or force labor upon the rest of the tribal body. The 'right' of coercion is invariably created by an alien group, after successful conquest and domination by force and violence have given the subjugated group no alternative but to obey."

[1] In a previous issue of this magazine (No. 3, 1931) we dealt with an article by Pound which appeared in the Dutch magazine *Front* in 1931.

In this connection the slavery, considered exclusively as the result of foreign conquest, constitutes according to Godwin not only the primary cause of class exploitation, but also generally the basic motive factor of social development at the dawn of the "written history" of mankind.

Such a theory, which does not unravel the whole socio-economic substance of class coercion and class exploitation as such, leads in the long run to a certain fetishization of the external form of this coercion, thereby objectively becoming little distinguished from those theories against which Godwin wants to polemize, the theories which see the substance of the class struggle in the predominance of the strong over the weak.

This view of the birth of the class struggle and of the origin of the state in primitive society has very little in common with the teachings of Marxism—at least, in the shape in which it was formulated by Engels in his *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.*

As distinguished from Godwin, Engels considers slavery in the primitive society, not as the starting point in the development of the class contradictions based upon private property, but merely as the consequence which arises at a certain stage in the development of the forces of production in the primitive society.

"The human labor power at this stage," says Engels, "does not yet produce a considerable amount over and above its cost of subsistence. But the introduction of cattle raising, metal industry, weaving and finally agriculture wrought a change. Just as the once easily obtainable wives now had an exchange value and were bought, so labor power was now procured, especially since the flocks had definitely become private property. The family did not increase as rapidly as the cattle. More people were needed for superintending; for this purpose the captured enemy was available and besides he could be increased by breeding like the cattle."[1]

Furthermore, Engels not only indirectly reduces the fact of conquest as such to the socio-economic factors which conditioned it, but also directly points out—contrary to the assertion made by Murray Godwin—that the factor of conquest is not at all an indispensable condition for the creation of the state in general. Thus, in the concluding part of his work, speaking on the three basic forms of the birth of the state, he writes: "Athens represented the simplest, the classic type: the state grew directly and mainly out of class divisions that developed within gentile society."

Thus, one has to observe that regardless of his unquestionably positive subjective intentions, Godwin in his article, carried away by the non-Marxian theory of conquest as the all-determining motive factor of social development, has against his will become a bearer of arms for his ideological opponents—substituting for the dialectics of the birth of contradictions and class struggle in the primitive society, the bare fact of coercion exercised by the "strong" conquerors over the "weak" vanquished.

The task of winning over the fellow-travelers, of struggling for leadership over them constitutes one of the most basic and urgent tasks of our proletarian revolutionary literary movement. For this reason we welcome the general position taken up by the editors of *Left* in organizing a bibliographical department of the magazine built to a considerable extent from the viewpoint of the problem of revolutionary fellow-traveling in art and literature. (Such are the reviews of the books of Dreiser, Sinclair, Bob Brown, etc.) Nevertheless, it ought to be observed that while correctly selecting books for treatment the magazine's reviewers do not always approach their subject with the necessary appreciation of the importance of leading the fellow-travelers, especially as regards attracting to the revolutionary movement the representatives of the wavering elements of the petty-bourgeosie in which the process of class differentiation becomes grown apace under the influence of ever sharpening crisis.

At the present moment, when the class struggle is reaching the utmost tension upon an international scale, the winning over to the side of the working class of every honest ally—however great may be his mistakes, providing he really helps us in our struggle—is a problem of tremendous political importance: in fact it becomes the direct duty of the entire revolutionary movement which to ignore would simply constitute a crime. The task of the struggle to win over the fellow-travelers cadres naturally urges the necessity to exercise the utmost circumspection and tact in dealing with them. Of course, it would be a profound mistake to construe this as meaning that we must sacrifice our principles and the ideological political purity of the movement for the sake of gaining additional allies. The point is rather that in reviewing and criticizing the artistic productions of the fellow travelers and sympathizers—we should not consider them merely by themselves, in an isolated manner, but rather in connection with the whole physiognomy of the writer as revealed in his artistic and publicistic activity, as well as in his immediate practical political work—in connection with the whole of his past, and not only of his past, but also of his future, to the extent that this future is already now discernible on the basis of his preceding activity.

This utmost circumspection and tact in regard to writers who are entitled to call themselves fellow-travelers of the revolutionary workers' movement is not fully maintained by *Left.* This is shown, notably, in Philip Sterling's review of Upton Sinclair's latest novel *The Wet Parade.* To be sure, *The Wet Parade* is not a revolutionary novel either by the problem it handles—the problem of drink (depicted by Sinclair as a sort of "root evil" of the whole of American capitalism) or by the way it is solved. Nevertheless, does this entitle us to deduce that after the appearance of *The Wet Parade* we have lost the last hope of Sinclair's revolutionary regeneration, as it is done by Sterling? Can we so scornfully brush aside the whole of the outspoken revolutionary publicistic activity of Sinclair as it is done by Sterling in the concluding lines of his review: "Sinclair will continue, occasionally, to lend his name to working class causes and to write on behalf of the working class. In the meantime he will go on writing his voluminous works on how to eat, drink, copulate, vote. He will cling to the title of socialist and insist that what the working class needs immediately is not revolution, but a knowledge of dietetics."

We know how Lenin used to evaluate Upton Sinclair's political publicistic activity comparing his statements on the imperialist war with the utter-

[1] Engels, "Origin of the Family, etc."

ances of theoreticians of imperialism like Robert Blatchford, observing that the conversion of Sinclair "is naive and theoretically ungrounded, but deeply correct warning against vulgarizing socialism; it is also a call to revolutionary struggle."[1]

Furthermore, on turning to the very recent period in Sinclair's publicistic activity, such as his recent article on the "Permanent Crisis," written for the American journal *The Thinker* and widely published in the Soviet press, coming from one of the most prominent modern writers of America and exposing the real nature of capitalist "prosperity" in America, drawing in opposition to the universal crisis of the capitalist system the building of socialism in the Soviet Union—did not that article possess tremendous political significance as a means of the revolutionary criticism of the capitalist system?

Of course, we know that the creative work of Sinclair is still weighted down by the ballast of vague reformism, that occasionally he does wander away from his path, with the result that he happened almost to turn into an apologist of capitalist "prosperity" (for instance, in his novel *Mountain City)*, or to become virtually an advocate of most reactionary mysticism (in his famous *Mental Radio)*. In this respect, of course, Sterling is right in his review of *The Wet Parade*. But all these facts should only urge the necessity of even closer attention to the creative work of Sinclair, of even more systematic friendly criticism of his errors. Sinclair's political activity on the whole, and each of his utterances in defence of the working class and the revolutionary movement, are so valuable to us that we can by no means afford to treat him in the disparaging manner of Sterling. This insufficiently sympathetic approach to Sinclair is even less justified if we compare Sterling's review with a review by Edwin Rolfe published in the same issue of *Left* dealing with the stories of Erskine Caldwell—a writer infinitely farther removed from genuine revolutionary ideology than Sinclair, and yet the reviewer does not lose hope of attracting him into the ranks of the revolutionary fellow-traveling writers.

