Workers of the world, unite!

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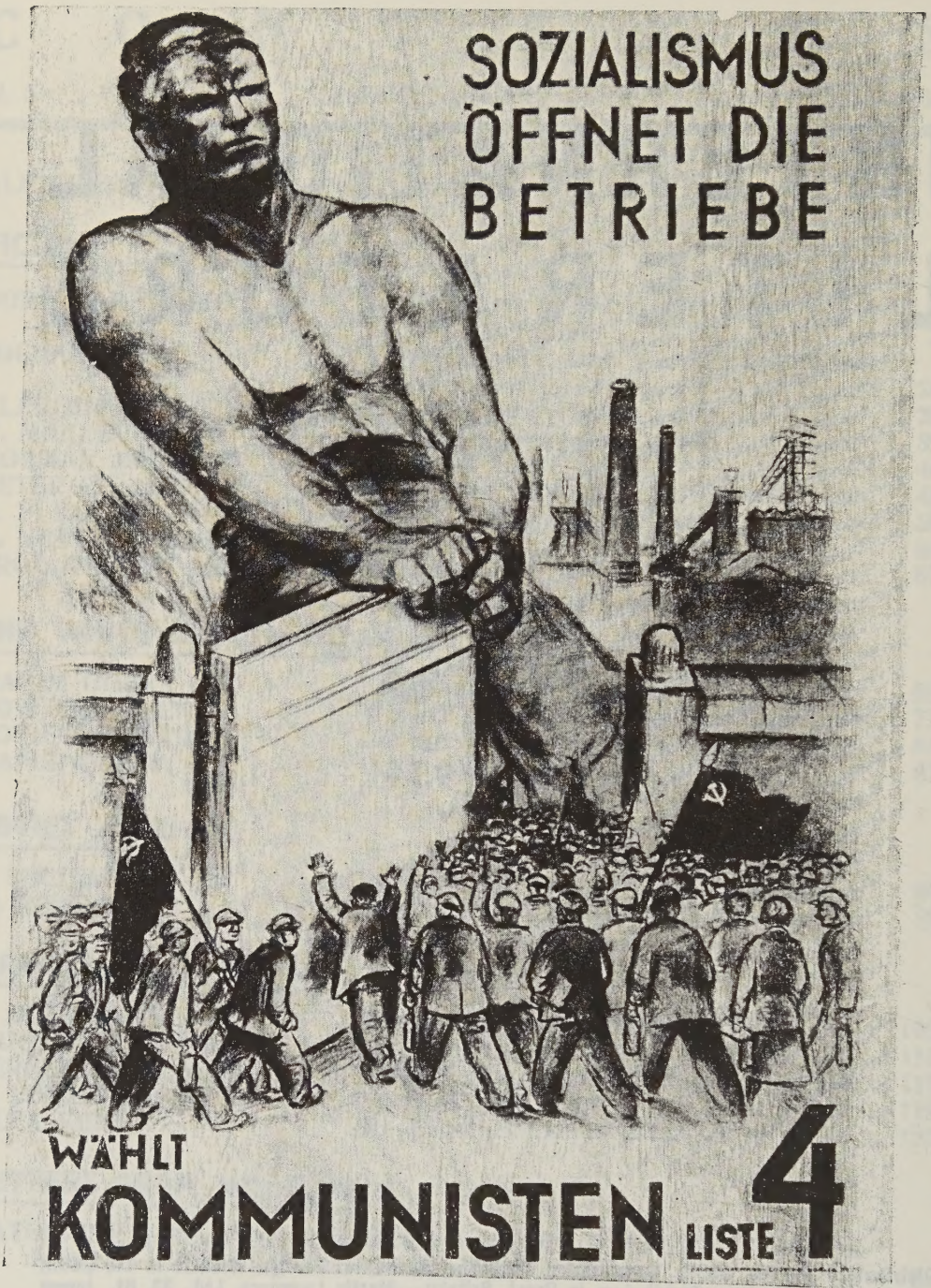


A German Communist Election Campaign poster by Alex Keil, Secretary of the Union of German Revolutionary Artists. Six other posters included in this issue, and used in Germany before the coming of the Hitler fascist regime were included in the exhibition of drawings by this noted artist held in November, 1933 at the Museum of Western Art in Moscow.

Boris Tarasenko

Twenty Days in the Hands of the White Secret Police

A Soviet Writer Relates His Personal Experiences

For two days they left me alone, but on the evening of the third I was brought before the colonel once more.

"Sit down, won't you?" said Piralov, with feigned politeness. "I expect we shall finish our talk today and part as decent people should. Don't you agree?"

Judging by his tone and behavior I gathered that this time I would not get off without a beating.

"Just a moment, while I find the papers referring to your case. Sit down, young man," he said, and went over to an oaken cupboard.

I sat down. The colonel was poking about in the cupboard; I stretched out my hand mechanically for the newspaper lying on the table. Turning over the broad sheet of grey wrapping paper (on which papers were printed at that time) I glanced down the headings. It was the *Don Herald*. The first thing that caught my eye was an article, entitled poetically, "In Northern Fogs." Someone had marked it with red pencil and scribbled "for Vera's album" in the margin. I read it stealthily, literally devouring the words:

"St Petersburg has fallen. Once it seemed that the wonderful magic capital of the north, the Russian city of dreams had come to life again. But the northern winds and whirling snow have returned. The golden spire of the Admiralty is enveloped in fog. The message of the English wireless proved false. It was only a beautiful legend with the power to move the Russian soul to its depths. The Northern Capital is drowning once more in the red northern fog. Confused and contradictory tidings reach us from the north. Cold and distant St. Petersburg is hidden from us by the Veil of the Unknown. And somewhere, not far from it, now reaching, now approaching, the tricolor flag, the hope of the long suffering city, waves proudly. And we are waiting—waiting and hoping passionately for the day when the dry, definite, assured click of the telegraph will bring us the desired tidings, when the long awaited dream will become reality."

Lower down, alongside an order depriving General Mayevsky of his command, I read:

"Under the pressure of the superior forces of the enemy, our troops were forced to leave Kharkov temporarily. All officers stationed in the rear are required to report to their units, in order to purge the free Ukrainian capital of Red filth at one blow. May God grant us His aid in this, the great work we have begun!"

Denikin

Commander in Chief of the Forces in South Russia.

"Interested in our papers, are you?" said Piralov, breaking in upon my reading and seating himself at the table.

A short laugh escaped me.

"What, you don't like them? What exactly don't you like? Oh, by the way, we must get on with your case." He opened a green portfolio. "Yes, I'm listening to you."

"I have nothing to add to what I said three days ago."

"And that's your last-word, is it?"

The colonel gazed into my face for a long time.

"Just think it over. You'll regret it by and by!" he said slowly, as he rose. "I would advise you to behave sensibly."

I shrugged my shoulders.

"Alright then! No use standing on ceremony with you! You've only yourself to blame now. Hey, Banduyev!"

A Chechen guard darted into the room.

"We've got to loosen this fellow's tongue. You can give it to him hot and peppery the first time. See?"

"Yes, sir," and the Chechen's teeth gleamed.

"Lock the door and get a start."

The Caucasian tribesman locked the door, rolled up the sleeves of his tunic, threw off his sheepskin cap, exposing a shaven head, and moved towards me.

The colonel went on smoking and sat down again.

There was perfect silence in the room.

"Now!" came a shout from the table.

The Chechen gave a spring, swung his arm back easily and struck me across the face with all his strength.

The blood spurted out like a fountain.

"Harder!" came the command.

The room swam before my eyes. My head struck the chair and I fell.

"Water!" ordered the colonel.

A bucket appeared.

"Douse him!" said the colonel.

The Chechen dashed icy water over me. I got to my feet with difficulty.

"Well, are you going to answer my questions?" Piralov asked again.

I shook my head, trying to wipe the blood away.

"Banduyev!"

The Chechen grew taut once more.

"Repeat the dose, but a bit stronger!"

The Chechen drew a horse whip out from his belt and a hail of blows fell about me. I could not stand it any longer. I flew at the man in desperation, caught at his mouth and tore his lip.

The Chechen gave a piercing screech. The dry click of a revolver sounded behind me. Clutching at my shattered chin, I fell to the floor unconscious.

Escape

I am lying on a bundle of straw. I have just come to myself. My face is swollen, I cannot speak, my jaws feel as if they were in a vise. There is a ringing in my ears and my body aches unbearably. I feel like vomiting.

"What brutes! To beat a fellow like that!" Old Perunov is hovering about near me. "They've disfigured him so his own mother wouldn't know him."

He scooped some water out of a bucket and began to wash my face gently. The other prisoners crowded round. There was Vaska Belenky who had been an anarchist —he was mad with wrath now. His huge figure shook convulsively with the force of his frightful curses. The others tried to quieten him.

Bortsov came up and lay down by me. His face and hands were covered with bruises. He had been badly beaten that day by the Secret Police.

He leaned over me to rearrange the bandage around my head and as he did so whispered:

"Can you hear me? Some units of our division have taken Kantemirovitz already.

The Whites are in an awful stew—they're retreating way beyond Zverero. Budenny's got to some place just outside Novo-Cherkask. Rostov's getting ready for evacuation—Can you hear me?"

"How did you find out all this?" I asked.

"They took me in to be questioned and I heard the officers talking. And, anyhow, it's easy to see that the swine are at the end of their tether. Piralov himself's in a sweat. Shouldn't wonder if he hasn't got his bag packed and all."

We made up ou minds not to go up for questioning any more.

"Never mind what comes of it!"

About three o'clock in the afternoon there was a clink of spurs and an officer appeared on the threshold.

"Sergeyev!" he called loudly.

Silence.

"Sergeyev!" he shouted still louder.

"What do you want of him?" asked Bortsov angrily.

"He's called up to be questioned."

"He's not going!"

"Yes, he is. We'll make him!"

Boris Tarasenko

"No, he's not going and you won't make him, you swine!"

"No matter what he is, he's not a filthy pimp like you, anyway!" said Belenky, rising.

"What was that you said..... Silence! Ser—gey—ev!" shouted the officer for the third time.

Silence.

"Answer when you're spoken to!" roared the officer now furrious. "Where is he, show me," he said, turning on Belenky.

"Look for him," replied the latter, and then added in an altered tone. "Eh, if I'd only met you a bit earlier, I'd show you how to look for what you never lost!"

The officer paid no attention to this speech but strode further into the cellar, to where the prisoners were standing close together in a group.

"Don't you try and lay a hand on him, you blackguard!" burst out Perunov in a threatening tone, coming towards the officer. Don't go too far with us!"

"Silence! I'll shoot him like a dog!" roared the White officer. "Show me Sergeyev at once, do you hear! Now, then, look sharp about it!" and he turned on the old man.

Perunov suddenly gave a spring and spat full in his face.

The officer gasped and began feverishly to undo the holster of his revolver.

"Aha!" exclaimed Belenky in a meaning tone, and he moved nearer the officer.

The man freed his revolver from its holster at last and raised it on the old man. But at that moment Belenky's hammer-like fist shot out and with a sounding blow he dashed the weapon out of his hand. It rattled hollowly on the cement floor of the cellar, and Belenky went for the dumbfounded officer.

"Get him by the throat! That's right! Stronger!" croaked Belenky. "Oh-oh! You bite, you louse, do you! Take that!" Bortsov was breathless.

The officer beat a tattoo with his boots on the floor but emitted no sound. At length he tore himself free, strove to call out but no sound came. For another minute he struggled in Belenky's strong hands, gasping and spitting. There was foam on his lips. He gave two or three convulsive shudders and then became rigid. The men started to undress him feverishly. Bortsov and Belenky came up to us.

Seconds of suspense passed, Belenky was holding the officer's clothes in his hands. Bortsov held the cap and revolver.

Then Belenky spoke in a thin, quavering voice.

"Listen, boys, we've killed an officer. We've got to do something right now... In a minute or two it'll be too late. I suggest this—let's decoy the Chechen sentries down here, disarm them, change into their clothes and lead all our fellows out under escort, as it were. If it goes off alright—we're saved, if not—we're ready to sell our lives dear —we can't expect any mercy from the Whites, anyhow."

Everybody agreed to this plan.

"Bortsov will put on this uniform," Belenky went on, "and Sergeyev and Petrov will dress in the sentries' clothes. All you lads, escorted by Bortsov and the two sentries in disguise, will leave the cellar and scatter in different directions. And as for you—" here Belenky nodded towards me, "Bortsov and me will take you outside the town or else leave you with some reliable family until you get better. We've got to hurry, though. The game has got to be played to perfection else we're done for. Do you understand me?"

Bortsov hurried into the officer's clothes. Then, after a hasty examination of the revolver, he made straight for the door.

"Get ready, boys," urged Bortsov. "Help! Sentry! Help!" he shouted through the grating in the door.

I did not recognize his voice, it was so full of power and decision. About his powerful figure with the belt drawn tight at the waist, there was an air of determination and daring. And I found myself believing that freedom was really quite near.

The door swung open with a bang and two Chechens rushed in, the whites of their eyes gleaming with excitement.

On the right hand side of the door, with his revolver in his hand, stood Bortsov. I could not help admiring his acting of the part of a white officer at that crucial moment.

"Fetch out that dog, there in the corner!" he ordered, pointing to Sergeyev.

The Chechens started forward with a rattle of their fire-arms. I watched Bortsov. His face was firm and quiet. Only his eyes followed the Chechens closely. As soon as they seized Sergeyev unceremoniously by the arms, Bortsov banged the door to and called out:

"Now, then, at 'em!"

It was all over in a moment. The two Chechens sprawled beside the officer, their eyes starting from their sockets. Sergeyev and Perusov were bsuy undressing and disarming them. The others helped feverishly.

"Well, now, boys," said Belenky, breathing heavily. "We've got three revolvers, three swords, two rifles and four hand grenades. Sergeyev and Petrov—you take the rifles, you'll be the escort. Then Volkov, Galyshev and I," he went on, turning towards two workers, "will take the revolvers and Bortsov will lead us all. The responsibility for the consequences will rest from this moment on with the men who are armed, and will only cease when we're far beyond the gates."

They took me under my arms and led me towards the door.

"Quick march!" Bortsov's order rang out.

We marched in rows of four out into the yard.

Bortsov strode ahead. He swung his arms somehow unnaturally with excitement. His tunic, adorned with the stripes of a lieutenant, was strained across his shoulders, his sword kept getting between his legs and throwing him out of step. Behind us, with naked swords, came Sergeyev and Petrov—the two "Chechens." Our way led through the gate opening on to the busy street. At this gate two soldiers stood like stone statues. A third was standing near the sentry box, scribbling something in his notebook.

It was about five in the evening. The dusk was falling.

As our group approached, the soldiers in the gate drew to attention and crossed bayonets. The one who had been standing by the sentry box closed his notebook, thrust it into the breast pocket of his tunic and, saluting, came up to Bortsov.

"Stand—at ease!" Bortsov ordered the sergeant. The latter dropped his hand from his cap and ran to open the wicket.

The rusty hinges screeched as the gates were flung wide. The sentries stood immovable.

"Please, sign here, sir," and the sergeant held out the passbook.

Bortsov scrawled something with a flourish. The sergeant shut the book without so much as glancing at the signature and moved aside.

"Forward—march!" commanded Bortsov and led us into the street. Just at that moment two Russian officers in British uniforms crossed the street and came towards us. As they caught sight of us they exchanged glances.

"Just a moment, Lieutenant," one of them, evidently a lieutenant-colonel called out hastening his steps.

"Yes sir," said Bortsov, saluting.

"Where are you taking those ragamuffins," the officer inquired, indicating us.

"Up for examination," was the curt reply.

"To where?" the officer persisted, staring at Bortsov.

"Excuse me, gentlemen, but I have no time just now to give you further information as to where and why I am escorting prisoners. I am acting under orders. Excuse me, please."

The officers exchanged significant glances once more.

Bortsov turned to the "escort."

"Forward! Look sharp, there. Straight ahead!"

"Wait a moment, lieutenant. I suggest you follow me with your prisoners. Otherwise there may be some—misunderstanding," ordered the lieutenant-colonel, hastily unfastening the holster of his revolver.

His companion did the same.

"Now we're in a mess!" whispered Perunov, gripping my arm.

The position was certainly a critical one. Everything depended on Bortsov and Belenky, and the way they would behave now. Our whole group began to sidle nearer to the officers.

"Sir, once more I must request you not to interfere with me during the execution of my duties. And what is more, do not dare to raise your voice to me! Go about your business. Otherwise I shall be obliged to disarm you and arrest you. Is that clear?" said Bortsov angrily.

The soldiers at the gate were glancing from Bortsov to the two officers in bewilderment. A little crowd was gathering.

"Move on, there, you're blocking the way! Bloody pimps!" could be heard from the crowd which was obviously not favorable to officers.

"They couldn't devide up the carrion between them—they had to bring it out and make a show of it in the street!" someone else shouted.

"Oh, glory be—they're from the Secret Service," shouted a tousled lad suddenly, and the people fell back at once.

"Drive them inside the gates!" shouted the lieutenant-colonel to the sentries. The soldiers hesitated. They did not know whom to obey now.

Then the sergeant ran up to Bortsov and shouted in a frightened voice:

"Back with you! We'll find out the truth in the yard! Else we'll shoot!"

"Forward, march!" commanded Bortsov, paying no attention whatever to the sergeant. "And you go to the devil, you blackguard!" he flung back at the lieutenant-colonel.

"Halt, you son of a bitch! Drive them back, I order you!" roared the officer.

Belenky turned sharply. His hand slipped into his breast. Drawing out his revolver he fired without stopping to take aim at the lieutenant-colonel. The latter flopped down on the pavement like a sack of flour. Simultaneously a second shot rang out and the worker ahead of me flung up his arms and fell to the ground.

"Make for the side streets, you without arms! And the armed stand clear!" shouted Bortsov, shooting back.

A short volley rang out from the sentry box. Two more of our men fell. The soldiers were firing at us. Our "escort" shouldered their rifles and fired at the gates. Two soldiers fell. Belenky killed the sergeant.

Soldiers ran out of the next street with their bayonets in readiness. Mounted police appeared at the far end of a side street. Most of the prisoners had scattered in different directions. Only six of us remained: Bortsov, Belenky, Petrov, Sergeyev and me, as well as Perunov, who was holding me up. We got out into Sadovaya Street, beating back the soldiers as we went.

A bout of firing commenced. Traffic was held up. Far away at the end of the street I could see how a woman in a bright purple coat flopped down in the road.

In a side street a group of drunken shop keepers huddled together like sheep. A few drunken officers in their vests hung out of the window of a big house and spent round after round of ammunition on us.

From somewhere round a corner came the panic stricken cry:

"The Reds! The Reds have taken the town! Save yourselves as best you can!"

"Ah! ah!" screamed the street.

Pandemonium broke loose. Folks ran at break neck speed hither and thither, some fell, scrambled up and ran on again. It seemed as if they had all taken leave of their senses and lost control over their actions.

At the railway station a motor car filled to overflowing with officers and women flew past. Shots rang out from it and a woman's shriek pierced the air.

No one paid any more attention to us. We mingled with the crowd.

Bortsov, Belenky and Petrov retreated slowly up the street with their revolvers in their hands. Sergeyev and Perunov dragged me along somehow by my arms. One of Bortsov's epaulettes was torn off and flapped in the wind. Glancing back, he coolly sent one bullet after another into the running soldiers and gave them no chance to approach. Belenky clenched his teeth and followed his example.

"Run for it, boys! Leave me," I said at last, feeling that I had no more strength left.

"Shut your gab, will you!" shouted Belenky, rolling his eyes at me in a fury.

A motor truck rattled up out of a side street. It was full of soldiers. They began to stretch in a cordon across the street.

"Clear out, boys! I can't, I've no strength left," I croaked, breathless.

"Turn round by the market!" yelled Belenky, taking no notice of me.

"Wait a bit, pull yourself together, lad! You saw what a state we were in," whispered Bortsov, halting for a moment.

"To you, maybe."

"Rubbish! Lieutenant," he called out to the officer. "I find that we can make things quite decent for him here. What do you think?"

"You're quite right, sir," agreed the officer saluting. "If we put a bed in here, everything would be alright, I think."

There was something familiar, too familiar to me, in the officer's voice. With a great effort for the pain was awful, I raised myself on my elbow.

"Yashka! You! Here!" broke from my lips hoarsely. The lieutenant started back. He glanced at the colonel in bewilderment and then came towards me. He dropped on one knee to look closer into my face.

"Who the devil's this!" he exclaimed. He started and stared and could not tear his eyes away from my face.

"Am I dreaming, or is it really you, Boris?"

"Yes, of course it's me," I said joyfully, forgetting for a moment that it was my enemy who stood before me. "How did you come here, Yashka? Or are you working for the Secret Service?"

The colonel who was no less astonished than the lieutenant, came up now.

"Lieutenant Ivlev, what does this mean? Is he a friend of yours?"

"Will you be so good, sir, as to leave us together for a few minutes. I can assure you it will be for the best."

"Certainly, Lieutenant," said Piralov, obviously delighted about something. "I should not dream of interrupting you," he concluded, and went quickly towards the door.

When we were alone, the lieutenant bent down closer to me and asked softly:

"So it's you who blew up the bridge?" adding in a still lower tone, "Nina's here, in Rostov."

Sitting down beside me on the straw, he suddenly clutched his head in his hands and rocked violently from side to side.

"Oh—oh—oh—! What'll Nina do now when she knows this!" he groaned.

A vision arose before my eyes. My pain grew less. I closed my eyes in utter weariness.

It is early morning in the month of May. The hot sun is rising slowly from behind the pile-drivers.

The mine is still asleep. The usual sound of wheels can be heard no more. Already yesterday the engines were stilled, the incessant rattle of the cars interrupted. A bank of coal rises up, sullen and unwelcoming to the bright morning. Absolute quiet reigns. It is Sunday, the long awaited day of rest.

I run across the street, turn the corner by the mine office ,and descend into a deep ravine. The river runs below. I tear off my clothes, take a little run back and dive with a tremendous splash into the chill water.

"O—o ugh!" I roar, gasping with delight and flinging up a shower of pearly drops.

"Hey, you there! Ugly mug! Shut your great mouth! You'll wake everybody up, curse you!" someone calls out from behind me.

I turn my head and see Yasha Ivlev, my old playmate, standing on the river bank, swishing at the dust with his walking stick. He is in the uniform of a student of the Mining Institute, a green tunic with thick braided tabs on the shoulders. He wears a huge and ugly cap with a stiff peak, and shiny, square-toed patent leather shoes, the latest fashion. His fine black cloth trousers are pressed to a beautiful crease.

"And you call yourself a pal, you dirty dog!" he goes on indignantly. "You promised to call for me and all the rest and never came near me—the filthiest trick!"

"Never mind, old chap, I forgot," I said, hiding my eyes guiltily. "Don't get mad, Yashka. Snap out of it and undress."

"A bit late with your advice, aren't you? A swine, that's what you are, Boris, and always were."

He sits down, however, and starts undressing. And so we splash about in the quiet waters of the muddy stream like two silly young pups. Offences are forgotten already. We dive down repeatedly into the smelly bog, knock our heads together under the water and come up again puffing and blowing cheerfully. We feel as gay and light-hearted as the May morning. I don't want to think of tomorrow—and of going down into the damp mine again and drudging in the dark underground for fourteen hours a day, six days on end.

"Ugh! That's enough for once!" cries Yashka as, blue with cold and puffing hard, he climbs out on the bank. "Come out quick else you'll get a stroke," he calls to me, "and then your girl'll be cut up no end."

A minute later we are lying on the grass, warming ourselves in the sunshine. Through the light morning stillness the rhythmic hum of the steam in the boilers is borne to our ears.

Yashka sits up suddenly. From his coat pocket he takes a bottle of brandy, from another a big yellow lemon, powdered sugar, a pretty wine-glass and a packet of thinly cut ham. Laying it all out carefully on the soft grass, he points to the bottle with a sly smile and says:

"Pinched it from my folks yesterday. As pure as the tears of an innocent maiden. Sixty degrees."

"Aren't you ashamed to steal brandy that's kept for the use of the hospital?" I ask, indignantly.

"Don't worry, there are three hundred bottles more of it yet, or I know nothing about arithmetic," returns Yashka calmly. "It's not my fault that the drink shops have been shut for the last two years. I have to drink something, haven't I?"

"You could chuck drinking altogether," I advise him.

"Go to the devil!" he shouts angrily. "I'm sick of listening to your unctuous sermons. Enough to make anyone vomit! Well, anyhow, that's enough on that subject else I'll be getting into a bad humor. And when I'm in a bad humor I'm no better than a log of wood. Let's start on this stuff."

Yashka and I were the same age. We had been pals since we were quite little. From the time we were eight until we were eleven we went to school together. In our spare moments we read Sherlock Holmes together, fought bitter fueds with other boys and conducted wild raids on the melon patches of the farmers living near the mine. School had no attraction for us. The walls seemed to oppress us. Scores of times we were expelled for laziness and fighting, but each time we were taken back at the request of Yashka's father, the director of the mine. Everything comes to an end, however, and the end came eventually to our "schooling." Once we gave a boy a frightful beating. He happened to be the son of the chief engineer, a wealthy man who held shares in twenty mines in the Don coalfields. After this we were, to our great joy, excluded once and for all time from the local seat of learning. Yashka was sent away to the High School in Rostov, and since I was a working man's son, further schooling was thought to be unnecessary for me.

The years went by. Yashka graduated from his High School and was sent to the Mining Institute, I remained in the mines. During the ten years of my work in that abyss I had changed my not very complicated trades several times. For two years running I had been a driver, rushing through the dark corridors and startling the gloomy

vaults with my shrill whistle. For a long time I had drawn sleds of coal from distant cuttings, and cleared the weighty lumps of rock from the broad coal-seams.

Thus year after year wore on. Yashka was aiming at being an engineer, ——at being a hewer, at the very most.

On that May morning of which I was dreaming, we were soon to become relatives. Yashka's elder sister, Nina, a doctor in the Mine Hospital was to be my wife in a very few days' time. I was glad—and sorry. On the one hand, the fact that this well-educated, strong-willed girl showed a preference for me was flattering, but on the other hand, the prospect of a family life terrified me. Nina was twenty-four. Her great black eyes always gave me a little tremor. Nina had disregarded the arguments and protests of her people and chosen me as her companion for life. More than once I asked myself the question—what was it that attracted her to me, a man so far below her in every respect, but I could find no answer.

Yashka was the only person who sympathized with me, and he often said:

"Although she's my own sister—I don't advise you to marry her. She's a very domineering woman, mark my words. She'll get you under her thumb from the first day. Look out before it's too late."

I was of the same opinion as Yashka, but it was too late now to retreat. There was nothing to do but to hold my tongue.

That morning Yashka sat munching bread while his feet, clad in patent leather shoes, glittered in the sun. He was grumbling mournfully:

"I'll be left on my own very soon. You'll have turned into a regular old woman in about a week's time, Boris."

"Well, what about it?" I said, giving way to his mood. "Marriage needn't spoil our friendship."

"You don't know your intended, that's the trouble. A woman like that won't let you budge an inch from her apron strings. I know my sister well," Yashka went on in a depressed voice, chewing loudly all the time.

All of a sudden he stopped munching and seized me by the arm excitedly.

"Listen, Boris. There is a way out. Let's join the army and kill two birds with one stone. You'll get rid of your bride and I'll get into a school for officers!"

I shook my head.

"Don't you want to? Fool! If you can't even understand what's for your own profit, then go to the devil! And I'm going to join up! My plan's plain and simple. Just to convince you I'll explain it. First of all—training school. Without elementary knowledge you can't be an officer. Next—I finish school as a subaltern with one star on a silver epaulette. To continue—I go on active service. I am promoted to be commander of a squadron."

"A bit early yet, isn't it?" I asked doubtfully.

"Don't interrupt. I'm commanding a squadron. The Divisional Command gives me a secret commission to execute. Ahem!"—he smacked his lips. "With two hundred braves I dash into the enemy's rear, destroy their base, and their main strategic points, take thousands of prisoners and trophies and return. Good. For this I am decorated and promoted to the rank of captain. Next. The war goes on. In six months' time I am a colonel. My stars have gone and in their place stripes have appeared. Just at that time the enemy is developing a successful attack, say, on our left flank. I am given special instructions, this time by the Commander-in-Chief of the front. I do the job brilliantly. The Germans run like the devil, there's a panic and all the rest of it. Our regiment occupies Berlin. My stripes fly away by this time and the neat little zigzags so dear to my heart make their appearance, plus a gold mounted revolver. And now

that I'm promoted to be a general, you can be quite sure of becoming my A.D.C. and a colonel."

I was flattered by my pal's kind thought and thanked him for troubling about me. Yashka's imagination was leaping all obstacles. He hurried on breathless with excitement:

"But now the war is over. Germany and Austria no longer exist. They've been wiped off the face of the earth. Only a vast territory—Russia, exists. And I am not forgotten. By an Imperial order I am made governor-general of Petrograd. A huge and splendid palace on the Nevsky Prospect is placed at my disposal—there are fire-work displays, balls, and the most beautiful women of the capital visit me. About five years pass—I become personal adviser to His Imperial Majesty. I wear a uniform, heavy with gold braid and orders all over my breast. The question of marriage arises. The Tsar has three daughters. They are not of age just yet, it is true, but by that time they will be ripe for marriage. One of them,—say, Olga Nikolayevna, is passionately in love with me. The Tsar is delighted, the Tsarina even more so. Everything is arranged, I am to marry Olga—after that—a splendid career and, who knows, maybe—"

"The throne!" prompted a voice behind us, followed by a burst of hearty laughter.

We jumped up in a fright. Nina stood before us, dressed in a light costume, with a pink parasol in her hand.

"You little devil!" cried Yashka. "There's no peace with you. Following me about everywhere, shameless hussy!"

"Go on, Yashka, do!" laughed Nina. "There was such a little distance left between you and the throne. Go on, just a wee bit further—why, it only remained for you to to put out your hand and you'd be Tsar of All Russia!"

I have no idea how our conversation would have ended, had it not been that our attention was caught at that moment by an unexpected sight. Along the road leading from the town to the head office of the mine galloped Police Inspector Cheresedelnikov, and behind him five constables on miserable wornout hacks.

"Oho, I'd like to know where those birds are off to!" said Yashka thoughtfully, following the riders with his glance. "Surely it's not the Tsar who's gone and died of something or the Tsarina, God bless her. I think I'll go and find out, all the same. Visitors of that kind don't drop round here for nothing," he concluded, and sticking his cap jauntily on the side of his head, he made for the office.

I felt a little spasm of anxiety. My heart contracted with a presentiment of misfortune.

"Let's go along as well" I said to my fiance. "Yashka's right, visitors like these don't come here for nothing. Something's happened! Let's go and see, Nina!" and I led the girl away with me.

As we climbed the hill to the settlement, Yashka came running back to meet us, waving his cap joyously. I hardly recognized him. His features were spread in a delighted smile. He ran close up to me and kissed and hugged me as if his emotions were too much for him.

"Congratulate me, I'm a sub-lieutenant!"

"What's the matter, Yashka?" Nina asked in a fright.

"Mobilization has started, Sis. They're calling up the boys of our year. Damn it, I'm so happy! O, Lord, isn't it grand! Titidly—ti—ti," and he danced about in the road.

Nina went pale.

"It can't be true!" she cried and burst out crying.

"That's the end!" I seemed to hear the words in my head. "That'll put an end to my wedding." I tore breathlessly at my collar and ran off at full speed to the office.

Six months later Yashka's dreams came true. He graduated from Pavlovsk Military School and got appointed A.D.C. somewhere at the base. I was sent to the front as a private. Our ways led apart.

It was impossible to remain silent any longer. I had really no questions I wanted to ask him, but still I repeated:

"So you are in the Secret Service?"

Ivlev raised his head at that and stared into a far corner of the cellar. Suddenly he seized me by the arm and whispered in great agitation:

"Listen, Boris. It all depends on you now, my career, I mean. I know now that it was you who blew up the bridge. Everybody's talking about it. And you've only got to tell me why you did it and I'll be promoted to be lieutenant-colonel."

"Yashka!" I raised myself a little. "You remember that morning down by the river, before we were called up, and our talk with your sister? Nina was damned right in her description of you then. She spoke the truth, Yashka. And I only see it now, three years later—how true it was. You're a low, mean little rotter! What's more, you're a downright blackguard! You actually want to make your career out of my death? There's not a hope of it, Lieutenant Ivlev. You'll squeeze nothing out of me! I've nothing in common with gold epaulettes, either—so you can clear out!"

At that Ivlev jumped up. Thrusting his notebook back into his wallet, he flung back at me with hatred:

"Don't forget that you're not in the mine now! You've sold yourself to the Jews, have you? Well, we'll see what you will say in a few days' time. Bear in mind your case is in my hands now, and I don't allow anyone who insults me to go unpunished, see?—" and he went quickly towards the door.

It smashed behind him.

Time dragged on. Left as I was without any attention or care, I fell into a delirium. My wounds ached terribly and since there were no bandages and they received no cleansing ,there was a danger of gangrene. The idea that blood poisoning was inevitable almost drove me out of my mind.

Five days I lay flat on the cold cement floor unable to stir. My wounds were bound up with dirty rags caked with dried blood. The slightest movement caused me unbearable pain, and the blood flowed afresh and soaked the bandages. The last straw was that painful sores appeared on my back from lying on the floor.

My strength was ebbing away every day. I could not eat, although some dry bitter bread was brought to me twice daily. I was ready to follow my dead comrades and began to look upon death as a delivery.

On the evening of—I forget what day—a group of drunken officers and women burst into the cellar. In front of them, his cap on the back of his head, marched Ivlev.

He stumbled on the bottom step and fell full length on the floor. Several of the others rushed to help him up.

Ivlev gave a vacant look all around the cellar and then scrambled to his feet and came towards me, swaying. He touched my arm, swollen and lifeless, with the toe of his boot, hiccoughed and suddenly began to recite:

Oh friend, oh brother mine!
What cruel fate, indeed, is thine,
Who then will come to thee,
And wash thy bloody wounds?
Like a maimed hound—

The lieutenant was babbling some nonsense. "Shut up, for goodness' sake," cried one of the women.

"Get away, woman, else I'll disfigure you for life!" came the reply.

"Ivlev, stop the whining. He's not dead yet, you've started the prayers for the dead too soon," drawled an officer with long moustaches. "Better let us treat your commissar to a drink! Give him a drink to remember us by."

Oy, oy, commissar,
Trum, trum, trum.
He's a fine fellow,
Trum, trum, trum—

sang one of the women.

"Stop!" cried Ivlev, with a wave of his hand. "Gentlemen, who's got the brandy?"

"Here it is!" replied a tall Caucasian, as straight and slim as a poplar, dressed in a crimson coat with white trimmings.

"Open it, my son. Well, gentlemen, let's drink to the health of the disfigured remains of this made-to-the -limits -of-bravery-commissar!" said the lieutenant, swaying and pointing to me. The whole party moved towards me in a body.

"Pass the vessel with the reviving beverage to our brother-in-Satan!" said Ivlev to the officer in the Caucasian uniform.

"Delighted, delighted!" replied the Caucasian, pushing the cork inside the bottle with his long forefinger. "Here you are, have a drink," and he held out the bottle to me.

I shook my head.

"What, you don't want to drink with us?" the lieutenant grew purple. "Drink it immediately, swine!"

"I won't drink!" I said turning away.

"Now, then, don't you try any of your tricks with me! Malakvidge, pour the holy beverage down the beast's gullet!"

"Certainly, certainly, with the greatest pleasure," the Caucasian readily agreed.

I clenched my teeth.

"Drink, mule," shouted the Caucasian, thrusting the bottle into my mouth. "Drink, I say!" and he tipped the bottle up.

The burning liquid flowed into my starved stomach. My inside seemed aflame, my head spun, and the company swam before my eyes.

"Let's toss the commissar!" shouted the officer with the long moustaches. "Here, gentlemen, catch hold of the sacred person of the Bolshevik! Don't be shy, take a good hold of him!"

A dozen or so of strong hands seized me and began to toss me up to the ceiling.