The remarks bearing on Sterling's review of Sinclair's novel may be applied to a certain extent to the review by M. K. of *Axle's Castle*, by Edmund Wilson, the famous American critic. This book gives a critical analysis of the art of decaying capitalism—notably an analysis of symbolism. Here again the reviewer deals with Wilson's book apart from the whole of the publicistic utterances of its author during the last one or two years, apart from his practical activity as a participant in the revolutionary movement. Such an approach accounts for the fact that the reviewer, in giving a general appraisal of Wilson's ideological position, characterizes him as a representative of "impotent and sterile liberalism." In the light of a number of recent published statements by Wilson (beginning with his article in *The New Republic* of January 14, 1931, in which he for the first time exposed the romance "of the old American legend about the poor boy who became a millionaire," and ending with his article in *The Nation* of January 27, 1932, where he supports the point of view of Marx and advocates the building of classless society, adducing as proof the building of socialism in the USSR), this characterization given by M. K. should be substantially modified. However important the slips made by Wilson in his latest political utterances may be, one thing is quite certain, that the stage of "impotent and sterile liberalism" has been left by him well behind. This fact is further confirmed by the direct contact which Wilson maintains with the workers' movement, shown, for instance, by his participation in the work of a committee of writers who went down to the strike area in Kentucky and had to stand the brunt of bitter persecution on this account. (A brilliant report of that journey was given by Wilson himself in an article in the April issue of *New Masses* of 1932).

While calling attention to separate mistakes made in treating the works of this or that writer, we must on the whole point out the generally high politico-theoretical level of the bibliographical section of the second issue of *Left*. Notably, it is necessary to point out the correct evaluation given of Pilniak's novel *The Volga Falls to the Caspian Sea*—the appearance of which novel had caused quite incredible confusion among revolutionary critics in America, even to the extent that in the *New Masses* it was almost held up as a model of Soviet proletarian literature. The review given in *Left* repudiates once again the erroneous tendencies of this kind which led to the boosting as a "proletarian" novel of a book which is really a slander on our socialist construction. The concluding lines of this review leave no loophole for tendencies of this kind. "No, we cannot agree with Kunitz," concludes the reviewer, "that the fate of such men as Pilniak is tragic. What really is tragic is that their failure to understand the significance of revolutionary Russia leads them to vilify her for literary purposes."

In conclusion, a few words about the correspondence published in the second issue of *Left*. Here, by the side of information on the development of the revolutionary cultural movement (such as the report on the work of the John Reed Club of Chicago in a letter by the organizing secretary, Jan Wittenber) and similar material, we find clearly hostile social documents which should not have been left without editorial comment. This applies particularly to the filthy insinuating letter by Arthur Davison Ficke. While hypocritically declaring himself in sympathy with the revolutionary position of *Left* in the sphere of politics, Ficke, speculating on this declaration, attempts further, under the guise of an "innocent" plea for "pure art," to discredit the very idea of revolutionary fellow-traveling in the sphere of art, reiterating the old bourgeois myth that the proletariat is unable to value its allies who come over to its side from the enemy class. These filthy slanderous remarks by Ficke should be quoted fully:

"To me, the heart of literature is in those simple enigmas of courage and love and death which are absolutely individual, which have nothing to do with the social revolution, and which are entirely unaffected by any changes in the external world-order. The only poetry, painting, or music for which I care deeply—or should care to try to produce myself—could by no possibility either help or harm those social changes which I, just as much as you, believe to be desirable. The literature that is most dear to me concerns itself with the individual soul moving amid the mysteries of time and space, of hope and terror, of attraction and

[1] Lenin, Vol. XVIII, p. 165, American edition.

hate—things that are, very probably, entirely unchanging so long as man is man, and which all our modern scientific explanations do not essentially alter. Sugar still is sweet; and friendship is still friendship; and death, death. . . . Before we are all swallowed up by the mob, let us at least have a moment of frank conversation together. It is my solemn belief that the mob hates you as much as it hates me; the mob wishes in its deep heart to destroy all honest artists, all experimenters—for the good and unanswerable reason that such persons are, and must always be, lonely, unsocial, and slightly contemptuous spiritual aristocrats. That is a condition of the functioning of the creative mind; and the mob detests the fact with a quite comprehensible fury. So I think it will be amusing when, on a day, the Editors of *Left* and I are lined up together in front of a firing squad and are shot against the same brick wall—for such good but contradictory reasons! I wish you the best of luck—and will meet you at the wall!"

The hostile class prejudice of these lines is self-evident. Now that the universal crisis of capitalism, speeding the tempo of social disintegration in the bourgeois camp, causes ever increasing numbers of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia to go over to the side of the revolutionary movement—the militant bourgeoisie, through their fascist and social-fascist agents, are waging a desperate last fight on the cultural front to win away from the proletariat its new fellow-travelers, its new allies. Ficke's filthy attempt to discredit and slander the proletarian revolution in the eyes of the American revolutionary intelligentsia, is one of the manifestations of this struggle.

We leave it to Mr. Ficke to make any surmise he likes as to the fate in store for him after the victory of the proletarian revolution in America, but we are firmly convinced that this fate he will share, not with the editors of *Left*—our comrades in the struggle—but with his fellow-warriors in the camp of the bourgeois counter-revolution. These fellow-warriors are represented here, in the correspondence section of *Left*, for instance, by one Paul Frederick Bowles who openly proclaims himself "a staunch enemy of all things proletarian," who assails *Left* as "a fashionable gesture, a charity ball given in honor of 50,000,000 defectives (in other words, proletarians.—A.E.), and who announces his "sincere belief that all the workers are born to be crushed, and that it is a form of snobbery, and a virulent form at that, to think otherwise."

Of course, to expose the true class political nature of such utterances presents no difficulty whatever; nevertheless, *Left*, in printing documents of this kind, should repudiate them, showing their connection with current events of the class struggle on the politico-ideological front in America, and exposing their real political trend.

At the same time these letters to *Left* are also important to us by affording an objective illustration of the atmosphere of both open and disguised hostility amid which this young and not yet quite robust organ of our American fellow travelers has to carry on its activity. They remind us once again of the necessity to give our utmost, constant and systematic support to this magazine. By its honest self-criticism of its mistakes, by partly putting them right in practice, by openly breaking with Calverton and Poulaille and excluding them from the list of permanent contributors on the staff, the editors of *Left* have shown their readiness to follow the road of further revolutionary reconstruction of the magazine. All they have to do now is to check up the objective value of this readiness in their further practical work. Along this road *Left* has still a whole number of difficulties ahead and is threatened with a number of setbacks and mistakes. We must be prepared to do everything possible to help them cope with these difficulties, and if possible, by internationalizing the whole experience of the proletarian literary movement in the Soviet Union, to safeguard them in advance from repeating the same mistakes that have already been overcome in the process of the development of the Soviet proletarian literary organization, and if this be already too late, to help by our comradely criticism for the quickest possible revelation and practical correction of mistakes already committed.