A pain like a sword shot through my body. The bandages had worked loose, and blood stained the dirty rags afresh. I could not cry out; the pain robbed me of all power to utter a sound.

Ivlev acted as conductor beating time with the bottle and wailed:

Bye-bye, baby!
Sleep my little one, sleep—
Little one, sweet one
Sleep, baby, sleep!

"One, two, three, ha! ha!" echoed through the cellar. At last they laid me on the floor, while the Caucasian danced around me with bottles in his hands. Suddenly he halted, rolled his eyes frightfully and bawled:

"Let's shoot the commissar! Shoot him! I want to shoot him, gentlemen!" and his hand went to his Colt.

They pushed him aside.

"Toss him again! Toss the commissar!" they shouted in chorus.

"I'm going to shoot him! Shoot!" the Caucasian would not be put off. He rushed at me with, "Shoot, you asses!"

A shot rang out hollowly. The bullet knocked Ivlev's cap from his head and ricochetted along the wall.

They disarmed the Caucasian.

"Oh, the swine! The cruel brutes! What a set of blackguards!" screamed a small woman hysterically, running up to me. "Have you killed him? Leave him alone!" and she gave Ivlev a sounding slap on the cheek.

"Throw this hussy out!" snarled Ivlev, "Chuck her out at once else I won't answer for myself!" and he rushed at the woman.

"Now who're you picking a quarrel with?" some of the officers said and held him back. "Better read the prayers for the dead over the Bolshevik instead!"

"Alright," he agreed ,soothed at once. "I'll start and you join in, gentlemen. Now, ready—I'm beginning," and he began in a nasal drawl:

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace—"

Somewhere behind me a woman sobbed. The officers picked me up once more and threw me to the ceiling. Then they stepped back suddenly and I dropped to the floor. I heard something slit in my back and then darkness closed over me.

The "Doctor"

Two days later three smartly dressed men were led into the cellar under a strong escort.

When the door of the cellar had closed behind them, they looked around the place bewilderingly for a long time. Coming to the conclusion at last, however, that every part of it was equally dirty, the new prisoners crowded into the corner nearest the door.

They scraped and cleaned the floor there for quite a while. At length they squatted down and all three began to talk at once, interrupting each other.

They paid no attention, to me whatever. I listened to their conversation.

"Now you see what a nasty turn things have taken all on account of that blackguard. I had to see Anton Ivanovich tomorrow and that little shrimp muddled all my cards. Why, we offered the worm a hundred thousand rubles, and he actually wouldn't take it—turned out to be one of these 'honest' folk!—" a tall heavy man was saying indignantly. "I tried all ways, but it was no use. Then I went to that woman, you know her, Dolinskaya, from the cabaret, and even she couldn't make any headway with him although—" the rest of the conversation was continued in a whisper.

"They're hand in glove, of course. They want to get the highest penny. I know his father, the engineer Ivlev, very well, we were what you might call friends. But the son is a good deal too flighty for his years. What bothers me, gentlemen, is that I've gone and dragged you into this, too."

"Now don't you go worrying about that, Markel Ivanovich!" said another soothingly. "This'll all be cleared up tomorrow, and the lieutenant is sure to apologize. It was simply that he hadn't been warned."

I concluded from this that Ivlev was by no means unimportant in the Secret Service. Now I understood why it was that he had been permitted to bring his party of friends down to the cellar.

"Why the devil should this happen, anyhow?" the first man began again. "I spoke to Lukomsky yesterday and we came to terms about a big supply of boots and breeches for a special division. Everything went smoothly. The deposit was paid in time and now, look at this, if you please," and they took to whispering once more.

"It seems to me that there's something besides boots behind all this. It would be silly to think that the lieutenant gave the order for our arrest without having received some word from headquarters. I should say that the Agarev affair is mixed up with this. What else can you make of our arrest?" asked a third voice.

From the rest of their conversation I gathered that they were war profiteers in Rostov, purveyors to Denikin's Army. They were convinced that their presence in the cellar was due to a mistake, which would be cleared up on the morrow, as soon as General Lukomsky arrived from Novocherkask.

One of them, a short elderly man with a big paunch was much more upset than the rest. He kept jumping up every minute, and threatening to show someone or other what was what.

"This is—what the devil is this, anyway,—a downright shame! To come and drag respectable people out of their beds, almost without giving them a moment to collect their wits, to put them into a sinking cellar—and all at the whim of a young puppy like that. What can my family be thinking now, I wonder? Such a disgrace, it'll be all over the town. That I should be arrested by the Secret Police! That I should be taken for a Bolshevik! How do you like that, sir! Oh, it's terrible," and the fat man clutched at his head.

I could not understand, no matter how I tried, what they had been arrested for.

"I say," I called out to them, "have you got a clean rag about you?"

The conversation was broken off at once.

"What do you want it for?" asked the fat man.

"Come over here, and you'll soon see," I replied. The fat man rose and came over to me timidly.

"Ugh, what a stink, my God! Where did you get knocked about like that, my lad?" he said, stepping back in disgust.

"Up there, by the folk that own this prison."

"What savage brutes they must be! God, to think they'd maim a fellow like that! Just look at him!" he said to the others.

They came up to me.

"It's a doctor that's needed here, a doctor and nobody else," the fat man began excitedly. "We're not living in the Middle Ages I hope. We're civilized people," and his voice rose to a thin shriek.

I could not hide my scorn of him.

"Listen, what I need is a bandage, not a lecture on the Middle Ages."

"Yes, you're right. You need bandages, at once. Otherwise you'll rot away alive I'll call a doctor at once," fussed the fat man hopping about from one foot to the other.

"A doctor—for a Secret Service prisoner! Are you joking, man!" I shouted indignantly. "Doctors aren't allowed here at all. The Secret Service doesn't ill treat its prisoners to doctor them up again.

"No, no, we can't allow this barbarity! You can shoot a man outright, that's another question, but to leave him in a state like that—it's downright savagery. There'll be a doctor here in a few minutes!" he concluded, dashing to the door.

I closed my eyes, realizing that there was no hope of any assistance from them.

"Hey, there! you swine! Come here!" the fat man shouted through the grating, beating at the iron bound door with his fat puffy hands. It was comical to see him.

"Hey there!"

The little window in the door opened and the sentry's nose could be seen.

"What are you bawling about there? Why don't you sit quiet?" demanded the sentry from behind the door.

"Send for a doctor, you pigs! We must have a doctor at once!" the fat man gasped excitedly.

"Alright, that'll do! Don't shout! I'll ask," replied the sentry.

The window was shut down.

"You'll see, there'll be a doctor here in no time," the fat man said to me as he came down the steps with a satisfied expression.

And sure enough, a doctor came, but what a doctor!

Eleven years have passed since that day and many more will pass, but I am afraid I can not remember that doctor without a shudder.

I had just dozed off when suddenly the clink of spurs was heard. The key screeched in the lock and about a dozen officers entered, accompanied by a civilian with a pocket lamp in his hand. Ivlev was with them.

A tall officer wearing cavalry uniform with the epaulettes of a lieutenant-colonel and the Cross of St. George, went up to the profiteers.

"Bah, what a stink here!" he said with a grimace. "This hole should be ventilated. I asked you to do it, lieutenant," and he turned to Ivlev.

"Yes, sir!" said the latter, saluting.

Lieutenant-colonel Kargaltsev was the acting chief of the Intelligence Service. He was the head of the secret department and dealt only with political prisoners of the greatest importance. Kargaltsev was formerly an officer of the gendarmes. It was he who had shot the members of the Temernitzky Committee in November, 1917. His name was, if anything, too well known to the Don workers. He was not one of those who, like Piralov, hid their hatred of political enemies; he took every opportunity of showing it.

When he appeared now, the profiteers rose and stood at attention.

I hardly recognized the fat man: he seemed to have shrunk so. What had become of his righteous indignation and his bold remarks about the Secret Service? His face was fixed in a servile, submissive smile. He looked at the officer in embarrassment and rubbed his hands as if they itched violently.

"Gentlemen," said Kargaltsev to the profiteers, "you have been detained owing to a misunderstanding. I am extremely sorry for what has happened. You are now at liberty, gentlemen."

At that moment the civilian came up to him.

"Who called for a doctor?" he asked.

The fat man glanced eagerly into the eyes of the lieutenant-colonel and said in an apologetic tone:

"There's a wounded man lying over there in that corner—he seems in need of medical assistance—he's in a bad state, apparently—Couldn't he have some assistance or other, Colonel?" he raised Kargaltsev's rank, as if by mistake.

The lieutenant-colonel turned to me.

"I know your case. It's rather interesting. We might really transfer you to the hospital but we have no guarantee that you won't try and run away from there as you did a week ago."

"I couldn't possibly escape in the state I'm in at present," I answered.

Then the doctor came up. He glanced with disgust at the dirty, blood soaked rags, cut them with his pen-knife and ripped them off as roughly as he could.

The pain was hellish.

"Gently, doctor, please!" I moaned through my clenched teeth.

"Lie quiet," growled the doctor, going on with his work. "Else I'll give it up."

I kept quiet.

"Give me a light over here, gentlemen," he requested.

Ivlev came forward with his lamp.

I hardly knew him again.

His hands trembled, his face was green, his eyes dim and vacant. He was evidently suffering from the after effects of a drinking bout.

The doctor opened his bag, took out lint, alcohol and cotton-wool, and began to dress my wounds. In wiping away the caked blood with a piece of cotton wool soaked in alcohol, he purposely let the alcohol touch the open wound.

I screamed aloud. My chest seemed on fire. Everything went dark and the ground began to float away before my eyes.

I had never imagined that a doctor could torture anyone. I was firmly convinced that class interests did not concern a doctor, that it was his duty to ease pain. Now, while this horse doctor was ripping the bandages from the living flesh and dropping alcohol into open wounds my faith in the qualities of the doctor as a healer vanished.

His hands were red with my blood. The dressings had been put on so carelessly they were stained already.

I grew feverish again.

The doctor rose.

"My work is done, lieutenant-colonel, permit me to leave."

"I shall not keep you any longer," said Kargaltsev.

The doctor bowed to him and went out. The Lieutenant-colonel turned to me then and said:

"Until you tell us why you blew the bridge up, you shall lie here without any attendance and rot like carrion. There are two alternatives—either you confess all, or I'll make a wreck of you. Choose either. This is my last word. If you are sensible and tell us the whole truth, we shall send you to one of the best hospitals in the town and as soon as you're in a fit state to walk, we'll let you go wherever you like."

I ground my teeth and shouted: "Don't talk nonsense! After my confession you'll throw me on the rubbish heap, where you sent my friends already."

"Oh, as you like then," he chuckled. "Well, let's go, gentlemen."

He thrust his hands deep in his pockets and went towards the door followed by the others. The "purveyors" left as well. Silence reigned in the cellar once more.

Abrasha Gershenson

Three more days passed by. I got worse and worse. I had lost a great quantity of blood the last few days and the Secret Service doctor's dressings were killing me. He came every day, accompanied by the commandant and two Chechens. All my requests to cease these dressings were in vain. I felt that the doctor was robbing me of my last scrap of strength.

One day I was awakened by a loud noise. A party of prisoners was being led in.

There were two prominent revolutionaries amongst them. They heard my delirious mutterings from where I lay in the corner, and hastened to my assistance. They made things hum. They tore up a clean shirt into strips, carefully and firmly bandaged my wounds and washed my face and hands. Two coats and a jacket were made into a bed for me.

That night I slept quietly for the first time in fifteen days.

"Well, how do you feel now, Comrade?" asked one of the prisoners, bending over me, when I opened my eyes at length. It was Abrasha Gershenson, a tall, black-eyed fellow of about twenty-eight.

I knew already that he was one of the members of the Communist Party working in the secret organization in Rostov.

Instead of replying I gripped his hand hard.

"We've been looking after you since we came," he said, smiling. "Are you from the Red Army?"

I nodded.

"We guessed as much. You kept muttering about blowing up some bridge or other leading some company."

The others came up to listen.

I told them all I had gone through at the hands of the Secret Police.

"We heard about your escape, but we couldn't help you," said Gershenson.

"And what a commotion you raised in our organization," said his comrade, Vassili by name. "We were expecting house to house searches and arrests all over the town. You did damned well, though, you lads! The Secret Police won't forget you in a hurry!"

Someone stuck a cigarette in my mouth. I drew at it greedily. It made my head swim pleasantly.

"Now you've got to get well, Comrade! That horse doctor probably won't come here any more and if he does we'll finish the swine off!" my comrades said to comfort me.

I cheered up. The new prisoners brought with them a spirit of courage and light-heartedness. They would hold friendly arguments with each other all day long. They paid no attention whatever to the sentries' shouts. I slept quietly through their loud talk, conscious that I was alone no longer.

In the evening a shout awakened me. I opened my eyes.

An officer, the commandant of the Secret Police, stood in the doorway. Behind him I caught sight of the cowardly figure of my old acquaintance, the doctor.

"Don't dare come near him!" Abrasha shouted. "We're warning you, we shall defend him!"

The prisoners quickly surrounded the newcomers.

The doctor remained hiding behind the commandant's back. The officer looked around in bewilderment.

"Now, look here, that's no way to behave! This is mutiny and you won't get very nice treatment for that."

"Clear out! Don't dare to touch him! We shan't allow it," cried the prisoners.

The commandant turned on his heel and left; the doctor crept after him.

"Now, you can look out for squalls!" Vassili warned us when the door was closed.

He was not mistaken.

Twenty minutes later an entire punitive expedition burst in. At the head of it came Kargaltsev, obviously extremely irritated, with a revolver in his hand.

He marched straight up to the group of prisoners.

"Who has dared to hinder the doctor in the execution of his duties?" he demanded.

"A hangman's duties, you mean! You should be ashamed of yourself, Kargaltsev," cried Gershenson in a challenging tone, stepping forward.

The officer looked him up and down with contempt.

"I'll talk to you later," he said.

"I don't want to hear any talk at all from a hangman, especially a gendarme like you!" cried Abrasha.

"Unfortunately for you, you're going to have an intimate conversation with me quite soon," said Kargaltsev with a grimace.

"We'll see about that! I'm afraid we aren't going to have that conversation after all. And now clear out of here!" shouted Abrasha.

A heavy blow sent him staggering to one side.

"Doctor!" roared the lieutenant-colonel, "Do your duty!"

The soldiers stepped back to let the doctor pass.

"Don't you dare, you swine!" shouted Abrasha, jumping up from the floor.

The doctor took no notice but came up to me. Just as he was bending over me, one of the prisoners standing near me, a dock laborer called Mikheyev, gave him a sounding whack over the ear.

The doctor bounced back like a ball towards Kargaltsev's feet.

"Thrash them! Knock hell out of them!" snarled the lieutenant-colonel.

"Don't give in, boys! Go for these butchers!" Abrasha urged.

Pandemonium arose in the cellar. The soldiers descended on the prisoners like a hurricane. Horsewhips and ramrods whistled through the air.

A little to one side of the conflict Mikheyev and Kargaltsev were hugging each each other in an iron grip; they fell to the floor, wrestling desperately. They beat each other mercilessly, tore the clothes from each other's backs, dug their nails deep into each other's faces. Now Mikheyev freed his right hand and struck Kargaltsev on the chin. Something cracked. The officer's face and chest ran with blood. The commandant rushed to his assistance. A shot rang out and Mikheyev, with a sudden twist of his head, dropped down on his side.

The "punitive expedition" had won the game.

Kargaltsev got to his feet. As stubborn as ever, he gave orders, wiping the blood from his face as he did so:

"Doctor, attend to the patient! And quick about it, too!"

The doctor tore off my old bandages with shaking fingers and dressed the wounds without washing them.

"Butchers, swine, mad dogs!" shouted Abrasha hysterically.

"How long are you going to yowl there, you damned Jew!" and Kargaltsev advanced towards him threateningly. "Hold your tongue at once!"

"I'll shout till my last breath—I'll shout that you're wild beasts in uniform, you who call yourselves the saviours' of Russia! You think you can stop the course of history by cowardly attacks and tortures! That you'll never do! You're digging your own grave. Just wait a bit the workers will make you pay for all this!"

"You think you can do all that, dog!" the lieutenant-colonel sneered, trying to grin with his swollen face.

"Millions, hundreds of millions, will do it," retorted Abrasha hotly.

"Captain Runitch, come over here a minute!" Kargaltsev called out to the commandant.

The officer did as he was told.

"Stand there behind this dirty Jew."

The commandant took up his position behind Abrasha.

"We've got to knock all that Israelitish nonsense out of this gentleman's head! Do what I do! Let's play ball!" Kargaltsev said and struck Abrasha across the face.

Gershenson fell back, but at that moment the commandant's fist shot out behind him. The blood spurted from Abrasha's head and mouth. The head with its black curls was tossed from one to another by a regular hail of blows. The soldiers and the doctor looked quietly on at the game.

"That's enough now, Captain. You can bear it in mind for the future. It'll serve as an example to you how to act in similar cases," remarked Kargaltsev as he wiped his hands on his handkerchief.

Abrasha rose to his feet with a great effort.

"Wait a bit, though, you butchers, Inquisitors! The working class will show you a game or two very soon. The time will come! You'll see!" he croaked.

Kargaltsev shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, see you again!" he said, going out.

The others trailed after him, carrying the dead body of Mikheyev. A chorus of voices singing the *International* followed them.

A few days passed. No one visited us. The Secret Police had evidently decided to leave us alone after the bath of blood they had treated us to. The door was only opened for a minute or two every morning when a bucket of dirty water and a loaf of black bread was brought in by two men who put it all down on the floor and went out in silence.

During the last few days I had become intimate with Abrasha Gershenson. He put new life into me.

He spent almost all his time with me, changing my bandages, telling me funny stories, reciting poems from the classics, which he knew by heart.

I tried to drive away the thought that this lively, clever fellow must soon become a lifeless corpse, but the idea kept returning. Many of my comrades had been led away, and none of them remained alive. The same fate awaited the rest.

He had made up his mind about his fate and endeavored not to think of the morrow. One night, however, when I was feeling very bad, he said as he laid his hand on my burning forehead:

"It's not death I'm afraid of. What I'm worried about is how my wife and my mother will bear it—and the children. It would have been better if I'd been alone in the world."

"Stop thinking about your family," I said.

We did not speak for a moment.