Yes, but Moscow . . .

Oui, mais Moscou . . . by Pierre Dominique. Librarie Valois, 1931

The third, decisive year of the Five-Year Plan, the "year of the great change" (Stalin), was one of a great change also in the attitude of the capitalist press towards the USSR, or rather, in the methods of its campaign against the USSR. The conspiracy of silence concerning the achievements of the USSR, the slanders about the Soviet system, the tales of "bolshevik atrocities"—all were thrown into the waste-paper basket. The bourgeois press, like the trumpets before the walls of Jericho, had been making a continuous din about the USSR, thus concealing the measures being undertaken by the general staffs of the imperialist powers to bring down these stubborn walls. Not only did not the walls crumble, but on the contrary, they went soaring above the whole of the capitalist world, surrounded by the scaffolding of the greatest socialist construction in history. The Jericho trumpets of blatant slander proved a useless tool. Realizing this, the bourgeoisie, with the legerdemain of a juggler, took up a more subtle tool.

It is rather curious to observe that one of the forerunners of this change of method, one of the first scouts of the world bourgeoisie who visited the proletarian state and upon returning home signalized to his class the necessity of a drastic change in the methods of fighting the USSR, was none other than the famous humanitarian writer—who always eschewed "politics" and advocated the ideals of a classless "humanity," Georges Duhamel. Duhamel was in the USSR in 1925, and on returning to France published a book entitled *A Voyage to Moscow*. After the slanderous sensational book of Béraux (*What I Saw in Moscow*), Duhamel's book was accepted as a friendly document, since it was one of the first to demonstrate the stupid nature of the fables about "savagery and barbarism," and called for an "unbiased" study of Soviet realities. Examining this book from the standpoint of today, we find in it a ready-made program of those other, more refined methods of fighting the USSR which were worked out and perfected five years later by the spokesmen of world social-fascism.

The gist of Duhamel's book may be summarized as follows: the Soviet regime is not worse than capitalism, and even better in many respects;

something may be learned from it: the Soviet state is better organized and has wise rulers at its head. But the achievements of this regime are quite attainable under bourgeois rule, providing that equally wise rulers be at the head. In other words, Duhamel denies the socialist character of Soviet construction.

He goes on to say that the proletarian revolution has benefited the Russian people ("the great majority of the Russian people have received benefits from the revolution which they want to keep and defend"). Nevertheless, it was necessary and inevitable only in Russia; like the Soviet system, it is a purely Russian phenomenon, and the more cultured "democratic" peoples can attain the same results without revolution, by means of wise reforms undertaken by wise rulers. If this will not be done, communism may threaten also these "civilized and democratic" states.

As you see, it is a program to which Otto Bauer and his ilk would readily subscribe. There is but one thing missing here—the fairy tale about "forced labor"; because Duhamel visited the USSR not in the period of reconstruction, but in that of restoration, when there was as yet no need for the "forced labor" myth which presented itself a few years later. In this respect, his job was completed by the ideologians of social fascism.

The successes of socialist construction, and the victorious fulfilment of the Five-Year Plan in 2 and 2½ years in several branches of economy, has convinced the bourgeoisie how Duhamel and other farsighted advocates of new methods of fighting the USSR were right in their argument. As if in response to a given signal, the capitalist press began to talk about the achievements of industrialization and collectivization in the USSR, about the practicability of the Five-Year Plan, about the new formidable rival which had suddenly appeared upon a blank spot of the geographical map.

The whole ingenuity of the bourgeois scribes was mobilized in a different direction. The word was passed around not to minimize any longer the achievements of socialist construction, which cannot be denied today, but to argue in every possible way that it is not really socialist construction, but rather a form of organized state capitalism. On the other hand, the capitalist press began to declare that the colossal development of industry in the USSR harbors a serious menace to the whole of capitalist industry. The USSR—so we were told—as a serious rival in the world market, aggravates still further the crisis of over-production now experienced by capitalist industry throughout the world, and the direct consequence is the growth of unemployment in the capitalist countries, and so forth. Developing this argument, the capitalist press got up the story about "forced labor" as the basis of progress in Soviet industry, about the "super-capitalism" of the USSR being built by the bolsheviks "upon the bones of the workers."

The whole of this comic philosophy of intervention is now being freely disseminated in the columns of the bourgeois press. The "objective" reports about the whirlwind growth of Soviet industry, which have taken the place of the previous allegations of crisis and decline, are now circulated by the capitalist press as a means of mobilizing the masses for war against the USSR as a formidable future rival to "home industry," as the alleged cause of the growing crisis and unemployment.

Nevertheless, the direct advocacy of war against USSR, even in such "improved" form, does not meet with the desired response from the masses. In order to foster the interventionist sentiment among the masses of the workers who look upon the USSR as the road to their own emancipation, the world bourgeoisie has to resort to the services of its masked agency within the ranks of the working class whose task it is to sidetrack the sympathies of the masses for the USSR and bend them to the purposes of fascism. It is a difficult task which bespeaks exceptional legerdemain.

It is already late in the day to approach the toiling masses of West and East with the open slogan of war against USSR. Everyone who tries to win the confidence of the masses is asked by them point-blank at the very outset: "for or against the USSR?" The new social-fascist agency of the bourgeoisie, in order to secure influence over the masses and get them to follow, must shout itself hoarse: "For the USSR!"

On turning over the pages of the foreign bourgeois press and of the books about the USSR recently published, the unwary reader might jump to the conclusion that our proletarian state has today more friends than enemies. Yet, scratch these "friends" a little, and the fascist *swastika* will show through the disguise of ardent pro-Soviet sympathies.

Bourgeois newspapers and magazines are full of "information" about the USSR. The shelves of bourgeois book stores are filled with books on the Soviet Union. The slogan of this new "Soviet mania" is given on the wrapper of the new book on the USSR by M. De Monzie: *Since It Exists, Let Us Study It!"*

And they are furiously studying, indeed.

Pierre Dominique, a French bourgeois writer, visited the USSR last year. The result of his journey is a bulky volume of three hundred odd pages under the promising title, *Oui, Mais Moscou . . . (Yes, But Moscow . . .)* — which warrants the expectation of a plea on behalf of slandered Moscow. Indeed, M. Dominique in the three hundred pages of his book speaks enthusiastically about the Soviet system.

In his appraisal of Soviet life he follows in the footsteps of Duhamel. Like Duhamel, he emphasizes above all, at every step, the peculiarity of the "Russian people." Naturally, from these peculiarities arises also the peculiar road of development (proletarian revolution) and the peculiar system of government that is necessary and salutary for the USSR, but does not correspond to the spirit of Western Peoples. M. Dominique lays particular stress on the low culutral level of the toiling masses of the peoples of the USSR and on their peculiar psychological traits: inertia, slowness, and the utmost laziness. He depicts the Soviet masses as a herd of inert cattle which have to be goaded on to the road of progress. In comparison with the Soviet toilers—the uncultured mob—the Western worker and peasant appear as real patricians.

"The yeast which raises this dough," he says, "is the Party. At times it has to drive this herd with a whip, but this happens because we have to deal with a real herd."

The proletarian revolution was a historic necessity for this people, and only the Bolshevik Party, the very best of parties, the party of self-sacrificing people ("something like religious martyrs"), could compel this herd to make up in a few years for

centuries of backwardness and to perform the great work which they are doing. Without the dictatorship of "the best of the people," without the dictatorship of the Party, all the achievements of the USSR today would have been unthinkable.

With these reservations about the specific traits of the "Asiatic Slav" race (the "ancient Tartar blood"), Dominique throughout the three hundred pages of his book sings an ode to the achievements of the USSR in all respects, vigorously denouncing all those who slander the Soviet system. This system, according to Dominique, is strong and invincible, and its fall cannot be anticipated. Dominique notes the corner-stones of its invincible strength: "1) A strong government reminiscent of the power wielded by Peter the Great, while the present Tsar has a million heads. It is not the power of one man, but of a whole party, all the more invincible that it has its own outlook on the world. 2) This power relies upon a federation of peoples, which could have been accomplished also by a wise Tsar. 3) This power is a socialist one." To be sure, according to M. Dominique, its Socialism is also of a peculiar Asiatic brand "which deos not at all correspond to the Marxian hypothesis and has nothing in common with Marxism."

Can these two systems—capitalism and Sovietism—continue to exist side by side? It is rather an important question, bearing in mind that the collapse of the Soviet power seems unlikely. According to M. Dominique, there can be five different possible solutions:

"1) A war may be declared against the Soviet, with the forcible destruction of their economic system, of their federalism, and of their Party, either restoring the former monarchy, or setting up a united democratic republic, or detaching from the USSR the Ukraine, Georgia, etc.

"2) The Soviets may themselves declare war and attempt to spread by force their three principles: a) socialist economy; b) federalism, a system which may unite all those peoples of Europe that are prepared to change their capital city, and c) the Party dictatorship.

"3) A blockade may be declared on the Soviets, in the hope of forcing them to change their internal system (see point "1" above), or simply in the hope of isolating them from the rest of the world, and at any rate, depriving them of the possibility to carry on propaganda. This is the policy of barbed wire.

"4) One may presume a slow evolution of the Western democracies towards the Soviet system. Being gradually socialised, these democracies would carry out in the long run a European federation, and the parliaments would renounce their powers either in favor of an individual dictatorship or of a party dictatorship.

"5) One may presume, on the contrary, the evolution of the Soviets themselves. The USSR is being gradually centralized; *i.e.*, the natural course of events will cause the Soviet Union to begin to Russianize its peoples, or it will be broken up into six nations, or it will dissolve itself in a European federation, or in a league of nations—all this will lead to the same end: the Soviets will be transformed into a democracy, and the bourgeois spirit will emerge from its ashes."

The first of these possible solutions is the road of armed intervention which was tried out in 1918-21 and was discarded as unsuitable (M. Dominique pretends to have forgotten about the Trial of the Industrial Party).

The second solution, alleged to have been tried out by the Soviets in 1920, was given up by the USSR, according to Dominique, since the time of the Riga Peace Treaty. There is no ground to fear an attack by the USSR.

The third solution, the crowning of which was the recent campaign against alleged Soviet dumping, proved equally unpracticable. The bourgeoisie, according to Dominique, shows a tendency towards giving up its policy of "barbed wire" in regard to USSR.

Possible as well as real, according to Dominique, are the last two suppositions, and not one of them in particular, but both of them simultaneously.

"The West is being socialized little by little," he says, "and it strives after the idea of federation, while at the same time the democracy seems to be gradually withering everywhere, making room either for individual dictatorship (of which numerous instances might be cited) or for party dictatorship. On the other hand, as regards the USSR, if it has not yet become thoroughly bourgeois, nevertheless it cannot be denied that it has given up pure communism and that its national component parts are becoming more and more clearly defined and more and more nationalistic. Finally, thanks to universal education, the Soviet government year by year and gradually reduces the weight of the party while the weight of the masses increases, and in this manner it strives after a peculiar democracy, one that is without a bureaucracy and is subjected to the leadership of the Soviet authority . . . Such are the basic three points on which the two systems manifest a converging tendency of development."

The peculiar deductions drawn by Dominique in his panegyrical book about the USSR are rather instructive. As compared with Duhamel and the methods suggested by the latter for combating communism and the USSR, Dominique proposes a far more perfected and elaborated system. Dominique has borrowed from Duhamel the basic principles concerning the specific road of Russia's development which is not at all obligatory for the civilized Western peoples and has spiced them with a goodly dose of demagogy concerning the toiling masses of the West, who represent an "aristocracy of workers and peasants" and will naturally arrive at socialism by following a different road from the one that was good and necessary for the Russian "mob," by a road that is worthy of "civilized" peoples.

This special road, by which the workers of the West would achieve the same results as the Soviet workers have attained by proletarian revolution, is outlined by M. Dominique quite plainly: it is the road of doing away with so-called "democracy" and giving up parliamentary rule in favor of *individual* or party (of course, fascist) dictatorship.

Thus, a modern social-fascist ideologian, taking cognizance of the sympathies of the masses for the USSR and the Soviet system, is trying to make clever use of these sympathies to further the fascization of the bourgeois "democracies," trying to convince the masses that the road of the proletariat in the USSR was determined by geographical and historic conditions, and that the workers in the Western countries can achieve the same final goal by following the course of fascism.

Bruno Jasienski

INTERNATIONAL CHRONICLE

USSR

THE WORLD SPARTAKIADE

By order of the Soviet Government, a world Spartakiade of workers sport will be held in the Soviet Union in 1933, to celebrate the fulfilment of the Five-Year Plan.

Work has already begun on the building of a stadium in Moscow. The stadium will bear the name of Joseph Stalin. It will contain a number of sport fields, swimming pools, race tracks, bicycle, motor cycle, and auto tracks, as well as several gymnasiums. The stadium will have a seating capacity of 120,000. In all it will accomodate close on 200,000 spectators.

Only the final part of the program will be carried out in the stadium. The full schedule of festivities will embrace every republic and province, every industrial and agricultural district in the USSR.