"The pity of it is, the Secret Police have destroyed so many valuable lives that the Revolution was in need of," he went on. "The terror is growing stronger and stronger every day, and the White butchers have grown insolent to the last degree. But believe me, there'll be an end of them soon: the Red Army is not far off now. The workers are organizing and before a month is out the red flag of the Soviets will be waving over Rostov. We may die, but the Revolution, for which the finest representatives of the working class died on the gallows, rotted in prisons and in exile, will arise triumphant over our dead bodies.—Oh, if I could only live awhile—just long enough to take part in the destruction of these bandits!"

I kept silence listening to his words.

Execution

Next morning I was carried into the office of the Secret Police and laid on the floor by the desk at which Colonel Piralov was sitting. There were a good many officers in the room. Spots danced before my eyes and the room swayed. I blinked in the strong morning light and raised my eyes with an effort to look at the colonel. He motioned to the Chechen guards to leave the room.

Lieutenant Ivlev rose and turned the key in the door.

Piralov left the table, took a chair and sat down by me.

He gazed at me a long time with his eyes screwed up and when I turned my head, spoke.

"I am going to question you today for the last time. Either you tell the whole truth about the blowing up of the bridge—in which case you will get good food and the best medical attention, or you will be shot today."

He was silent a moment and then went on: "We're sick of bothering about you. You are free to choose, of course. Common sense should tell you which to choose—death or freedom. I'm not going to read you any more lectures, I'm not a professor of philosophy. Don't blame anyone for the state you're in: you're responsible for it yourself. I gave you the chance at the very outset of our acquaintance to avoid physical methods of coercion. I'm speaking to you as a friend and for the last time: you'd better not resist us any longer, you unfortunate fellow."

I turned away. I was indifferent to everything. My only desire was that the end would come as soon as possible.

"The logic of war has taught people from the earliest times not to spare their enemies, particularly such enemies of Russia as you are," continued Piralov, "but we are trying to make allowances for your youth, and your utter foolishness. You blew up the bridge, and it would be silly to think that you did this on your own initiative. I repeat the initiative came from your headquarters. I advise you, young man, not to persist in the line you've taken or else—you will have to pay for your stupidity with your life."

Kargaltsev came up now. Thrusting his hands into the pockets of his wide breeches, he leaned a little towards me.

"I can't understand why you persist! If there was any purpose in it—then it would be another question. But to keep silence just out of sheer obstinacy! Besides, the Bolsheviks, it seems, haven't long to live now. Look here," he said, going up to the map. "Voronezh was taken a week ago by our troops. Your famous Budenny was court-martialled and shot at Grafskaya Station. His troops have been cut to pieces, except those who were taken prisoners or ran away. The Bolsheviks are running helter-skelter in the direction of Griazy and before the week is out we'll have taken Moscow—the cradle of Jewish propaganda, the city that the agents of Lenin and Company talked so much about to you."

"That's cheap talk! It doesn't convince anybody. Think of a better one!"

"So you don't believe me," said Kargaltsev, pretending to be surprised.

"Of course not. I know better. Nine days ago the same Budenny that you've been in such a hurry to shoot, took the Zhverevo Railway Station and is now nearing Novocherkask."

"How do you know all these details?" asked Piralov quickly. "It's all lies, of course. Nonsense, every bit of it!"

I laughed.

"Maybe you're in touch with a secret Bolshevist organization, since you have such detailed information about the front?" asked Kargaltsev, frowning.

"Why the secret organization? Your own soldiers are talking about it!" I replied.

"Well, what interests us at the moment is: are you going to tell us about the bridge or not?" Kargaltsev asked gruffly.

"I've already said all I have to say."

"That's your last word?"

"Yes."

"Alright, then. You will be shot today," said Piralov, in a tone of pretended regret. "We've done all we could to save you. Now you have only yourself to blame."

He opened the door and called out to the sentries:

"Take him back!"

I was dragged out of the room.

That night the cellar door opened and Runitch the commandant, appeared on the threshold. He drew his revolver from its holster and commanded curtly:

"Out with you!"

"All of us?"

"Yes."

"And what about the sick man?" asked Abrasha.

"Carry him," said the officer carelessly.

"Where are you taking us?" asked Vassili.

"You'll see," replied the officer. "Now come on, look sharp!"

Abrasha came up to me.

"Come old chap," he said. "It's the last lap. Have patience a little longer!"

They laid me carefully on a coat, and four men carried me out of the cellar.

We made our way along the dark, silent streets, came out somewhere in the suburbs and went along the deserted banks of the Don. Its waters were still, and all around deep silence, except for the sandcreaking under the feet of the marchers.

The east was reddening faintly.

"Halt!" came the sharp command.

They laid me down on the sand.

The coat they had used for my stretcher was soaked with blood; the bandages had come loose on the way and the wounds had opened once more.

I raised myself and saw about fifteen longish, shallow pits in a row, they looked like individual trenches.

In front stood a platoon of soldiers.

"Soldiers!" cried Abrasha suddenly, "this is your own brother, a worker who lies before you! In a few minutes your volley will have closed his weary eyes forever. Soldiers! You are being forced to do a foul, a cowardly deed! Class brothers! Do not allow this! Don't shoot at a worker like yourselves! You thirty strong lads, why should you obey one hangman? As soon as you turn your bayonets—"

"Silence, dog!" screamed the officer. "I'll shoot!"

He raised his revolver.

"Beware, soldiers! If you permit this thing," Abrasha went on, "the working class will never forgive you! Soldiers! You are being fooled! Open your eyes!"

A shot rang out.

Abrasha gave a jerk and fell face downwards on the wet sand.

"You can see, soldiers, how our enemies treat revolutionaries? They are terrified of the truth! They are afraid you will turn your bayonets on them. Crush the dogs!" said Vassili, taking up the speech where Abrasha left off.

"Aha! and you can follow him!" screeched the officer.

Two shots rang out one after the other.

Vassili fell, clutching his head in his hands.

"Hurry up there!" shouted the commandant to the men at the machine-gun.

Silence fell.

We were placed with our backs to the pits. In front of us stood the machine-gun. A sub-lieutenant was working away at it feverishly. At ten paces on either side stood a platoon of soldiers with rifles ready. Then I was lifted up and bound to a rough stake thrust into the ground to support me, and I hung there helpless in the ropes.

"You think you can bring back the past by tortures and shootings! Never! For every man you kill tens of thousands will rise up to avenge him. They will fight to the

bitter end for Socialism! Long live the great proletarian revolution!" shouted one of the condemned.

"Fire!"

"Hey, butchers! Hangmen! Shoot at my heart!" cried the man beside me, tearing away his shirt from his breast.

A volley like a flame flared out for a moment. The machine-gun rattled on, as if it was choking in its haste.

I awoke on a farm kept by a family of peasants about twenty miles from Rostov. I learned later that seven comrades from the secret Bolshevist organization had made their way to the place of execution just after the soldiers had left and opened the neglected graves.

I and another of the prisoners had shown signs of life. We were lifted out of the pits and taken away from the town. The other man went out of his mind after his terrible experience. I survived.

Epilogue

Many years have passed since then. Life has changed. It is a long time since Abrasha's words "the Revolution will triumph" first came true.

The memory of the Secret Police has faded a little. The pain has grown duller. But still every year I go to Rostov on that fatal night and visit the graves of my comrades. The graves are well looked after. They are tended by the Pioneer children who have planted them with young lime trees. And there a little to one side is another grave. It was once mine. The earth over it is sunken a little. I go over and sit down on the ground.

There I sit for a long time, staring at the quiet waters of the grey Don. The scene of the shooting comes before my eyes once more, every detail of it.

I close my eyes and hear Abrasha's last speech. I see him fall on the wet sand.

Suddenly I hear light footsteps and glance around. Abrasha's wife and mother are coming towards me. They know my habits and where I am always to be found on this night. They come up softly and sit down beside me in silence.

Translated from the Russian by Anthony Wixley

Michael Gold

A Wreath For Our Murdered Comrade Kobayashi

"On February 20, 1933 comrade Takiji Kobayashi, one of the most gifted revolutionary authors of Japan, was tortured to death by Tokyo police. Cause of death was given as heart failure—a lie often used in these cases. He was 29 years old, but had written much—notably the novels, *Crab Fishing Boat* and *Absentee Landlord*. Last year in Japan 6,000 revolutionary workers and intellectuals were arrested and tortured."

Cabaret lice with clever eyes and loose sucking Mouths
And fat liberal frogs defending the swamp
Befoul our life with false theses—
Said the sheriff's gat to the miner's guts
Communism
I'll blow yuh to hell out of this perfect world
But the strike was a Kentucky sunflower that dying left immortal seeds—

A dark cloudtorn night we slept
While Judas the polecat murdered his brother
Yet from Roman graves rang the proud International—
Yes, yes, despite Gallifet, the Czar, the Horthy slime
All the museum of horrors
Duces, Jack the Ripper rhetoricians
Hitler butchers and bombastic pansies
Corpses sucking at tomorrow's throat
Hollow T. S. Eliot-Ezra Pound-men
History's bad dream
Shrill queer poisoned scurrying fascist rats
Despite, despite
Communism lives

2

Though they murdered thee in a mean Tokyo hell, Kobayashi—
Burst the strong skull that held our passion
Thou Kobayashi lover of this world
Born to be free, grateful to her
At whose burning breast we drink joy—
Born of grace like the deer on fragrant nights
Thine was spring, the wild plum and blue star—
But in Otaru no rice for thee
Thy sister died in factory lava-dust
Thy father was a tenant farmer
Thy father was a tenant farmer
Thy soul a clear mountain lake
Where labor's grief shattered the fine stars
O the grim lost young Shakespeare

Dead on a railroad track in Montana
O, the holocaust of our proletarian genius
But thou wert saved—
Thy days grew magnificent
The great seawind filled thee
And in New York we swear revenge—
In Paris Canton Prague we say—

3

Long Live the Communist International
Because near a green canal fascists have flung another corpse
An old bloodsmeared Berlin Jew
Killed to be a fascist document
To prove men are not brothers
His large face ripped by the Aryan bootspikes
And children laugh at comic gore on his white wool beard
Under his nails they stuck phonograph needles
In his tall forehead gouged the hooked cross of Jesus Hitler
Still he does not die
Stares with Hebrew majesty at the heaven
Patient to ask, are not men brothers—
They will never die
Trapped young beautiful Negro in a swamp
Hangs from a florida liveoak by torchlight
Of Benito's whooping ku klux klan
Stretches his long useless neck and forever, quietly asks
Are men brothers—
Yes, yes, in Kharkov we swore to avenge thee
Jew, miner, German, Negro and proletarian poet
Men are workers
Men are workers
War on the war makers
On those in Tokyo who murder thee
On those in New York who murder thee

Vladimir Tolstoy

The Man Who Flew

A Story of the Soviet Air Fleet

In 1915, there was an acute shortage of pilots in the Russian Air Force.

The Russian pilots were extremely well groomed, wore velvet caps at a jaunty angle, like a Highlander's bonnet and smart jackets with sealskin collars, but they were not distinguished for their mastery of the technical side of flying. Their recklessness and foolhardiness was responsible for a long list of fatalities and the consequent scarcity of airmen during the first year of the war.

The Imperial War Office was therefore, in a quandary. The obvious course was to take a number of officers from the army and train them to fly, in the shortest possible time.

But the officers were needed in the army. The military schools could not turn them out fast enough. German bombers flew over Russian territory with impunity and destroyed bridges, ordnance stores and the soldiers' nerves. The commanders who had, before the war, regarded aviation as a pastime were now, within a year of the opening of hostilities, crying out for more pilots.

Then the War Office found itself forced to waive class-distinctions in the selection of candidates for the aviation colleges and issued the following order:

"Private soldiers may be admitted to the Aviation Colleges if they fulfil the conditions as to health, etc."

There were no applicants, however. The soldiers had seen enough air crashes for that year, and an aeroplane with its roaring engine was for them even more terrible than the cannonade.

Recruiting by pressure began.

Eighteen athletic young privates were driven to Gatchina, where the aerodrome was situated. Like children bewildered at an unaccustomed sight, they were persuaded to come nearer and watch the wheels go round, so to speak.

In two months' time, before they had scarcely mastered the technicalities of taking off and piloting a plane in a horizontal line, the half-baked aviators were sent to the front. The older pilots looked upon them as unfortunates condemned to death. Still, aeroplanes loaded with bombs had to be sent against the enemy at once. The bombs had to be dropped at all costs and other considerations were of no importance.

"Well," said Headquarters, "what about it, supposing these new pilots can't land properly yet? The point is to throw the bombs, and then—if they want to save their lives, they'll effect a landing somehow."

The doomed men began their flight.

Thus are young, almost featherless jackdaws thrown from a high cliff: they flap their wings instinctively and even attempt to fly, but they have no strength to battle against the wind, no powers of endurance, and drop like stones to the earth, unable to find the direct line of flight.

Many of the soldier pilots were killed that first day. A few "lucky" ones succeeded in dropping their bombs on the Germans and landing at the aerodrome with no more than a broken limb or two. But there was one man among them, Private Melnik, a former blacksmith, who returned unharmed and made an excellent landing.

2

In 1925 our group of young pilots was, on graduating from the Aviation School, placed in the N- Flying Squadron.

In the part of the country we were sent to,the summer is so fine that practically every day is suitable for flying. We had lived in the hotel near the aerodrome. At daybreak one of the pilots would fetch the hot water; the difficulty of pulling on tight Wellington boots would call for the usual bout of cursing, and the room awoke to life once more. To the accompaniment of loud chatter and good humored jokes we would get into our summer uniforms with great rapidity. Helmets, goggles, gloves and leather coats smelling of gasoline or perhaps it would be better to say—pervaded with the spirit of the engine—seemed to bring with them courage and lightheartedness. When our watches pointed to three we seized our topographical maps, prepared overnight, from our tables and ran out of the house.

Everyone was eager to fly. As some people hurry to the morning market, others for the train, so we hurried to fly. The barbed wire fence around the aerodrome came in sight, the noise of the engines could be heard, the morning air was chilly.

At the gate of the aerodrome we were each delayed for a moment while our passes were being examined. It was at this moment that unpleasant thoughts entered my head—and not only mine, as I learned later on, but those of my comrades as well—thoughts which were not dispelled until we arrived at the hangars and dispersed among the aeroplanes.

The cause of them was a man who was sitting on a hillock near the gate of the aerodrome.

I cannot remember a single day on which we succeeded in arriving at the aerodrome before him. He always got there first, and was sitting in his customary place on the hillock, from which he watched every take-off and landing.

He was a short, thickset man of about thirty-five, and evidently the possessor of extraordinary physical strength. He wore an old jacket a little too tight for him, and this emphasized still more the well developed muscles of his arms and chest. His clean shaven face and the broad, open forehead helped still further to create the impression of power.

He would acknowledge the greetings of the hurrying pilots by a slight shake of his head and continue to stare straight in front of him. He interested young pilots from the very first. After hearing his story, nobody could pass carelessly by the little hillock, upon which this sturdy man was sitting, somehow pitifully.

It was Pilot Melnik.

What was it then, that prevented him from mingling with the group of pilots hurrying to the aerodrome?

It was a board. Just an ordinary board on which, in large letters, were the words:

"No admittance except on business."

Melnik, who was known to the whole air force, Melnik, the incomparable pilot, had no business in the aerodrome.

3

If you take the map of the European part of the U.S.S.R. and mark with a blue pencil the air routes flown by Melnik, the only parts that remain untouched will be Trans-Caucasia and the Tundras of the Far North.

There was a time when, if two Air Force trains happened to meet at a railway junction, the pilots and mechanics would jump out to shake hands and chat with each other, share their experiences and recount details of the latest catastrophes and the

deaths of mutual acquaintances. So-and-so's plane had come down in a corkscrew and been smashed to bits, another one had been observed flying over enemy territory and been hit, still another had burst into flames just over the aerodrome and dropped to the earth in a cloud of black smoke, while his friends stood watching unable to help. By the time the trains were ready to start once more some pilot or other would be sure to have been tempted by the conditions of work in the other squadron, and, collecting his luggage, would change over to the other train, complete with plane and mechanic. This was not an arbitrary act, of course, it was done with the consent of the commanders of the two divisions.

That was how Melnik and his faithful plane changed about from front to front so often. He had been spoiled by the various commanders, who were all anxious to get him for their own divisions, for to secure a crack pilot like Melnik meant they guaranteed their own success in a battle. Melnik's excuse for his frequent changes was always the same:

"They don't value me, they give me nothing to drink."

He was unsurpassed as a pilot, drank heavily and played the violin pretty well.

There was nothing special about his playing, he would hardly have been admitted into even a bad orchestra, but—after the roar of the engines, and the rattle of artillery, in a momentary lull even the most hackneyed melodies had charms to soothe the breast grown savage in the smoke of battle.

So Melnik amused his comrades with his playing at impromptu field concerts.

One morning on the day a concert had been announced, someone told Melnik that in the village of Polejalovo there lived an excellent violin maker, whose instruments were famed all over Poland and were even ordered by well known foreign violinists.

Melnik rushed off to the aerodrome, found his mechanic, Shmulkov, ordered him to get out the aeroplane, and took off in half an hour's time. The news that Melnik had flown off to the rear of the Poles and for a violin, went through the ranks like wildfire.

Polejalovo was about seventyfive miles from the front. Melnik had visited the village only a month ago with his detachment. He could not forgive himself for not having paid a visit to the violin maker then. He crossed the line of the front, flew for about twenty minutes over Polish territory and landed in the familiar village street. He took the precaution of leaving the engine running while he ran into the violin maker's.

"Give me the best violin you have, sir, quick!"

The old craftsman moved his spectacles slowly on to the end of his nose and stared over them at the stranger who had just dropped down upon him from the skies.

"Look here, I've no time to waste. I must have a violin!" without waiting for the old man to show him his instruments, Melnik went up to the table and carefully, as if he was lifting an infant from its cradle, drew out a brand new violin from its velvet bed.

The craftsman let out a horrified yell.

"I cannot give you that one, sir. Better kill me than take that violin!" But Melnik had not a moment to spare. Glancing out of the window, he noticed a cloud of dust rising at the far end of the road. He ran out into the street again, jumped into the cockpit of his machine and took off at full speed. He had just time to tear the machine off the ground before a cavalry squadron of Polish White Guards galloped up.