It is anticipated that no less than 10 million proletarians and peasants will take part in the Spartakiade. Football teams will number about 52,000, volleyball—90,000, basket ball—7,000 while about 2,000,000 athletes will take part in field athletics and skiing. It is expected that about 75,000 will be entered for the tennis tournaments and 100,000 for swimming meets.

No less than 5,000 guides and interpreters will be needed to serve the numerous foreign delegations who will arrive as guests to the festival.

The 1933 Spartakiade will serve as a review of the physical fitness of the Soviet laboring masses, of their readiness to resist intervention, which world capitalism is feverishly preparing against the Soviet Union. Now that all the capitalist governments are feverishly piling up armaments, the world Spartakiade will also serve as proof of the readiness of the workers in capitalist lands to rise in defence of the Soviet Union, of their readiness to struggle for the world October.

The program of the Spartakiade will be finally decided upon only after wide discussion of the concrete forms it should assume. The physical culturists of the Soviet Union, together with the red sportsmen in the capitalist countries, and the *komsomols* all over the world must take an active part in working out of the desired form and plans.

Many first class athletes will take part in this world Spartakiade and display their prowess in football matches, boxing, wrestling, fencing, volley ball and tennis. Teams from factories and mills, first in fulfilling the Five-Year Plan, will be given first places in the order of the program.

A special feature of the Spartakiade will be mass recitals. Thousands of workers will take part in these recitals.

The year 1933 will begin with a number of combined relay race and propaganda tours, announcing the Spartakiade and the fulfilment of the Five Year Plan. The racers will circle the North, the Urals, White Russia, the shores of the Arctic ocean, Pamir and Altai mountains, as well as of Ukraine.

This victory will be largely the result of our huge achievements in mastering technique. For this reason a most important place in the Spartakiade program will be given to races on motor cycles, automobile, aeroplane and motor boats, constructed of Soviet materials and equipped with powerful humming Soviet motors, driven by the steady hand of young Soviet chauffeurs and pilots.

The Spartakiade will begin its program in the factories and mills with a series of factory meets.

In its struggle for the Five Year Plan on the industrial front, in the fields of socialist agriculture, and in the cultural revolution, the Soviet Union is preparing this great army of participants in the Spartakiade, two millions of whom will receive instruction, aiding them to pass examination for the right to wear the insignia "Ready for labor and defence."

Much work on an international scale will be carried on in preparation for the Spartakiade. Soviet sportsmen will establish connections with factories and mills in the West, inviting as guests the red sportsmen who wish to visit the Soviet Union during the period of festivities and celebration of the victory. About 30,000 proletarian sportsmen are expected to arrive as guests to this great sport festival.

Turkey

SOVIET AND TURKISH WRITERS MEET

Ismet Pasha, during his recent visit to the Soviet Union, was accompanied by several Turkish writers who met Maxim Gorki on the evening of May 1. Among Gorki's visitors were the poet Yakub Kadri-bey, who has translated several books by Dostoevsky; Rushen Etref-bey, also a poet who has translated many of Gorki's works, Dostoevsky's *Poor People*, as well as a number of books by modern Soviet writers; Yunas Nadi-bey, editor and publisher of a number of newspapers appearing in Constantinople and author of a book on the Turkish revolution; Valia Nuretin, translator and jour-

nalist. Michael Koltzov, the well known Soviet journalist and writer, was also present.

The discussion was opened by Maxim Gorki, who addressed his guests as follows:

"We have met today to discuss the question of exchanging whatever is of value in the literatures of our respective countries. I must admit with shame that we, Russians, know nothing at all about the modern Turkish literature. We are very eager to learn about that literature which has arisen since the revolution and reflects the changes that have followed it. Besides you must help us to select a number of literary works, picturing the every day life of our peasantry and city dwellers prior to the revolution."

"Allow me," said Rushen, "to acquaint you in short with our achievements in this sphere. We have just finished compiling an anthology of Turkish poetry, which includes all Turkish poets from the 16th century down to our day. This anthology has already been translated into French and will soon be published. We are also preparing a similar anthology of our prose writers. In the first anthology we have included those poets who write under Persian and Arabian influence. Their work smells of the soil and lays bare the very soul of the Turkish peasants. Here are also poetic works that show unmistakable European influence and last but not least, the works of those of our contemporary poets who have escaped the influence of the various European poetic forms and seek inspiration in our present, in its rich variety. We shall send you these anthologies. Naturally you will receive the poetry anthology first."

"I am very gratefull to you," said Gorki. "I would also ask you to send me the original Turkish texts of these poems, for, as you are well aware, translations—no matter how faithful and well done—never convey the spirit of the original. I believe many of the poems, appearing in the anthology, could be published in Russian."

"We shall gladly sell you the originals," said Yakub Kadri-bey. "They can be accompanied with a short outline of the literature of past and contemporary Turkey. I believe this could best be done by Mr. Kushen, who is at present engaged on this class of work. We have some literature on this subject that we can send you."

In coming back to modern Turkish poetry and its development, Yakub Kadri-bey stated:

"Our literature has traversed the same road as the Russian literature. We also had our Narodniki, a strong current in our literature. It was greatly influenced by the writings of Dostoevsky and therefore elements characteristic of the latter were predominant in it. Even Tolstoy, whose works we know so well, has not influenced our literature as much as Gorky. Imbued with the spirit of struggle expressed in his works, our literature became a flaring emblem of battle against sultanism."

"Tell us," inquires Koltzov, "have you a literature reflecting the life of the workers in Turkey?"

"You see," replies Kadri-bey, "Turkey has no large industry. We have, instead, a well developed handicraft industry. Therefore when we speak of labor or the toilers, we usually mean both the worker and the peasant. Our writer is as yet unaware of that division of labor, (if I may express myself so), to be seen in European literature."

"Comrade Gorky!" Valia Nuratin turned to Gorki. "I don't speak Russian freely, but I understand it quite well. In translating I always use the original text. I would appreciate your advice. Which modern Soviet work do you suggest for translating?"

"I should suggest the following books," said Gorki, "*Eutry* by Yuri Germann, *The Badgers* and *The Net* by Leonov, *The Armoured Train* by Vsevolod Ivanov, also some of his short stories, *Destruction* by Fadeev and also his *The Last From Udege.*"

"What is your opinion of Ilia Ehrenburg," breaks in one of the Turkish guests.

"I am not overfond of Ilia Ehrenburg," replies Gorky. "His works smack too much of the adventurous. There's too much in them of the foreign influence of this genre. No, I am not at all a worshipper of Ehrenburg. But to get back to the previous subject. I would also advice you to translate The *Ice Breaker* by Gorbunov, *The Story of the Great Plan* by Ilin. By the way, in America 180,000 copies of this book were printed. Then also *Tayga* by Pasinkov, *Quiet Don* by Sholohov. All these are fine works, and give a good picture of our modern Soviet literature."

In parting the representatives of Turkish literature invited Gorky to visit Turkey.

OUR TURKISH FRIENDS ABOUT THE USSR

In recent years Turkey has shown a tremendous interest in the USSR. Its newspapers and magazines contain numerous articles on the cultural and economic achievements of the Soviet Union.

Particularly great is the attention given to the USSR by the newspapers *Jumuriet-Republique* (published in Turkish and French), and *Milliet*. At the close of 1928 Junis Nadi, a member of the Turkish Parliament and Editor of *Jumuriet*, wrote a series of articles in which he recounted his impressions of a visit to Moscow and his conversations with Rykov, Lunacharsky and other Soviet political and culutral leaders. Junis Nadi gave a highly appreciative evaluation of everything he had seen in the USSR, especially in the sphere of culture and education.

He spoke with great enthusiasm about the Soviet theaters, schools and clubs.

At the close of 1930 the noted Turkish writer Falikh Rifki printed in *Hakimmet Millie* and in *Milliet* a series of sketches on the USSR, which he has since issued in book form (1932) under the title, *New Russia.*

In an article in *Jumuriet-Republique* (October 23, 1930), entitled: "How a University is Organized," Kiazim Nami relates the history of the Kazan University and gives a detailed description of its present condition:

> "The Kazan University, whose importance is recognized not only in its own country but also throughout the world, may serve as an example to us. It was organized in 1805 during the reign of Catherine II for the purpose of training missionaries for the spreading of tsarist influence in the East. Kazan had once been the capital of the Kazan Khanate of the Northern Turks. The Russians annexed this district, wiping out the Khanate, but they could not exterminate the Turks. Kazan is

now the capital of the Tartar Soviet Socialist Republic.

"For a long time Kazan University was an institution for training tsarist officials. Of course, it was not love for science that prompted tsarism to create this university.

"The present government of Russia assists the scientific activities of the university which, in its turn helps to build up the new society based on the principles of Socialism.

"Under tsarism only Russians were permitted to study in the university while now the majority of the students are Turks (Tartars), Tchuvash, Mariy and Votyaks."

The author shows a fairly wide knowledge of conditions in this seat of learning:

"The university has at present the faculties of physics, mathematics, medicine, administration and law, and also a Workers' Faculty (training workers for entrance to the university). Not only is the tuition free, but one third of the students receive stipends from the State. The university's library in 1904 had 228,000 books, and at present it has 453,000.

"Kazan University," he concludes, "is steadily marching forward, and attempts not merely to keep pace with Western science, but to go ahead."

The writer proceeds to describe the older universities of USSR (Leningrad, Moscow, Kharkov):

"Science is a universal boon belonging to all people. Science has no fatherland. Each nation can and must gain science from other and more enlightened nations. At present the Russians are building their own airplanes, tractors and automobiles and at an accelerated tempo at that — in their own plants and with the efforts of their own workers and technicians.

"While the growing requirements of the masses of the Russian people make it still necessary to depend to some extent on Western technique... they are bending all their efforts to get rid of this dependence as quickly as possible."

He concludes his article with the following words:

"To reveal the abilities of the nation in the realm of science, is a common task for humanity. Herein lies genuine nationalism."

The principal Turkish newspapers, like *Milliet*, *Hakimet Millie*, *Vakom* etc., published reviews of *New Russia* and recommended it as the first Turkish book about the USSR.

It is characteristic that a book on the "Russian Revolution," written in Turkish by the counter-revolutionary Crimean emigrant Djaper Seid Ahmet, which was published before Rifli's book, was entirely ignored by the Turkish press and reading public.

The more sober organs of the Turkish bourgeois press do not hesitate to hold up Soviet cultural achievements as worthy of imitation.

Thus, at the beginning of last year the Turkish public showed great interest in the reorganization of public education in the USSR. In an editorial published in *Milliet* on January 18, 1931, we read that in the matter of school reform the organization of educational and cultural work in the USSR may be taken as the model.

While the "Soviet dumping" campaign, in which part of the Turkish press joined, was at its height, Junis Nadi wrote in *Jumuriet* repudiating the allegation of Soviet dumping and declared that "the Russia of today is prepared to make any sacrifices for the sake of carrying out its ideals."

Characteristic of the Turkish public opinion concerning Soviet culture was a sketch, entitled "A Comparison," which was published in *Hakimet Millie* on July 30, 1931:

"Their theater is an institution which produces all the evil aspects of the pre-revolutionary society. Its aim is to render them an object of detestation and to show the sublime and the attractive that has been brought forth by the revolution.

"Our theater is an establishment which produces either plays about the vices of nations with whom we have nothing in common, or plays in which mountebanks disport themselves on the stage.

"Their radio is a whole system which tells about what has been done and achieved by the country, by the revolution; which reports daily on the fulfilment of obligations assumed by the masses, which tells about the aid that is expected by the government from the country. It is the mouthpiece of revolutionary State and of the Party, which addresses itself and speaks to the nation day in and day out.

"And in our country? All kinds of Hijaekers Kurdu, Adjem Oshirii (old songs), interspersed with morceaux from Chopin, and with belated despatches of world news filtered by the Havas and Reuter telegraph agencies.

"Their transport is a means of communication which is equipped with books, cinema, maps, statistical data, orators, propagandists, publications, journalists, which serves as a vehicle of extensive propaganda. In our country it is merely a means of transportation, and that is all.

"Their cinema, like the theater, is a means, a weapon of revolution. And here? Greta Garbo, Marline Dietrich, Douglas Fairbanks, etc."

J. Nevin

Germany

BRECHT - EISLER

Everybody today is familiar with the name of Eisler, the communist composer-author of the "Comintern March" sung by every young communist, Red Army man, pioneer. Composer too, of "Rote Wedding," that rousing march tune, favorite of the proletariat of many lands. "Rote Wedding" is sung in demonstrations not only by Germans but by Dutch, Swiss, Austrian and Czecho-Slovakian workers. Wedding is the working class district of Berlin. Forty thousand gramophone records of "Rote Wedding" were sold before the song finally came under the ban of social democratic police who took the occasion to forbid the sale of the entire repertoire of the German Agitprop groups. This included all the works of Erich Weinert as well as everything in German literature daring to raise the voice of protest.

An enemy of light entertainment music, Eisler favors community choral singing which draws the listener into active participation. Eisler was one of those who actively opposed the reformist choir movement in Germany, organizing in its stead the independent communist choir movement which during its short period of existence already counts over 15,000 members.

No revolutionary proletarian concert in Germany is complete without Eisler's songs.

The songs themselves are topical, like newspaper feuilletons — impudently ironic. Eisler's melodies parody bourgeois sentimental love songs, hymns and saccharine chorales. The chant the unemployed, the disabled war veterans, bourgeois swindlers and police clubs.

But the irony of his full-blooded music becomes particularly keen when combined with the shrewd sarcasm of Bertold Brecht, one of the most interesting revolutionary poets and dramatists of contemporary Germany.