That evening he amused his comrades by playing on the violin of the famous Polish violin maker of Polejalovo.

4

Pilots are not as a rule unbiased in their estimation of the flying capacities of their friends. They are by no means generous in their praises of other people's flights. But Melnik was an exception. Melnik's flights called forth unstinted admiration from all who observed them. His name was known along every front. The Polish White pilots had heard of Melnik, too, and there was probably not one among them who would have cared to meet him in the air.

He did not try to scare his aerial enemy with the color of his plane, as the German flying ace, Baron Richthofen did, with his scarlet aeroplane. He was a plain man, but he knew his value though he only spoke of it when he was drunk. Then he would amuse everybody with his complaint, "They don't value me. They give me nothing to drink."

He never went up while he was drunk and never even put in an appearance at the aerodrome until his drinking bout was well over. His attitude to a flight was distinguished by love and respect, and noone who had seen him boozing over a bottle of vodka would have recognized him at the aerodrome. Together with his favorite mechanic, Shmulkov, he would examine his machine with the greatest care, before taking his place in it. Every time, before he touched the wheel, he would rub himself down from head to foot, with his broad palms to make sure, as it were, that there was no foreign matter of any kind adhering to him. Then, straightening himself in his seat, he would look around him twice to see if all was in order and there was nothing to hinder freedom of action, and at last, call out to Shmulkov:

"Ready!"

That was how each of his flights began and that was how he would start to carry out his orders.

Many of the most colorful pages in the history of our Air Force were supplied by Melnik's bold flights.

Fogs and thunderstorms could not stop him. He flew in a wornout aeroplane with "longerons" fastened with string, in machines that were known as "flying coffins."

Melnik had already been responsible for destruction of four enemy aeroplanes when the moment came for him to meet the best of the Polish White pilots, Voitsekhovsky.

It was an unequal fight. Melnik's gasoline and his own high spirits were getting low. He had already been up on two fighting trips that day. Voitsekhovsky had one of the best aeroplanes and was fresh to it.

The two pilots had heard a great deal of each other and were looking forward to this meeting.

It so happened that as he was returning from a scouting flight Melnik, looking round for the last time at Poland, noticed an enemy aeroplane coming straight after him. It was still about five miles off. Automatically, without stopping to think of his gas, Melnik turned to meet the enemy. Before he had time to correct the angle of the machine he was attacked from below by Voitsekhovsky. He recognized the Polish pilot by his daring and decisive manner of attacking. Before him, to the left, Melnik could see two holes punched silently and with the swiftness of lightning in his wing.

Voitsekhovsky rose and prepared for a second attack. Melnik hastened to anticipate him. But the superior speed of his plane permitted Voitsekhovsky to attack Melnik again while the latter was rising. He let a round of bullets into the very belly of Melnik's machine and dropped lower to wait for the outcome of his attack.

Almost at the same moment a pain in his foot and a fit of violent rage drove Melnik to crash down on Voitsekhovsky as the latter was dropping. Thus Melnik unexpectedly got the advantage. He aimed straight for the enemy plane; she was now fairly scream-

ing with her speed. Melnik let about twenty cartridges into the enemy's back as he dropped.

Voitsekhovsky's aeroplane began to corkscrew.

As he brought his machine level and prepared to watch his enemy's destruction, Melnik's attention was caught by the uneven throbbing of his own engine.

"I'll have to be getting back to our lines," he thought to himself. The throbs became stronger and stronger. The engine was evidently working on the last of its gas. Its speed slackened. The angle of descent grew more acute. Melnik's eyes were busy searching for a landing place over the boundary of White Polish and Soviet territory. It was only when he became quite certain he was actually flying in the right direction that his excitement died down and he felt that his foot was very painful and that he was weary. He landed at last.

That night was spent in a peasant's cabin. The old woman in charge treated him with home distilled vodka and an ointment made of medicinal herbs. He told her to bind up the wound tightly and then fell asleep.

As evening was drawing in on the following day, Shmulkov, the mechanic, arrived with gasoline.

Before leaving, Melnik tore a leaf out of his note-book and wrote a few words on it, hiding it meanwhile with his hand. Then he folded the paper inside a flag and took off. Melnik climbed to a good height and then, to the horror of the mechanic, who was watching him from the ground and felt anxious about his wound, flew off straight in the direction of the enemy, instead of towards the aerodrome. As he approached the front he dropped sharply and then went on stealthily, almost directly over the ground.

In an hour's time Melnik appeared over the enemy aerodrome, swept in a wide circle over the astounded Polish pilots, dropped the flag, and disappeared in the direction of home.

On unfolding the flag the Polish pilots could not disguise their admiration for the daring of the Red ace.

The note said:

"To the undying memory of the glorious eagle of the air Voitsekhovsky. *Melnik.*"

5

During the Civil War Melnik was forgiven a great deal. His drunkeness, for instance, and his wilfulness. He was too valuable a pilot for the weak little Air Force to risk offending.

Then peace time came. The country grew stronger. The Air Force grew stronger, too, but Melnik kept to his old ways. His behavior discredited the other pilots. It would be difficult to describe the details of the excesses which led to his being notified at last by the squadron commander that Frunze, Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian Forces, had decided to dismiss him from the army.

Melnik sat up all night writing a letter to the Commander in Chief:

"Dear Comrade Frunze," it ran, "they want to put Melnik, the Red eagle, in a cage. They tell me that you have ordered me to be thrown out of the army for being a scoundrel and a drunkard.

"Dear Comrade Frunze, I'm a blackguard. The truth is the truth and that's all there is to it. But forgive me, rascal that I am, for I can't live without flying. I give you my word, Melnik's word, that I'll give up drinking for good. My fate hangs on your answer. I am sending you a tumbler and a bullet. The tumbler is that same blackguardly glass from which I have drunk for the last time. Break it with your own

hands: the bullet you shall send through my head if I am ever scoundrel enough to take another glass. *Melnik.*"

He was very drunk when he wrote the letter. Whether he believed that he would really give up drinking, it is difficult to say. That day he drank himself into a stupor for the first time in the memory of the pilots. They found him sprawling over the table on which lay a letter and two empty bottles. In his right hand he gripped a glass. His friends took the glass, packed it up that same day, together with a bullet and the letter and addressed it to "Comrade Frunze, Commander-in-Chief of the Forces of the Ukraine and the Crimea. Personal. Urgent." It was sent off before Melnik came to his senses.

6

Melnik was pardoned.

He was allowed to remain in the army, too, but was given to understand that it was his last chance.

He made good. He flew. Of an evening he would wander from one house to another, astonishing everyone with his chattiness. He informed his friends that he had decided to do some designing and was making plans for a huge twelve motor aeroplane.

No one believed in Melnik's creative powers, they laughed at his plans and soon his never-very-strong faith in his idea weakened and he ceased to speak of it.

"Melnik," said the divisional commander to him once, "Melnik, it's time you were squadron leader. You should read up, study a bit. The young pilots make a regular god of you, and yet you know, you're weak on discipline."

"I can't do it," replied Melnik. "My hearts not in it. What's life in a cage worth? Don't do this! You can't do that! That's hell for an airman. An airman should be free, like a bird."

"Melnik, you've not looked closely enough at birds, it seems. Go to my carrier pigeon station and observe a pigeon's day. You must break yourself in a bit, Melnik. Pour gasoline over those old traditions and burn them. Think it over, Melnik."

It so happened that next day this same commander was making a practice flight when suddenly his machine began to corkscrew and crashed. The commander was, of course, killed. There is nothing more overwhelming than a fatality like that in peace time. It depressed the garrison and the whole town.

Everyone in the town turned out to accompany the commander on his last journey to the cemetery.

The band wailed and sobbed, behind it came long lines of the troops, the cavalry tried to keep back the crowd. On the iron roofs photographers balanced and swayed and children clattered about, and at the head of the procession men in leather uniforms carried their commander. His goggles, gloves and helmet, the inseparable companions of an airman, lay upon the coffin.

Suddenly Melnik burst from the skies over the funeral procession in the dusty street. The wheels of his machine skimmed close over the heads of the people, the roar of the engine deafened the band. The horses started, people screamed. Many dropped down in fright. As he flew over the coffin he came so close that it seemed as if he would take the lid away with him. Even the experienced people in leather uniforms fell to their knees involuntarily with the coffin.

Melnik climbed to a hundred yards and looped the loop.

The procession came to itself again. The band played once more and the street moved on. But Melnik went on doing stunts. He deafened the *Funeral March* again, disappeared behind the houses, stole up to the procession unobserved, hovered over the coffin like a bird of prey, at half a yard away rose again, floating away over the child-

ren's homes, scared the photographers balancing on the roofs, turned a somersault, tore off the banner from the Executive Committee Hall with his wheels, annoyed the cavalry and upset everyone. How he managed to avoid a frightful catastrophe in which neither he nor the crowd could have escaped death remained a mystery.

As Melnik was landing at the aerodrome the commander of the garrison came up to him.

"What's the matter with you?" he asked, as Melnik climbed out of his machine.

"I've been burying him," he droned out and hiccoughed loudly. Melnik had flown drunk, for the first time.

A few days later he was brought up for trial.

Melnik was dumbfounded. He could not grasp it at all—that he should be brought up for trial and all because of this flight. But when the grave charge against him was read out in court and they began to cross examine him, addressing him as "Prisoner at the bar!" he stood up meekly and answered all the questions in a monotonous bass:

"Guilty. . . . It won't occur again."

"You flew without permission. You had given a pledge not to drink. You have broken the rules. You flew while in an intoxicated state."

"Guilty. It won't happen again."

"Do you admit that a terrible catastrophe might have occured as a result of your flight over the crowd?"

Melnik repeated: "A catastrophe?"

"Yes."

"A catastrophe, you say?" and he laughed.

7

After the trial Melnik was denied admission to the aerodrome.

He was dismissed from the army.

He was stopped at the gates of the aerodrome, where the watchman on duty insisted on seeing his pass.

"But I'm Melnik! You don't seem to understand, I'm Pilot Melnik."

"It's no use, comrade. Where's your pass?"

The airman and the mechanics all stopped for a moment as they went through the gates. From the aerodrome came the hum of the first trial of the motors. There was a smell of gasoline.

"What's all this, boys? Eh?" Melnik asked in bewilderment. But they passed on in silence through the gates, hurrying to their machines. He caught sight of his mechanic among them.

"Shmulkov! What's this? How can you?"

Shmulkov gave a start and stood stock still. Then he turned slowly, looked at his old pilot standing there, pitiful, begging to be let in, and with a sudden violent gesture as if he wanted to shake off his own grief, Shmulkov turned and ran to the hangar.

From that time on Melnik was to be seen daily sitting on the little hillock by the gates of the aerodrome. He arrived before the doors of the hangars creaked in their hinges, sat down on the ground and, without once changing his pose, followed every take off and landing, every movement in the air.

Months went by, but Melnik never changed his habits. After their flights the pilots came to him, like pupils to a stern teacher to await his judgement on their abilities. Melnik was willing enough to give it. He was always glad to express his opinion on the flight of this or that pilot. He remembered them by the numbers of their aeroplanes or by the district over which the pilot flew.

The airmen would tell him what particular task had been set them and ask him to watch the stunts they performed. And Melnik would watch them.

Sometimes the younger pilots who were like birds in love with the air, would rattle away about the fine summer weather and the technical details of their flight. Then Melnik would grip the arm of the youthful airman and say:

"Don't, lad, don't," and the boy would be silent, realizing the pain he must have caused Melnik by his thoughtless enthusiasm.

No one ever saw Melnik drunk again. It was said that he spent the evenings playing the violin, and went to bed very early so as to be up at dawn and get to the aerodrome in time.

The Aviation Corps grew as he watched it. Huge new aeroplanes with many motors arrived, machines he had once dreamed of flying. Everyone realized how hard it was on Melnik. Perhaps the most painful of all for him was the appearance of the Fokker D-XI. He could after all, bear the arrival of the large planes, but the little ones stirred the depths in him. Shmulkov, who was working on a Fokker D-XI described the peculiar qualities of the new machine to him.

For almost a year now Melnik had been living on the flights of other pilots.

He drew our interest and claimed our respect from the first day that we arrived at the Aviation School, and we longed for the incomparable pilot to praise us. I must admit that we were astonished at the severity of the punishment inflicted on him for a fault which it seemed to us he had got rid of for good.

8

A year went by.

It was one of the finest of our flying days, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force was to pay us a visit. I learned of his arrival from one of my comrades, who burst into the dormitory, shouting:

"Listen, boys, the Commander-in-Chief has come and he's allowing Melnik to fly!"

We were ready, as always, for flying. We dashed out of the dormitory and ran full speed to the aerodrome. My pal told us on the way how the squadron commander had spoken well of Melnik's behavior, had mentioned his terrible depression, and the commander ,taking into consideration Melnik's wonderful flying powers resolved to take him back into the Air Force once more. He sent at once for Melnik, who was at the gate as usual.

We arrived at the aerodrome just as the mechanics were crowding round the bewildered Melnik, praising their machines and clamoring for him to take them. Melnik hesitated. Just at that moment Shmulkov came running across the whole aerodrome from the farthest hangar.

Breathless, he rushed up to the crowd of mechanics, pushed his way through to Melnik, and gasped out:

"Can I get her ready?"

"That's right, old chap, get out your new Fokker."

He took off.

Going at a prodigious speed, he turned the machine upside down, throttled the engine, (the machine seemed to hold its breath) and in dead silence flew for several seconds in this position.

Melnik in his aeroplane resembled at this moment an expert swimmer who swims on his back without disturbing the water, and for greater steadiness holds his breath, drawing a storm of applause from the spectators.

Everybody knows, however, that there is a limit to swimming on one's back, that the swimmer will turn over in a moment, fling the water about and swim off several

yards. The art of flying must also keep within bounds. The nose of the plane was pointing downwards, the angle of descent grew more and more obtuse another minute and the aeroplane would crash towards the earth at lightening speed.

It was not falling. Aeroplanes did not crash like that. It was only a way of agitating spectators, a way only fliers like Melnik knew.

The aeroplane came closer and closer to the earth, a hundredth part of a second and it would be too late. I noticed how my companions clenched their fists and jerked them nervously, impatiently, as if they were steering an imaginary machine. And just at that moment, when he was only three yards above the ground, Melnik suddenly soared upwards like a candle flame.

I glanced at the Commander-in-Chief. I knew how he felt about these "forbidden" stunts. I did not recognize the Commander. His expression was that of a fascinated spectator, his usual sternness was forgotten for the moment.

Meanwhile Melnik, who has climbed to seven hundred yards, has brought the machine level, speeded her up, and without losing any time, begins to loop the loop. Five—seven—when will he finish? As he finishes the fifteenth loop he makes a turn at an angle of 180 degrees and, speeding up once more, looped the loop again.

You gaze and gaze—you cannot tear your eyes away—it is so beautifully done. Your neck aches with looking upwards but the rhythm of the movement in the air gets the better of it. And you feel glad about Melnik. His somersaults in the air remind you of irrepressible children, rushing out into the fresh air the first spring day.

Melnik is flying once more. Melnik is a man. But he has brought the art of flying to perfection, to completely automatic movement. I am certain that he never gives a moment's thought to his movement. His reflexes seem alone with his thoughts.

He has completed the last loop and is flying horizontally for a minute. For him this minute is a minute of regret. He has probably remembered that he has gasoline enough for only forty minutes and that he must descend now back to earth.

But Melnik can never bear to waste time on descent. Never.

Another turn, and yet another. He veers once more. So! And now—downwards. Like a stone.

Away over there Melnik's Fokker appears from behind the wood ,ready for landing.

He lands. We straighten our backs. No one speaks. Admiration has brought weariness in its turn. We long to lie down on the grass and relax.

9

At dawn next day we were preparing for the air-parade.

The aeroplanes crept out from the hangars like giant bees from their hives. Men crowded round them, taking off the coverings, wiping away the dust that had collected during the night on the flat surfaces, feeding the engines with oil, gas, and water.

The morning examination. The sun was feeling its way with rays of light and brightening the land but had not yet time to appear from behind the woods. Mist was floating away in the valleys. The birds awoke and fluttered their wings.

Near the aerodrome there was a carrier pigeon station. At daybreak the old pigeon breeder would climb the ladder to the roof of the station and feed his birds. They would peck at the meal awhile, and wash themselves and each other before the morning's flight.

We had forced ourselves in on the feathered world, taken their form on ourselves, and the feathered ones had made their peace with us. One by one, with a chirrup of screws the motors awoke.

Gasoline is the life blood of the engine, heating it with the regularity of a heart; from low pressure to average, to ordinary normal activity.

The engines hummed.

The pilots were testing them both with instruments and by sound. The noise was deafening. But if you stood a little further away and listened to the hum of the engines, you could distinguish certain musical notes. As soon as the pulsations of a single engine grew unequal, the whole symphony was destroyed. Even on the earth pilots notice the inequality with the same lightning rapidity as in the air. In the tenth part of a second two questions burst in on an aviator's conciousness—

1) I realize what has happened.

2) I make a decision.

With the rapidity of a serpent's sting the eyes and fingers dart to the instrument board.

Having tested the engines, we are ready for the start. Half an hour remains until the commencement of the parade. The engines are shut off, the pilots climb out of their machines and sprawl about on the grass. A rest before the flight is a blessing to a normal pulse.

The squadron commander lay beside us, silent.

"Isn't Melnik going to take part in the parade?" asked one of the pilots.

"Melnik?" repeated the commander. "Melnik's finished."

"How?" and there was a minute of suspense before he replied.

"Yesterday after his flight he went on the worst spree that you ever heard of. Whether it was that his being taken back again went to his head, or devil knows what, anyhow—I suppose it was like an abcess that had been gathering for a year and suddenly burst! He got drunk at night. Started a row, beat up a militiaman, collected a crowd of drunkards, chucked the driver and the passengers out of the tram and apparently started on a joyride round the world."

Some more pilots and mechanics from other squadrons had joined our group. Among them was Shmulkov in his greasy blue overalls. He had some keys in his hand. He had evidently just looked over his engine and was now listening guardedly to the commander's words.

The latter was silent.