Of Brecht himself we know little. His derisive ballads have earned him fame throughout Germany, especially his "Ballad of the Dead Soldier," a gruesome tale of a warrior whom the capitalists and their lackey physicians and priests exhumed from his grave patched up and returned to the trenches.

But it was the "Beggar's Opera" that won Brecht world-wide recognition, and revealed his extraordinary dramatic talent.

In the "Opera" he shows that under existing conditions it is but a small step from bandit to banker so long as the ordinary precepts of law and convention are observed.

His drama "Managoni" illustrates the fact that in bourgeois society any crime is permissible as long as you can foot the bill.

The "Song of Supply and Demand" has already been recorded for the gramophone while chorale compositions such as "Party Eulogy" are extremely valuable additions to German revolutionary art:

"An individual sees with two eyes,
But the Party sees with thousands of eyes;
The individual knows his seconds,
But the Party — its days and years;
The Party envisions peoples, continents;
The individual — only his own backyard."

For the past year Eisler and Brecht have become inseparable in their work. Unfortunately, their names have been as inseparably coupled with the word *Verboten.* There is scarcely one piece of work by either during the past year that was not banned or confiscated.

Brecht, Eisler and Dudov collaborated together on the first important German proletarian sound film, "Kuhle Wampe," depicting the life of a group of workers driven by the crisis to live in self-built barracks on the outskirts of the city, and alongside a vast grave filled by their own hands and bearing the legend:

"Here lies the last
Of our hopes to find work."

"Kuhle Wampe" met the same fate as other works of these young proletarian artists. *Verboten.*

Eisler wrote three songs: "Jobless," "Peasant Revolution," and "On Suicide." The "Peasant Revolution" contains the words:

Workers, peasants, shoulder arms!
The proletarian bayonet is keen!"

It was promptly *Verboten.*

Brecht, Oswald and Eisler composed a "Red Review" dealing with events of 1918 and the fate of the petty bourgeoisie. One of its ballads contained the verse:

"Workers, peasants, shoulder arms!
"We're the stump guard,
On wooden crutches
Our stumping heralds
The dawn
Of the Red October."

Verboten!

Brecht adapted Gorky's *Mother* for the German screen for which Eisler composed the music. Even bourgeois critics were obliged to acknowledge the skill of this dramatization. The play however was suddenly taken off the boards after the 30th performance.

But the tickets had already been sold. The audience was assembled.

"You can read the play but not act it," the cast was instructed.

So the actors sat in a row on the edge of the stage facing the audience and began to read their roles.

Suddenly from among the public arises a hand encased in a police man's gauntlet. . .

"Stop!"

"What's wrong?"

"What kind of reading is it when the actors speak their parts from memory. The roles must be read from the book!"

The actors take the book and read, glancing from time to time over their manuscripts at the public. One of them, carried away by his role, unconsciously gesticulates with his hand. . .

"Stop!"

To gesticulate with the hand means acting, not reading. *Ergo! Verboten!*

Brecht and Eisler are now working on a new play entitled "The Maid of Orleans from the Chicago Slaughterhouse" a tale of the capitalist crisis.

It is not difficult to prophecy how the social fascist censors will greet this play.

While in Moscow recently, Brecht and Eisler made an outline for their new musical dramatic work which is to be composed in honor of the great festival of the revolutionary proletariat—the fifteenth anniversary of the October Revolution.

Poland

"WHITHER POLAND?"

The "cultural" policy of Polish fascism, whose chief weapon is the Roman Catholic Church, is gradually turning every sphere of cultural life in the country into the freehold of the priests. The unlimited power of the latter gives rise to a widespread anti-religious movement among the masses, alarming the government and compelling it to struggle by "administrative measures." However, the movement is so powerful that the fascists, fearing to lose their influence on the masses altogether, have been forced to "stage" a special anti-clerical

movement of their own. They hope, by means of a fake struggle against the domination of the priests, to trick those sections of the toilers which harbor anti-religious ideas.

In Polish fascist literature, this "oppositional" role is played by M. Boi-Zhelenski, a venerable writer and disciple of Pilsudski.

In a recent issue of the Warsaw Literary News, Boi-Zhelenski has a big article under the arresting title: "Whither Poland?" The facts given in this article speak for themselves and are plain evidence of the cultural stultification which marks all branches of intellectual life in present-day fascist Poland, in whose poisonous atmosphere the revolutionary proletariat of Poland, West Ukraine and West White Russia are creating, under the blows of the terror, the germs of the new proletarian culture.

"In *The Flood*, Senkevich compared *Retch Pospolitu* to a piece of crimson cloth which the claimants to the throne tear from each other's hands," writes Boi-Zhelenski in his article. "But to-day we may say that every party without exception is tearing from the hands of the others the black robe of the priests.

"The Department of Science and Art is in the hands of the clergy. . . The Catholic press agency hurls its thunderbolts at a theater for presenting a play in which Philip II, the patron of the holy inquisition, is not shown in a sufficiently favorable light. Forestalling the wishes of the unofficial preliminary church censorship, its "secular arm" will not permit the production of a very moral play by a young author.

"In short, the circle is narrowing. If the occupation (the church) were to carry out its aims, then everything, absolutely everything, would be under the power of the priests. Hence, we are naturally curious to know something definite about this candidate for the spiritual throne of Poland, and what cultural riches it brings with it.

"Before me lies a document which gives us a chance to observe it at close quarters. A book has appeared entitled *What to Read*. Its author is Father Marian Pirozhinski, a redemptorist. The book was published with the sanction of the ecclesiastical powers of the Jesuits of Cracow. The sub-title tells us that it is a guide for book readers. On the cover is an announcement of great promise: "The first and only sane appraisal of Polish and foreign literature ever published in the Polish language. 1,000 authors, 3,500 works."

'The first and only'! A far-reaching statement! Let us take a glance at this sane appraisal.

"The choice of authors, given in alphabetical order, is extremely fortuitous. We strove vainly to solve why one author is included and another omitted. The book resembles the catalogue of a library in a holiday resort, except that a short estimation is given alongside the name of each author. We give below a few of these appraisals, commencing with the foreign writers.

" 'Johann Wolfgang von Goethe—German poet. In his youth led a wild and dissipated life. On the background of his experiences, he wrote in 1771 the *Sufferings of Young Werther*. He falls in love with her, she marries another, he continues to love her and commits suicide. This novel was in the style of the epoch—sensitive, tearful, self-analytic—and hence made a deep impression on the minds of his contemporaries, causing much harm.

"It is sufficient to know so much of Goethe . . .

" 'Prosper Mérimée—a French writer who delighted to make murder and all kinds of abomination into the subject of his works. His heroes are drunkards, bandits and debauches. Sometimes he goes to the extent of blasphemy. . . .'