We sat there, dumbfounded by his news, only exchanging glances. Airmen were accustomed to wordless explanations in the deafening roar of the engines. That was how pilots would exchange glances with the observers when, flying towards their own aerodrome they would notice a plane sprauling there face downwards.

Then their glances contained indignation and meant:

—"on level ground"

—"his own aerodrome."

—"on soft grass."

—"and to ruin a machine like that!"

But now there was something more than indignation in their glances.

It often happens that when a flying squadron is nearing some populated spot, the thousands of eyes are directed on the planes from the earth. And then one of the phalanx drops behind. At first you think, "his engine must have broken down," you glance below involuntarily and, catching sight of a landing place, feel relieved. But the plane is not dropping—the engine is still going well. The town grows nearer and nearer. Why is he trailing behind, then? Can't he guess he must step on the accelerator or has the engine got overheated, or is he simply obstinate and stupid?

Then all the pilots and the observers look round and beckon to him. If this does no good, the pilot observor stands up and shakes his fist savagely at the laggard.

The pilots now turned on Shmulkov as if it was he who was guilty of Melnik's crime.

"Did you hear that?"

"That's the liberty he was always talking about."

"Nice boss you've got!"

"You should have taken his machine to a drink shop for him!"

"Flew like a god and couldn't learn to move about on the earth properly."

Shmulkov shifted the keys from one hand to another and glanced from side to side.

"Well, look here, what have I to do with it?" he replied timidly. "I believed just the same as you did that—"

The conversation was interrupted by the command:

"To your machines!"

Thirty aeroplanes took off in a chain, disturbing the air.

They were all alike. It was a Soviet Aviation Industry Parade. Every screw, every bit of the aeroplanes had been made in the country. We listened anxiously to the working of the engines from the "Icarus" and "Bolshevik" Works and grew more and more convinced every moment of the triumph of our aeroplanes.

1400

1500—

1600—

1700 revolutions.

A roar with wonderful melodies running through it. The neatness of the formation of our ranks in the air and the smooth running of the engines permitted scraps of thought.

"Melnik! You're a blackguard! The truth is the truth, there's no getting away from it!"

He came in for the start of the second flight. He was in his old leather jacket with a satchel on his shoulders. The aerodrome watchman came running after him, calling something out, his words did not reach us. The noise of the motors ready for the start drowned them.

Melnik went to a group of pilots and mechanics and shook each one by the hand. His glance sought out the bewildered Shmulkov and them, suddenly, hastily he kissed him.

Silence. Even the engines quietened down, as if they used out the last drop of gasoline.

Several score young pilots, all resembling each other closely, stood before Melnik. Many of them he did not know by name, just as he could not remember the numbers of the swarms of aeroplanes.

And then, in the sudden silence that had fallen, Shmulkov seized Melnik convulsively by the shoulders, and shoock him as though he wanted to rouse the man. An unaccustomed anger and irritation gleamed in his eyes as he muttered through clenched teeth:

"Eh—h—you—you fool!"

Melnik gave an unnatural jerk, as if straightening the satchel on his shoulder. Then he turned and went away quickly.

A few minutes later the signal for the start of the second flight was given. The only spectators left were the technicians, the mechanics and the watchmen. All the pilots, the observers and the commanders were in the air. Laggard planes put on full speed and caught up to their phalanxes. The ranks crept closer and closer to the leader, and swept over the aerodrome in a powerful, symetrical whole.

Nikolay Markevich

Nishambe's Revolt

A Story of the New Soviet Near-East

The sun's rim lightly touched the horizon—a crooked line of trees, fields, and two tumuli. The sun gilded the canal and it lay like a gleaming sword. A Surniaist minstrel entered the village. He brought with him the dust of his travels and a large Caucasian fur cap, of the kind worn by the Turkmen people. Grey-bearded, he was puffed up with importance—he was the master of sounds, the keeper of melodies, the teller of tales collected at various times and in many places. In the Tchaihan (tea shop) the minstrel turned his face to the setting sun and played the march called *Mamajan.*

The sounds flowed unceasingly. You could hardly tell when the minstrel stopped to take his breath. When he finished playing, the minstrel sat down and with a dignified air accepted a cup of tea.

"Tell us a story," they begged him.

"Very well," agreed the minstrel. "Listen to the tale I learnt from the tribe living near the desert. It is a story that shows how true is the proverb: 'Woman is unfaithful but a dog is true.' Not for nothing does our law tell us that a woman's grave must be dug a foot deeper than a man's. Women can never become equal to us. The Shariat, by which we have always lived repeats that many a time.

"Listen! Two tribes, once upon a time, fought. The conquerors gained much booty, and among the booty was the young wife of the chief of the vanquished tribe. One day, this chief crept to the village of the conquerors and into the hut of the victorious chief and there saw his wife. She was stroking the conqueror's head, in her lap.

" 'Fear has forced her to do this,' thought the poor husband. He made signs to her, called her outside and said to her, 'Let us fly!' 'No,' replied his wife, 'I don't want to, I love the chief now.'

"He couldn't persuade her by any manner of means. Then the husband had to resort to guile.

" 'Kiss me for the last time'," he begged her. And when his wife granted him his wish he caught her tongue between his teeth and walking backwards, led her to his horse, placed her behind him and galloped away. But his wife scattered arrows along the road out of the quiver which hung at her husband's side. The dog noticed this and warned its master by its barking. Afraid that the dog would raise the chase after him, he killed the faithful dog with his whip. But the pursuers caught up with him and he had no arrows to defend himself with. 'Look,' said the husband to the chief who galloped towards him, 'Once upon a time this woman loved me and now she has betrayed me. Take her, I freely give her to you, she is not worth that men should fight for her.'

" 'She was unfaithful to you, deeming me stronger and handsomer. But she may also be unfaithful to me when she finds somebody better. Take her yourself,' and the chief galloped off.

"And the husband led her to her father and told him all. Her father killed his daughter with his own hand for her treachery and gave him another to wife."

Silence reigned in the Tchaihan.

"Well, and lets talk business now," said the chairman of the kolkhoz, Moidin Mosinov. "Was Hauturaiev in the field today?"

"No, he didn't turn up."

"What are we going to do?"

All agreed that Jusup Hauturaiev should be given a last warning.

For the third time his name, written in Arabian and Latin letters hung solitarily on the black list, nailed to the kolkhoz gates.

Another large sized board was placed at the parting of two roads. Passersby stopped and climbed off their camels; they read the list of Hauturaiev's misdeeds. He was a Teryak smoker, a quail fighter and an absentee.

Teryakesh—is native for those who smoke that intoxicating poison. Teryak is a weed which calls forth ghostly visions and mercilessly robs you of your health and will power. When he came out of his stupor, Hauturaiev fell in the toils of that queer bobtailed quail, the bidane. He trained the quails, taught them the art of battle, fed them with meat and planted lice in their feathers to get their dander up. Hauturaiev walked the bazaars, hunting out rivals and lovers of quail fights. Not fully recovered from the effects of teryak, he was overcome with excitement.

Two passions, teryak and quailfights, possessed Hauturaiev. Nothing remained of this man, neither for the kolkhoz nor for his wife, Nishambe.

Submission is the keynote of Nishambe's whole life. She unfailingly wears her submission, just as a turtle wears its shell.

When she was fourteen, the "chachwan" hairnet (Uzbek face veil) cut Nishambe off from the world, from that insignificant section of the world as represented by by the kishlak (village) lost among fields and gardens. When she was fourteen, Nishambe donned the paranja—the veil which entirely hid her figure. Clothed in her paranja, a woman resembles a bell. The fine network of the chachwan gave no admittance to the light, and Nishambe's surroundings were blurred and deformed. Eternal twilight set in. And the hitherto far away world became untouchable. Nishambe was now betrothed.

It was more out of stubbornness, than out of studied calculation, that Yusup Hauturaiev put his bet on a hitherto unknown bird. Mamajauov's bedane, the fighting quail, up to then had never been beaten. The little body of Mamajauov's bidane was full of ferocity. But nothing availed it against the unknown bird. Hauturaiev was victorious.

The spoils from the quail fight went to pay the purchase money for Nishambe.

Only the marriage arba (canopied bullock cart) upon which the bride was drawn, was at all beautiful. The drunken, greasy marriage guests, the piercing music (it was easier to walk barefoot on sharp knives than to listen to this music), the bridegroom himself, drunk and rude, all this was disgusting.

No, Nishambe's life, the life of Yusup Hauturaiev's wife was not a bit like the marriage cart. Each day was an exact copy of the day before. Nishambe was overloaded each morning with a mass of minor duties, tiresome and degrading work.

As a wife she had to get up while her husband was snoring, so custom had it. When breakfast was ready, she woke him with slavish officiousness. She lost her strength in looking after the cattle, working in the field, garden and vineyard. Nothing was left to her, neither songs (it is forbidden to sing songs in the presence of one's husband) nor even hope. What could the Uzbek maiden hope for, when before her were three seemingly unsurmountable obstacles: the chachwan (veil) the duval (clay wall, surrounding the house) and the shariat? Three months after their marriage Yusup hit Nishambe.

In obedience to custom, Nishambe did not lift her veil to passing traders. The close network before her face did not allow her to judge properly of the quality of the goods she was buying. The experienced trader sold her rotten goods. Yusup came home from the bazaar. An unlucky quailfight had made him sore. (Already

Yusup was possessed of other passions which left no place for love.) His anger fell upon Nishambe. He kicked her in the corner with his toe. Her unlucky bargain clattered after her. This took place on the third month after the wedding. As if he had discovered hitherto unknown possibilities, Yusup henceforth began beating Nishambe. Beatings became invariable, as the daily rising of the sun.

One would think that at this point the story and very life of Nishambe should have halted, but her biography and life recommenced anew this autumn. Between this autumn and the first shameful blows, sixteen years have flown, history has gone its course: rebellion, war, revolution, the Emir's flight. Before it was just as if history had not glanced at the kishlak (village) of Besh-Arik. As immovable as ever seemed the chachwan over the women's faces, the clay walls surrounding the houses, the mullah's chalma and the wisdom of the aksakats (elders). But time showed that history had not forgotten the village of Besh-Aryk. The mullah crept away, like a thief one night, no one knew where. The elder's two sons fell in the bashmach detachment. Their death and the defeat of the whole detachment was for the elder the end of all hope. The first tractor, met with amazement, malice and delight, turned over the boundaries of the fields. The newly arrived agronomist examined the kolkhoz fields, just like a doctor. History at last found out the village of Besh-Aryk.

The whole village of thirty seven huts has become one single collective farm.

Unconcerned, Yusup Hauturaiev turns over his land to the collective. He never did love it too much. He himself works but little, but he sends his wife to work every day. Autumn, he would come along, large as life, and carry off the grain, lucerne, money and cotton goods as his right.

The third spring, the kolkhoz bookkeeper handed Nishambe her individual labor account book. This event, which passed unnoticed, assured the continuation of Nishambe's biography.

Summer came and as ever, with it the concern for the cotton.

Autumn, when the leaves were already hanging dead from the trees, when the fields were covered with gray hoar frost of a morning and the whole earth seemed very aged, Nishambe Hauturaiev walked up to the bookkeeper's desk. Timidly smiling, she explained that she couldn't read. Proud of his authority, the young bookkeeper said:

"You have to your credit 295 work days. You've got coming to you, Nishambe—let's see—78 poods of grain and 528 rubles. Lucerne and all the rest will be divided up later."

"Is that for both of them? For Yusup and for her?" they asked the bookkeeper.

"No," replied he, "that's only for Nishambe. Yusup has only made 69 working days."

"My, my!" somebody exclaimed enviously.

All day long Nishambe was busy carting home her grain. She covered the floor in the corner of her hut with sacks and on them she poured the golden grain. A mountain of grain grew in the dark corner. Nishambe bathed her hands in the grain, and this gave her a hitherto unknown sense of pleasure. She went for the last few sacks of wheat. It was almost with pride that Nishambe walked through the kishlak (Uzbek village). The submissive ass followed in her wake.

Yusup wasn't at home. The day before, he had left for the bazaar in the nearby town. The next day, Nishambe also set out for the bazaar. It was with a sense of pleasure that she walked along the rows of trader's stalls, went into the shops and reminded herself of what she had to buy.

There was a big shop on the market place, in the corner. At the door hung a poster with an inscription in three languages,—"Men not admitted here." Sales clerks, cashier, manager, all were women. At the very entrance ,prospective women customers could doff their veils without fear of meeting strange men. Here you could buy

anything you needed without danger of being cheated. Things were displayed in their natural state. In this store, Nishambe bought herself a new paranja (native women's dress, covering the whole figure), and two European fashioned dresses. The paranja was an ordinary grey one, edged with tape. The long narrow sleeves nearly reached the ground and were joined together at the back, almost symbolical of woman's serfdom. The dresses were light ones. As she was trying them on, Nishambe experienced a feeling of shame. She paid for the dresses, not quite sure herself that she would ever walk in them through the village.

On her return, Nishambe noticed the ass tied to a post outside her hut. Yusup had come home. Leaving her purchases in the yard, Nishambe entered the hut.

"How much did they give you?" roughly queried Yusup, pointing to the grain.

"That's only my grain," replied Nishambe. "That's my earnings. You'll have to go yourself and fetch yours."

Yusup brought his own grain in one sack. They had held back all that he had drawn in advance. Without a word, he emptied his sack on the heap of Nishambe's grain.

The rest of the winter passed by uneventfully. Retaining her usual submission, Nishambe fulfilled the housework and only twice repeated her independent journeys to the bazaar, asking no permission for this from Yusup. Yusup never made sign that he noticed these trips, he remained silent, feeling the ground falling from beneath his feet. He was still wise enough to recognize the change taking place around him.

Nishambe rebelled in the spring when they went out to plough the cotton fields for the third time.

Three obstacles had blocked her path all her life long: the veil, the clay wall and the shariat. Resolutely did Nishambe stride across the clay wall and the shariat.

Three allies went out to meet this lonesome woman and strengthened her resolution. The black list bearing the name of Yusup, her husband Hauturaiev—the Teryak smoker, quailfight promoter and absentee; never ending talks with her friends in her brigade, showering lavish praise upon their husbands and cunningly quizzing Nishambe as to her ne'er-do-well; confidence in herself and that strength which came to her when she poured out her hardearned grain and bathed her arms in the golden mass. That evening when the lights were out in the hut and Yusup lay sprawling on a heap of blankets, Nishambe said:

"I'm going to leave you!"

"What?" Yusup doesn't comprehend.

"I'm going away from you," softly repeats Nishambe. "I don't want to live with you any more. I'm ashamed of you and then I don't want to feed a lazy ne'er-do-well!"

Yusup is overcome with anger.

He runs up and down the hut, shouts that he won't stand for any insults or the loss of his honor, but, cowardly, he is afraid to hit Nishambe who is silent in her corner.

"I'll cut your throat," yells Yusup.

"And have you forgotten about the militiaman, Muhameddiev?" says Nishambe in that same silent tone.

The reminder of Muhameddiev acts like fire on Yusup. They have already met, and Yusup was fined for smoking teryak. Yusup sprang out of the hut. You could hear him swearing as he untied the ass.

The tchaihan is silent. The listeners are turning over in their mind the minstrel's story of the faithful dog and faithless wife, and the decision about Hauturaiev, just as the cow chews the cud. The secretary of the Komsomol group enters.

"Have you heard the latest?" he says, "Nishambe's left Yusup."

"What do you mean—left?"

"She doesn't want to live with him any more. She says she doesn't want to feed lazybones. We have given her, temporarily, our group meeting room. We ought to help her."

"Shameless hussy," says the old barber Satimov, who has lived all his life in accordance with the tenets of the false wisdom of the shariat, heaving a sigh.

"That's the stuff," says the secretary of the party group, Ibrahunjan. "We've got to help her stand on her feet."

Thrice ploughed and watered, lovingly looked after, the earth is sewn with cotton seeds. The men fetch the sacks of heavy, soaked seeds. The women take them and take their places in the rows. The women work, throwing back their veils which fall on their backs like hair of unseen length and blackness.

The children are playing in the dry canal. Hitherto they used to be left to their own devices and each mother would run at the cry of her child. Now the children are nursed by a woman. The brigade accepted Nishambe's suggestion that each woman take her turn at looking after the children. That means a rest, and at the same time the children would be cared for. Nishambe has no children and she is beginning to think for all.

The chairman of the kolkhoz and Ibrahimjan are approaching the field. The women lower their veils. Nishambe, looking after other women's children, with an accustomed movement also lowers her veil.

Norman Macleod

The Wild Geese Cry

Fragment From a Forthcoming American Novel

Max got a job through a friend of his stepfather's in a lumbermill in Bonner, Montana. The Anaconda Copper Mining Company, which affiliated with the American Brass and Steel Corporation controlled much of the industry of the United States. Max remembered the guy distinctly: he was a fat, pompous ,purblind, unimaginative automaton bound on a Twentieth Century Limited for personal wealth. One of the pioneers who came into the West in the early days with other men who made fortunes out of devastating forests and gutting mines, and scrounging out of human labor the last ounce of strength and profit.

He possessed an aged father, who sat upon a rocking chair on the back porch of his mansion in Missoula, smoking a corncob pipe (he was from Missouri), spitting occasionally with great gusto in the general direction of the back yard, wiping his mouth and chin with a filthy red bandanna handkerchief.

Those rocking chair blues. . .

Whenever Max came to the house with his stepfather, the guy's old man would ply him with questions, senile and feeble with a certain sort of bourgeois sterility.

Did you ever use corncobs? Corncobs are best, he said, his mouth drooling and his eyes bleary with age.

When I was a kid back in Missouri, I always used corncobs. Corncobs are best, he said.

Max didn't like either of the guys, but it was through them that he got a job as assistant grader in the lumbermill at Bonner in the Blackfoot River region.

Max got a room in the hotel where all of the checkers and office-workers lived. On the third floor overlooking the refuse burners, which flared at night with the electric incandescence of wasted flame. Devilish arctic lights from the slow conflagration of capitalism. The whistle of the mill punctuated his life there. He washed with cold water in a porcelain bowl. That together with the long hours of work and the high altitude affected his blood, and his nose bled freely as the stuck entrails of a gutted horse.