" 'Charles Montesquieu—a French philosopher and literateur, known for his treatise against public morals: *The Spirit of the Laws* (forbidden by the Pope 29. XI. 1751)' . . .

" 'Henri Murget—French writer. His materialistic novels vulgarly describe the poverty of the poorer strata of the population. All were forbidden by the pope 20. VI. 1864. 'Bohemia'.''

" 'Alfred de Musset—French poet. In style, one of the best, in morals, one of the worst. Lived as a libertine and described his unworthy life. . . .'

" 'Stendhal—pseudonym for Henri Bailey. Served in the army, managed estates, was a diplomat, and finally wrote unhealthy and godless novels.'

" 'Charles Dickens . . . Not very instructive, as he describes love scenes in too great detail. . . .'

" 'Honoré Balzac . . . The novels of Balzac have the distinguishing weakness that they contain no deep thought. . . .'

" 'Edgar Allan Poe—American writer. In moral matters on the whole irreproachable. However, in his novels are frequently to be found abnormal persons, even specters, and unlikely situations occur which disqualify his books from being recommended for the young. . . .'

" 'Luigi Pirandello—one of the pagan writers of modern Spain (?), extolling corrupted morals: *The Shadow of Matthew Pasqual, The First Night.*'

" 'J. G. Rosny—the pseudonym of two English (?) brothers who write in collaboration: Justin and Joseph. . . .'

" 'Josephine Baker—modern dancer, leading a depraved life: *Memoirs* (written by M. Sauvage).'

"Is it possible that we can find nothing worthy of praise? Let us seek further.

" 'Germaine Acremand (real name—Mm. Poulain). A good observer of life with a good outlook on life. *The Merry Marriage Broker*, for adults. The main theme—better marry a bad husband than remain an old maid. . . .'

" 'Charles Bouet—French writer. Excellent tone. *From the Life of a Village Priest.*'

" 'Annie Vivanti. *Marion*, the story of an unfortunate singer. She has no character and therefore strays from the path. Not bad. *Naya Tripudians*—a debauched society tries to take advantage of the innocence and unsophistication of two sisters—a seemly and instructive novel.'

"There are interesting notes in brackets, showing the authors whose books are forbidden by the pope, *e.g.*, the whole of Dumas, the whole of Maeterlink. . .

"But let us look at the Polish authors.

" 'Stefan Zeromski—a talented writer, a master of the Polish language, an enthusiast, wishing to play the role of teacher of the nation, to which point he has not grown up. *The History of a Sin* . . . outrageous. *True River*, a novel of 1863, in which a wounded rebel seduces a girl . . . *Before the Spring*—an execrable pasquinade on Poland and the village intelligentsia, biased and untrue to life, an apology of the working class strata and the Jews. In addition, its extreme erotism and anti-government ideology. . . .'

" 'Julian Tuwim—a widely advertised poet who would seem to have regenerated poetry. His much-

talked-of *Waiting for God* creates an unpleasant impression. The author is on familiar terms with the lord, and has no small amount of racial insolence. . . .'

"'Sophia Malkowska (should be Nalkowska): *The Romance of Theresa Gennert*—a worthless novel interwoven with indecent scenes.'

"'Antoni Lange . . . A worshipper of 'beautiful words' and art for art's sake. Seeks for something everywhere. Christ is not enough for him. *The Wild Rose*, a novel in bad taste about a naive girl, money, etc.'

"'Piotz Hoynowski . . . *The Five Daughters of Sulezhitski*—as a novel, middling—neither good nor bad.'

"'Marja Zurowska. *The Heart is no Slave*—the love of an artist for a married woman; it is true that the married woman went too far, but she pulled herself together in time.'

". . . It appears that this priest is acquainted almost entirely with indecent books. The knowledge possessed by the Rev. Pirozhinski of the pornographic literature of all ages and countries is absolutely astonishing:

"'Pitigrilli—a modern pornographer. His license knows no bounds. *The Girdle of Chastity, Cocaine, Outraged Morals, The Eighteen Carats of Virginity.*'

"This holy father redemptorist knows every obscene thing, even those which have been forgotten by everyone.

"'Paul de Kock. Frenchman. At the age of 19 he published *My Wife's Child*, and ever afterwards wrote immoral and vulgar novels. Over 40 of them have been translated into Polish.'

"What erudition! In parts, this catalogue reminds one of the news items of the boulevard newspapers, in which the reporter, showing his indignation at the discovery of a house of ill fame by the police, gives its address in detail. . .

"It is no chance that this flood of 'pornographic' literature—though reviewed unfavorably—appears in the guide book on *What to Read.* Among these victims of celibacy, the question of sex overshadows everything else, becoming a genuine mania for persecution and generates into unhealthy erotism. . . Even Dickens serves to arouse this priest!

"The impression left in our minds after a glance at this mend—which to some extent can be regarded as representative—is a queer mixture of pity and alarm—pity for a man who looks at the world through such spectacles and who displays such naive coarseness and illiteracy, but at the same time alarm, when we reflect that he represents a whole caste which is impudently and insistently stretching out its hands towards the power in modern Poland, and which is grasping at the monopoly of guiding the minds of the youth.

"The Father Pirozhinski's guide is an interesting but not an enticing commentary on the psychology of our clergy. It cannot be looked on as an exceptional example. It comes from a sphere where nothing happens fortuitously. The book was passed by the church censor; without doubt it was read by a number of people; it was published by the jesuits, and with perfect consistency, as it harks back to their best traditions in Poland before the Partition.

"If in the future matters develop further in this direction, I can visualize this 'guide book,' this 'first and only healthy appraisal'—suitably amended and supplemented—as a text book in our schools. It will be sufficient for the Minister of Education to be absent on his vacation for the priest who acts as deputy to the minister to introduce this book, and we shall be faced with a 'fait accompli.' For I am convinced that the post of deputy to the Minister of Education will always be occupied by a priest. Once our clergy have won their way to a position, they do not let it slip easily from their hands."

At the end of this article. Boi-Zhelinski, startled by his own "radicalism," adds that he is not referring to the present priest who is deputy to the minister, as he has always had the "highest opinion" of that man's "honorable feeling." Boi-Zhelinski does not fail to add that the extreme erotism of the priests has "irrevocably driven away from the confessional many a clean woman"—unconsciously repeating the terminology of the immortal priest Pirozhinski, over whom he has just labored.

The aim of Boi-Zhelinski's article is obvious. It is a danger signal, warning the more sober-minded and modernized sections of the Polish Catholic clergy that unless they wish to drive all "clean people" utterly away from the confessional and all sensible citizens out of the church, by showing up their "cultural program" to them in all its nakedness, the church must rapidly change its line and adapt itself to the requirements of the present political situation. Only then can it play a further role as a reliable bulwark for fascism. Otherwise, if it does not aid fascism, it will on the contrary unwittingly compromise it and weaken its influence over the masses.

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