His work was not difficult, but it dragged with time on his hands. He helped a French Canadian grade lumber into various consistencies of perfection, according to the quality of hardness in the trees. When work was slow, he sometimes loaded boxcars with his head as a bumper for the roofs of the cars, or worked in the sheds which housed shingles, paper, or assisted in piling lumber in the yards. This last was the most dangerous. Often the worker on top of the stack would grow careless from lack of sleep or through weariness with the scarlet sun streaming upon his head, and a board would slip from his grasp. Men were often killed or badly injured in this fashion. The worst part about all of this work was the sawdust continually in the air, which filled Max's lungs and paved his nostrils with the dust of a slow death as the nervous whine of machinery frayed his nerves and beat a tattoo of work, work, work in his head.

Max soon discovered that he could save no money. His board and room (prices

dictated at the company's will), commissary expenditures, fees for doctors (that were never available) and insurance (that didn't insure) and what not were all deducted from his paycheck before he ever received the figures of it. Men had worked for the company years on end and had never been able to leave because of their debts.

It was a form of penal servitude for proletarians.

And work if it were for some good cause . . . that life might be better . . . that some good aim might be achieved. . .

But fatigue after fatigue, that there was no night's rest, and for the company?

Jean Fortunatus had a room next to Max's on the third floor of the company hotel. He was a swell guy in some superficial ways and looked off work like a white collar ad. But he used some sort of weird perfume—(Max thought, what's the idea, but maybe there's some reason for it). Jean had been the lightweight boxing champion of California, and he was always shadowboxing some imaginary opponent in his spare time or brushing his teeth and combing his hair or telling ribald stories that were *really* funny or making love to chambermaids, or reading decadent literature and writing poetry. He was a dilletante, hell knows, but it was really marvelous all of the things that Jean could do.

He was the disinherited son of one of the vice-presidents of the company and had a job working as a checker. He was always short of jack because he drank too much, but he managed to borrow money from everyone in the place . . . for was he not the son of one of the big shots in the company?

His room was always in a mess with manuscripts, books, neckties, remnants of revelry. . . One night Jean came into Max's room stinking drunk. With one of the chambermaids on his arm.

Here's a girl for you, he said.

She sat down on the bed and Jean laughed as he went downstairs to tell the joke to the officeworkers who were reading or playing checkers in the lobby.

The company subscribed to only one morning newspaper for the use of the workers who lived in the hotel. Jean used to sneak down in the morning, take it upstairs, read it (clipping articles of interest), and then return it to the front porch.

The housekeeper was sore about it.

She often wondered whom it might be and swore a terrible vengeance upon the culprit if ever caught. But she was too lazy to get up in the morning. . . she decided that it was easier to blame it on a guy like Max. She called him in one night after work.

Get the hell out of here. Go on get another room, she swore at Max. Max packed up his belongings and went down to the milltown that evening. The company refused to refund the rest of his rent paid. Another little graft for the big shots. World without end and the profit within it.

Near the river Max rented a room in a board shack, or rather one half bunk in a cubicle which boasted eight occupants. The joint smelled of sweat, bedbugs, shoes, cheap soap and cooking. This was the environment of the real workers and Max was glad to be in his own milieu, but flabbergasted by the environs of it.

Max ate supper there that night. The board was loaded down with all sorts of food—only later did he discover that each product was cooked in batches large enough to last six weeks. It took an adept to single out the fodder cooked most recently. And Max had no experience in that.

He retched all night.

The stench of the bunkhouse was terrific and outside of it the mosquitoes made

it impossible for him to sleep on the ground. And he had farther to walk for work than formerly.

The first day after this change of domicile, he found almost insufferable. His brain and muscles would not function properly and his feet lagged.

And it rained all day . . . in the sheds, when Max was sent on errands for lumber, he stalled as long as was physically possible and looked out of the large doors at the rain and the mountains and the forests shaggy upon them above the Blackfoot river and the huge rocks that broke the grey fastness of the sky with their very sharpness and magnitude. Occasionally, the sky rumbled and flashes of lightning split the clouds with jagged ominous precision.

Max thought of days on end, of Idaho in his earlier years (days when almost a child and he had taken a dirty white nag and a rifle and some salt and flour and his courage and youth in his hands and gone off on a long tramp for forty miles in the mountains with no trails or compass to guide him by. And how he had awakened one morning to find a porcupine in his bed alongside of him. How he had shot grouse and partridges. And how he had made sour dough biscuits as the prospectors and camped by the shore of a forgotten lake. He had suddenly come upon the purlieus of a fashionable summer resort and had seen dapper young men and smart young ladies in riding breeches, cantering upon pleasure trails—the bourgeois out of the metropoles learning how to "rough it" on forty dollars a day. They had passed him by without a smile. . . He had taken weeks and the rain had fallen. Gone swimming as far into the lake as he had dared. And then coming home his horse had escaped and he had had to walk for miles through the rain with his loneliness.)

And Max felt that way now in the immense sheds of the lumbermill. With the rain, with his weariness. But formerly, he thought, he had been comparatively free and the mountains were not denied him, shut off by the immense sheds of a corporation and the routine of his slavery for which he was not even paid a living wage.

All of that day Max went around in a daze. Automatically doing his work and the tasks that were exacted of him. He listened for the whistle which would mean that his shift let out.

The Canuck grader finally had Max loading one of the big two wheeled steel trucks with tamarack. Max worked at it in a desultory fashion for an hour or so.

Even to the Canuck, Max's slowness became apparent.

Come on, snap it up, kid. We haven't got all day. Snap it up and get the lead out of your ass, he said to Max.

It's getting dark with the rain. It's almost night, he said. And we have to load this truck before quitting time. Max helped him wheel the truck to a boxcar. Max was pushing on the side and the Canuck was wheeling from behind.

Max thought of the rain, of Idaho, of his early life. The rain flowed with a monotonous sound off of the roofs of the shed. The sawdust was a damp poison in his mouth. And Max was tired. Tired of working for a company instead of himself, instead of the workers, instead of humanity, the world. And the rain ceaselessly. The rain endlessly. Like the profits of landlords and financiers. Like the persevering poverty of proletarians and the exploitation of the moneyless, landless producers of "prosperity". And Max tired. Max with rain in his ears and sawdust of death bone articles in the mortal flesh of his body (the flesh dies but the purpose continues) and bitterness in body and brain.

The truck swung around sharply to the left toward Max in order to make the turn out of the shed to the platform beside a Canadian R.R. boxcar. The steel wheel of the truck creased Max's foot neatly and split the flesh to the bone.

Max woke up in the hospital. His stepfather's friend was beside his bed.

How are you, he said. He was almost blind. Max could see him peering and blinking through the inefficiency of his stodgy eyeglasses.

How are you, he said. Goddam kid to ruin my time with his foot and carelessness, he mumbled under his breath. *How are you, kid,* he said.

And rain in Max's ears, Idaho with mountains remembered in his brain, dream of footfall and rattlesnake bites, and girls, and the rain, the sheds bleak with stagnating lumber (because there was too much food, too much lumber, too many shoes, too many houses—and the workers in a world economic crisis going without food, lumber for homes, shoes for their feet, clothes), and men were starving, girls with a price for the diseased destitution of them, and hunger in their bellies.

But it was a good thing that hunger had come.

Because hunger would become bold.

There would be voices to clamor for the courage to feed the mouth of the revolution. Can you taste it even now? The sustenance that gives life to multitudes—not one man alone?

The wild geese cry as they pass over the land in autumn. Presage of October. There are omens in the winds of destiny. There are many who do not starve or slave without protestation. There are sturdy words to be said to lay a new foundation. There are battles to be fought in song and upon the soil. In the factories the guttural of machines demands a new master.

There is revolution.

The rain came ceaselessly down.

Peter Conrad

Our Father Who Art In Heaven

A Story of Germany

It was the first week in April—I think, Thursday. First thing in the morning they raided our street and then went through it with a small tooth comb. That lasted until evening. Then we were packed into three lorries and taken away under a strong guard. In my lorry, besides me, there was Gerber and Jussitzka and Adolf and Franz from my cell, and I believe the Zieglers were there too from the cell next to ours. There were many people I knew on the other two lorries as well. They drove us to the S.A. barracks. There were Storm Troopers waiting outside and a whole crowd of people who had gathered from the neighborhood. They unloaded us very slowly, one by one, while people shouted and threatened us. Among the crowd I recognized Blaugraber, who was our cobbler for six years, and the shopkeeper's wife whom we used to call The Fat Angel. We had to run a regular gauntlet of blows, kicks, spitting and shoving.

That night we were left all together in a courtyard behind the barracks. On one side the back walls of the houses in Gerber Street, on the other the low wall of the Victoria School. There was scarcely any leaf on the trees as yet. The playground of the school was empty as the Easter holidays had been extended.

In the morning the S.A. leader came into the yard and at least a dozen people after him. He had a little under-strapper with him who kept close beside him the whole time and when he shouted out anything this little fellow would stamp his foot and shout the same. The S. A. leader shouted: "Fall in!" and the little fat one stamps his foot and shouts: "Fall in!" too. Well, they took a whole bunch of us off into the barracks and left a few of us in the yard. Exactly a dozen of us.

I was left in the yard together with Jussitzka, who is treasurer of the Atheists' Club, and Adolf and Franz from our cell. I knew the others too. We were all acquainted.

They read out a list of our names which must have been drawn up during the night, after they had examined our papers. So it was no accident that we got left in the yard together. The S.A. leader shouted: "Fall in! In four ranks!" The little fat one kept tapping his heel on the pavement and shouting: "Fall in! Fall in!" They made us form a square of four ranks, and posted sentries at the four corners of the yard. The S.A. leader took his stand right in the middle. He shouted: "Hands up!" And the little fat one shouted: "Hands up!" too. We swung up our arms over our heads—the joints were stiff like rusty hinges—and as I swung up my arm I felt my hand touch Paul Gerber's who was standing next to me.I felt his hand in the air.

The S.A. leader shouted: "Now, fold your hands!" And the little fat one shouted: "Fold your hands! Fold your hands!" The S.A. leader shouted: "Learn to say your prayers first!" The little fellow kept tapping on the pavement: "Learn to say your prayers! Learn to say your prayers!" I squinted along my rank. The bald-headed fellow at the end of the rank, whom I didn't know, had his hands folded together over his chest. Then came Jussitzka. His hands were moving up and down, up and down, first folded over his chest, then down again. As for Gerber who was next to me, he only turned up his thumbs. So I did the same as he and let my arms hang down.

The little fellow hollers out: "Let 'em have it!" and the sentries from the corners of the yard came and beat everyone over the hands who hadn't got them folded.

My hands were like lumps of raw meat—all red and blue, but that was nothing compared to Paul's hands. They were shouting and shouting behind and and before us. The S. A. leader bawls out: *Our father who art in heaven!* and the little fellow shouts: *Hallowed be thy name!* and he keeps on tapping his foot on the pavement so that it sounds crazy.

I heard someone behind me mumbling: *Hallowed be thy name!* and two others were mumbling too. I don't know who the bastards were—they weren't in my row. The S.A. leader bawls out: *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done!* and the little fellow keeps drumming away on the pavement and shouts: *On earth as it is in heaven!* Suddenly Alfred, the little fat treasurer of the Atheists' Club—I knew his voice well, he'd taken my dues maybe fifty times—well, Alfred, who is standing behind me, suddenly gets the urge real strong and sings out loud: *Arise, ye Prisoners of Starvation!* Everything goes deathly still all of a sudden—a silence you could hang your hat on. We pull ourselves together, we move our jaws, try to sing but there is no moisture in our mouths. The silence is broken with a crash. Behind me, I can hear blow after blow being struck. That one has fallen on Alfred's head and that one on his shoulder. In our ranks we feel how they are dragging him away. The sentries make us crowd close together now. They have drawn their revolvers, the little fellow is screaming once more: "Fold your hands!" Gerber raises his lumps of raw meat. My hands quiver. I can't help it. They do it against my will, curse them. I take a squint at the bald-headed one. He has folded his hands so fearfully it seems as if I can hear the fingerjoints cracking. Jussitzka's hands aren't such bastards as mine, they do as they're told and keep down. The little fellow keeps on screaming: *On earth as it is in heaven!* and then crash!—a shot rings out. The bald-headed one doubles up. He, of all people, got hit in the ear. He is trying to nurse his mangled ear and keep his hands folded at the same time. So he doubles himself up and keeps on praying: *On earth as it is in heaven, on earth as it is in heaven!*

The S.A. leader is praying away like mad, as though his dinner was on the table—*Give us this day our daily bread!* And the little fellow screams—*Give us this day, give us this day!* Behind me, the sentries have been lamming into someone or other all the time, I don't know who. They keep driving us closer together and beating us over the hands. We are quite a small square by now. *Lead us not into temptation!* shouts the S.A. leader. *But deliver us from evil!* answers the little fellow, still drumming on the pavement. The sentry reaches out over me and gives Jussitzka one in the chest, where his hands ought to have been. Jussitzka falls against me. We are all collapsing this way and that. Jussitzka is dragged away into a corner of the yard. Alfred in his corner actually strikes up once again: *Arise, ye Prisoners—!* But he never gets as far as *Starvation.* They give him a kick in the mouth. At least that's what his mouth looked like afterwards. The S.A. leader prays: *Forgive us our trespasses!* and the little one drums away still: *As we forgive those who trespass against us!* Someone near me, I think it must have been Paul, suddenly laughed out loud. You can't imagine what it sounded like. I saw the S. A. leader's arm swing back and his fist went slam into Paul's face and Paul crumpled right up collapsing on top of us all. We were all collapsing. *Amen! Amen!* shouts the S.A. leader and the little one shouts, *Amen!* too. They started hitting out among us till we were all lying stretched on the pavement of the yard and even then they weren't satisfied. They had to kick us. Little Alfred sang out again now and then; in the end there was nothing but blood coming out of his mouth but maybe he thought that he could still be heard singing ever so far off.

Translated from the German by H. Scott

A. P. Roley

The Glittering Prize of War

A British Worker Tells His Story

The sun went down behind sullen clouds and long streaks of angry red bestrode the darkening day. It was the last sunset on the British line in Gallipoli, and to us it almost seemed as though the sun resented our going.

Curley Green, Curley for short, and I made our patrol together, and about nine o'clock he called me to look at a rifle which was automatically timed to go off at midnight, a few minutes after our departure for Lancashire Landing.

Would the time to leave never come? The suspense was getting me down and I sat on the parados and commenced to think of incidents that had happened since the landing.

That morning at eleven o'clock the previous June when the bombardment shut down with a snap. For some minutes the sudden silence was as much a shock as the previous din. Then, with bayonets fixed we were 'over the bags' with a cheer, to advance in a welter of blood and muck. . . . The young soldier on my right . . . he had red hair, who was hit in the head and who with a gurgle as he departed active service for the Crown, slumped to earth. . . a bundle of bloody rags. . . . The frog, that gross and ugly sent forth its discordant croak from a pool of brains and slime, and the human eye that had somehow become detached from a body.

How we held on to our position all the next day without water, how we lost twenty men in as many minutes the end of the long evening, and counted ourselves fortunate at that.

Grimshaw . . . . little, happy Grimshaw, the Burnley weaver, who took a piece of shrapnel in his intestines the back end of the month, and running past me down the trench. How we tried to stuff his belly back into the gaping open wound as his face was contorted in agony and he shouted, "*Christ. . . Oh Christ*" a prayer and a curse.

How In November the master strategists on Imbros decided that as our line in Fifth Avenue was only twenty five yards away from the Turk, it would be a sound military operation to knock yards off. Possibly they had visions of letting the press in England scream in shrieking headlines *Great Advance in Gallipoli,* again possibly just because they were staff, and we were only common bloody cannon fodder they intended to show us once more who really was running the blood bath.

A mine had been laid and the plan of campaign, for us, was to jump the bags as we went up, and, supported by drumfire, hold the crater. The mine went up all right and thirty of us under our own captain and another from the Royal Engineers went out into the open while the mushroom of smoke hung in the air. We sought in vain for the crater, the darned thing was nonexistent as the charge of explosive had simply pancaked the earth all around. The Turk commenced to plaster us with gun, machine gun, and rifle fire. I flopped hard to earth and pitched my bombs as quickly as I could over the enemy parapet and then legged it back to our own trench. My mates acted as I had, but we left twenty of the boys in *No Man's Land.* Then came the cries of the wounded which rang incessantly in our ears. One, very badly mauled lay only three yards away, just in front of the trip wire, and through the periscope we could see his eyes fixed on our parapet. At first they were lit with hope as he shouted to attract our

attention, then they were aflame with rage as he cursed us for cowards, finally they were swimming with tears of despair and pain. He pleaded for succour or, at least a drop of water. We threw him a water bottle but as he stretched to grab it a machine gun was turned on him.... I saw the slugs strike home.... in the belly.... His eyes glazed.. .he just moaned.... hope was gone.... life was speeding quickly. We cursed the red tabs who dodged in comfort on Imbros. Big Joe, our mate, a worker, was spilling his blood for what, and for whom?

My mind returned to the present, and looking at my watch found it almost time to leave. Five minutes later the officer gave the command to evacuate, then, slowly and quietly we left the front line. Months of fighting, months of agony, of lives spent in useless endeavour, and six men and a second lieutenant were the last of the allied forces to leave that part of the blood drenched sector. Down the mule trench to the ravine and Geoghegan's Bluff. The memories that the walk conjured up. Each spot had some tale to tell. Here, I had rested with Bill Davies on our way up to the line for the first time, there, I had rested again with him, when he was stark and stiff, and we were taking him back for burial.

Here . . . . here . . . . there . . . . there . . . . ghosts that walked with us and spoke of oil wells, imperialism, red tabs, and working class slaughter.

Wasted lives.... wasted lives.... wasted lives.

Gully Beach was reached after midnight and we boarded the lighter which was to take us out to sea. The larger boat at last and as we lay rocking in the Narrows a shell fell into the water on our port side. We held our breath, to be blown up at the last moment of the tragedy would have been the deadliest of irony. We were well out to sea when the dumps on the beaches went up. And they did go up, thousands and thousands of pounds worth of taxation wasted in smoke, noise and flame. Everywhere was as bright as day and the sea reflected the crimson glare for miles. Someone commenced to sing a song, and as I yawned with the desire for slumber, Curley placed his haversack under my head and with his arm around my waist we slept the sleep of the exhausted.

Egypt has been termed the land of romance and mystery, and the desert described in glowing phraseology, and it is not to be wondered at that so many of us in 1916 after the Gallipoli nightmare looked forward to pleasant adventures with a capital A. August 4th, 1916, saw us "standing to" on a line twenty miles east of the Suez Canal, our flanks resting on a huge sandhill named Mount Royston on the officer's map.

The Turk held the higher ridges of the alleged mountain, his line of defence along the sandhills about a mile to our immediate front.

At dawn water bottles were filled and in addition, Curley carried a "chatty", that is, a long necked native vessel, filled to the brim. For as he put it, "Jack, my boy, we're going to need this liquid before the next two or three days are out." Yes... Curley was always thinking ahead of us all.

In extended order we commenced to advance across the loose sand towards the ridge, the mounted troops in front being by this time under shell fire from the Turkish artillery.

The advance continued in the nature of a creep rather than a push, but towards nine o'clock when we came within range of small arms we commenced to rush forward in sections a hundred yards at a time. By this time the sun poured down on us relentlessly and the "chatty" was soon half empty, the thirsty throats of the section even demanding more. Our Lewis gun and spare ammunition grew steadily heavier.

The Turk withdrew and we followed up, until by nightfall we could see the oasis of Katia about a mile away, the trees just discernible for a few minutes before the sun went down in a flaming ball of fire.

The "chatty" by this time was empty and water bottles had already been attacked. Most of the boys were without water, not having set off with an extra supply at the commencement of the day, and the eyes which peered towards the Turkish lines, early the next morning were not less anxious than those that looked towards the rear, seeking the long expected camels with the water supply.

"Advance" called out the Lieutenant and off we went again, crawling, staggering, running, in the hope of getting liquid relief in the oasis.

The enemy however held on, and thus we spent another night without water.

The sixth of August dawned and the sand seemed deliberately to stick to our boots and clog our advance. Onward, ever onward, how I cursed the steel of the blue sky and wished for the homely grey of my Northern English home. Our tongues were blackened and sore, our lips cracked and bleeding. Men and strong men at that, just sank into the hot sand. . . exhausted.

Katia at last and the sight of the haven put fresh strength into our deadened limbs. With a final spurt we approached the trees and shrubs to find naught but the rotting bodies of men and horses belonging to the Yeomanry. The oasis was in the possession of death.

There was no water and in our frnezy we dug and even scratched with bleeding finger nails in the sand for the precious fluid. At last we realized the awful truth; our only hope rested in the arrival of the camel transport, and there we lay, too weak to stand under the palm trees, like landed trout,sweating and gasping.

Men moaned and fainted, two in the section went mad and had to be clubbed with the butt end of a riflle, until at six thirty the first camels arrived with the precious fluid. Curley and I along with many others went down the line suffering from thirst and exposure and as I lay in bed in the Cairo Hospital I understood that Egypt for the rich traveler may mean comfort, and health, but for the soldier and the worker something very much different.

My final sketch is that of crawling slowly through the town of Poperinghe in Belgium in 1917 on a much battered railway train, the glow in the east now punctured by pin points of brighter light indicating battery positions. There was not a fraction of a second without its heavy noise of the continual drum fire and as we drew nearer to the rail head we could hear the staccato rattle of the machine guns. . . . The Ypres salient was giving us the welcome of death. . . .

"We're for it at dawn to-morrow, the whole company is going over, so write your letters and eat well my lucky lads" thus spoke Curley, now appointed Lance Corporal, to his small section of which I was one.

A watery sun penetrated the grey skys, and not a movement could be discerned anywhere around us, either back or front. Bitter experience had taught the troops that it was courting disaster to show as much as a hand in the open.

Someone came in the pill box and said that Russia had packed up fighting. "Bloody good job too, they've more sense than us" was the only comment.

Peering through one of the loop-hopes of the concrete structure, we could see the grey mound of the German shelter about one hundred yards in front, and from this mound's tiny slit, a machine gun would spit forth its leaden hail. Between us and the enemy was a morass of holes, battered equipment and wire, rotting pieces of bodies, and over all the stink of death. On the tick of five the next morning there was a roar like a thousand express trains screaming overhead. Our barrage had opened. At six the officer's whistle sounded shrilly, zero hour had arrived and the attack began.

I set off at walking pace between Curley ,and a new arrival, a consciencious objector, whom Curley said had "funny ideas." When I say we walked. I mean we slipped and stumbled in the mud and slime which abounded everywhere. We commenced to lose men, some falling solidly to the ground, some waving grotesquely like wooden

dolls, others staggering a few yards and then sinking to the knees, shrieking in their agony.

Curley was stumbling beside me with blood pouring from a jagged wound in the left wrist when the whistle sounded again and a shout went up for the retreat.

"Hurry chummy, we'll get their heavy stuff in a tick" muttered Curley and we lurched unevenly back towards our pill box. I had managed to squeeze into the doorway when there was a tremendous thud, and a noise as if the world had split asunder. A shell had registered a direct hit just above the door. When my shattered senses had partially recovered I turned in my tracks to see how Curley had fared. I found him a mass of blood, with hideous bleeding stumps where his right leg and arm had been. At that moment Squires, the consciencious objector, pushed into Khaki by the thug called Capitalist Government, rushed forwad and between us we dragged what was left of our comrade into the shelter. Curley opened his eyes, and by the faint light of the candle which we had left burning, I could see him smile.

"Cheer up chummy..... I'm done for.... look after yourself.... and the best of lu...."

The words came out in a spurt and then my mate ceased to live.

"The swine... this murder... murder it is... if only the workers would use their arms and strength on those that make war possible. Then. . . ." That was my mate's requiem.

Those were strange words to me, Squires, in 1917, but now when I see our unemployment queus, when I think of all the broken pledges, when I see the slums... our slums. . . .—not your slums my masters—, I realize that poor old Curley was wrong when he thought you had "funny ideas." I am no pacifist Squires, your words fell on fruitful ground, and with my comrades of the bloodbath, having learned to use a rifle, a bayonet and a machine gun, also know now, where to fire the slugs.

> Rulers who sit in high places, what gives them power in the land... Cartridges . . . rifles . . . and bayonets . . . . all are the work of our hand. . . .

A. Novikov-Priboy

Flight

A New Soviet Novel — Complete, in Excerpts and Summary

FOREWORD

Novikov-Priboy's life story is an astonishing one. It is that of a Tambov peasant who became a writer; a sailor who went through the battle of Tsusima during his service in the tsarist navy; one of the twelve thousand Russian seamen who were under the continuous shell fire of the Japanese squadron in May, 1905 and one of those few who survived that fierce and tragic battle only to be taken prisoner by the Japanese.

He wasted no time, however, even during his captivity. He talked to seamen and naval specialists, to miners and artillerymen, wrote down their statements, made a summary of their opinions and collected enough material for his bill of indictment against the tsarist regime.

Naturally enough the above regime found a man of his kidney extremely inconvenient even while he was a prisoner of the Japanese. The "agents provocateurs" among the officers in the Kumomoto prison camp were ordered to spread the rumor that the Russian soldier captives would never again be admitted to their own country unless they got rid of the rebels among them. A mob of three thousand people blinded by indignation and despairing of ever seeing their own folk again, all but tore to pieces the future author of *Tsusima.* But he survived this as well. Together with a few other class conscious sailors, he stood firm amidst the distracted, deluded mass that stormed them from all sides. All his manuscripts were lost, however.

This stocky sailor proved to be as sturdy of mind as of body. When the mood of the prisoners had changed once more, he went on collecting his notes and summaries with the same energy and consistency as before.

But it took 25 years of his life, several years of roving about in foreign parts as a revolutionary emigrant and lastly, the friendly support of Maxim Gorky, before the sailor from the tsarist fleet could raise himself to his height in Soviet literature as the writer Novikov-Priboy.

Novikov-Priboy has been writing for many years, but it must be noted that he owes his artistic development to the October Revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, for this old sea salt has revised all his views on the war. War is imperialism in action and Novikov-Priboy understood perfectly that only by destroying imperialism can the danger of war be destroyed.

Flight is a sequel to *Tsusima.* The last named book describes the expedition of the Second Squadron to the coast of Japan and *Flight* describes its defeat. *Tsusima* is written in the first person, in *Flight* the author no longer takes the leading role, the story becomes an epic.

Tsusima is a novel of the tsarist regime and of the complete imbecility of that regime in time of war. Step by step Novikov-Priboy traces the progress of the Squadron moving to its doom, the ridiculous parades and drilling, the panicky firing on the fishing vessels at Dogger Bank (the Hull Incident) the Squadron's visit to Madagascar and other places, the admirals, officers and sailors and their moods. He recounts their extraordinary life stories, their mutual relations, conflicts and class interests. And he describes it all in that outwardly calm manner that is best calculated to arouse the indignation of the masses.

"The backward will always be beaten," it has been said. *Tsusima* is the story of the backwardness of tsarist Russia, the country that wanted and could not defeat its young imperialist neighbor that was armed to the teeth.

Flight is a picture of Russia paying for her backwardness. It is one of the most brilliant illustrations to Stalin's memorable dictum.

As a literary achievement ,*Flight* is not complete. It is a collection of fragments, but such fragments as are usually regarded as fundamental and leading. It is one of the most forceful and condensed of Novikov-Priboy's works.

Flight opens with a description of the Russian squadron preparing for the batttle in the Tsusima straits. Here Admiral Rojestvensky began to reassemble his ships in a different

order. The Japanese appeared, headed by the batttleship *Mikasa* under Admiral Togo's flag.

All the Japanese ships were painted steel grey and merged beautifully into the grey waters, while the Russian vessels were painted black with yellow funnels as if it had been part of the plan to make them unmistakable targets!

The Russian squadron could not make a single maneuvre correctly or reassemble without a mistake while the exactitude with which the Japanese ships took up their stations was amazing. It seemed as if the whole of the enemy fleet was directed by a single mechanism. It made no more than 15 or 16 knots an hour but gave the impression that the whole mass of warships with their smoking funnels was driving through the waters at a terrifying pace. The Russian fleet huddled together in a shamefully incapable way and formed a colossal target.

The Japanese took up their stations once more. . Rojestvensky went on passively leading the squadron further away. He was on the flagship *Suvorov,* after him came the *Alexander III,* the *Borodino* and the *Oral.* The other column was headed by the battleship *Oslabya.*

In the deck cabin of the *Suvorov,* the brain of the ship and of the whole squadron, sat the officers and Admiral Rojestvensky. The fact that the whole of the command was collected in one spot on the ship was in itself a danger. But Rojestvensky seemed unable to realize it.

He refused to budge an inch from the traditional methods of commanding this huge squadron and he ignored the lessons of Port Arthur. He refused to transfer the flag to a swift cruiser as Admiral Nakarov did, but remained on the battleship at the head of the column. At the same time the question of the command during the battle was a particularly important one for the Russian squadron. It was entirely unprepared for independent action. Everyone looked to Admiral Rojestvensky, who kept everything in his own hands. Previous to the battle even his closest assistants among the junior admirals were not informed of his plans—not to speak of the captains of the ships; they followed him blindly. He had trained his squadron in the belief that only his unbending will united the variegated collection of ships that formed the Second Squadron.

The terrible hour of trial was approaching.

The warship *Suvorov* was going at nine knots an hour, wrapped in silence; it seemed as if there was not a living soul on her decks, at her engines or in the turrets. There was little talk in the deck cabin too. They were all in that state of strained expectation when people even try to hold their breath.

The Admiral was large and heavy and sunburnt, with streaks of gray in his beard. He followed the enemy's movements patiently, never removing the binoculars from his eyes for an instant. He was tall and so he had to spread his legs and bend his broad back to look through the observation notch. A tight sausage of fat bulged over the collar of his jacket. He had a habit of twitching his jaws which livened up his stony face a little but made it all the more terrifying.

The hands of the clock showed twelve minutes to two, when Captain Clapier de Cologne, a nervous timid aristocrat announced shyly:

"The *Mikasa,* your excellency, is turning towards our side now."

And Rojestvensky replied hoarsely, as if his mouth were dry:

"I can see that. It's making a swing around. She evidently wants to lie on a parallel line with us." He gave the order: "Signal to 'Aim at the head', open fire with the left six inch gun."

A minute or so passed before Admiral Togo on his battleship *Mikasa* performed a full turn at sixteen rhumbs. The *Mikasa* was fired upon from a distance of 32 cables. The shell flew over it. Our other vessels also opened fire. But the concentration of the artillery fire produced only negative results. The sea around the *Mikasa* fairly boiled from the columns of water that spouted up. But not one ship could distinguish her own splashings from the others and had no chance of correcting her firing.

The enemy began to retaliate about two minutes later. And now the Russians discovered the tremendous advantage of the enemy squadrons due to their remarkable training. One ship led the firing and then informed the others of the range by signals.

And after that came the salvos which found their mark. A perfect storm of shells landed on the target.

At first the *Suvorov* was hit by shots from the *Mikasa* alone. But by degrees as the Japanese ships turned and lay on the opposite parallel course (or in other words, every minute or so) the *Suvorov* was consistently pelted with heavy calibre shells from other vessels—the *Fugi,* the *Shikishima,* the *Kasuga* and *Nissin.* Soon six Japanese cruisers were concentrating their fire on the *Oslabya,* and the *Suvorov* became the main target for six of the most powerful battleships. A hailstorm of steel fell about her. They were fougasse shells and looked like flying mines. When they exploded into thousands of tiny splinters, great flashes of lightning and columns of suffocating black or yellow smoke burst from them. And everything inflamable, even the paint on the iron was ablaze in a moment. The salvos fired from her own guns, the explosions of the enemy shells and the clang of the iron falling apart mingled in one terrifying roar that shook the boat from the keel to the mast heads.

Through the observation slits in the cabin flew bits of metal, splinters, smoke, water splashed in. Without, a huge wall of flame, smoke and sea spouts whirled chaotically, hiding everything else. There was no chance whatever of making accurate observations. And apparently no one wanted to do so. All the people in the cabin were shaken and demoralized by this unlooked for catastrophe. Terror drove them into hiding behind the vertical wall of armorplating, and flattened them on to the deck. Only the sailors stood at their posts: at the steering wheel, by the range finder, the speaking trumpets, and telephones. But they could not act otherwise. One of the officers squatted down on his heels, the others dropped to their knees. And Admiral Rojestvensky himself, that proud and arrogant officer, stooped gradually lower and lower in his efforts to avoid the splinters of metal. At last he was forced to kneel before the enemy fire. He was the first to set such an example to the others. As he crouched there with his head craning from between his hunched shoulders he resembled a scared passenger more than the commander of a squadron. At rare intervals one or the other of the young officers would peer through the observation slit for a second. Many of them were already slightly wounded.

Commander Ignatius turned to the Admiral with the words:

"Your excellency, the enemy has evidently found his range. Permit us to change our course."

"Alright," Rojestvensky assented without troubling to think.

At five minutes past two we changed our course two rhumbs to the right. At first the firing slackened but soon began again unintermittently. A six inch shell struck the steel of the cabin. It did no harm but the shock was terrific.

The clock stopped.

Fire broke out in the rostra, the spardeck, in the Admiral's saloon, on the poop. The firemen had to be called out. But it was impossible to stay out on the open deck under a rapid succession of fougasse shells. Fragments of shell rained down and disorder ensued in the ranks. Sometimes whole bunches of men were wiped out. The hose-pipes were broken. The fire had got out of all bounds, and by degrees separate outbursts united into one great bonfire that enveloped the whole of the deck from the bows to the bridge.

In the cabin the chief artillery officer, Lieutenant Vladimirsky had been wounded. The Barr and Strood range finder on the port side was broken. They used the one on the starboard instead. The flagship artillery officer, Colonel Bersenyev, a long skeleton of a man took up his position at it, endeavoring to calculate the distance to the enemy, but fell dead almost immediately. The two helmsmen were killed at the wheel. Two

flag lieutenants, Sverbeyev and Krjijanovsky took the wheel until the reserve helmsman could come. The handles of the wheel dripped with blood.

The *Suvorov* lay once more on its former course, northeast 23 degrees.

Bad news poured into the cabin from all quarters of the ship. The First Aid cabin by the chapel on the middle deck was in ruins. The wounded looked like bleeding pulp. The left subaqueous apparatus had been punctured and was leaking. More news came over the telephone,. Huge shells had struck the twelve inch turret on the poop. There had been an explosion and the turret was now ruined and useless. The ship had already lost half of its artillery.

The Admiral had been wounded by a fragment of shell but remained in the cabin. His presence, however, was already useless. He had lost all power of commanding his squadron.

It was impossible to go out now on the bridge and signal under the furious onslaught of the enemy. The shells wiped the men out in an instant. Besides, all the cordage was destroyed and the signal box with the flags enveloped in flame. The main mast was cut down by a shell and fell overboard. The lower sailyard dropped from the foremast. The admiral remained, helpless and passive, at his post, waiting for the shell that would relieve him of the burden of command.

Maybe he was thinking of the past.

In St. Petersburg, on the banks of the Neva, the huge old Admiralty reared its bulk, topped by a golden spire. His last two years in it Rojestvensky had spent as the chief of the naval staff. He had received encouragement from the Tsar and had regarded himself as indestructible. At the time he had been only a rear admiral and comparatively young—55. To the envy of the rest he had managed to skip the vice admiral stage and obtain this high post. All men had trembled before him. And he had been sure that under him the Russian fleet would prosper and make Russia a great sea power.

And now, perhaps, his disturbed thoughts ran ahead to a somewhat different meeting at the Admiralty.

At the door of the building on the side nearest the monument of Peter I, smart equipages containing important people were drawing up. The highest representatives of the Admiralty were hurrying to an urgent meeting. They were met in the vestibule and helped off with their overcoats by a noble looking old man whose chest was decorated with four crosses of St. George and a great number of medals. And then one had to go upstairs, pass through the billiard room and a door on the right. This was the private office of the Admiralty. Its windows looked on to the Alexander Gardens and faced the Winter Palace. There was a magnificent fireplace in this room, and pictures of tsars, admirals, generals and battles at sea. A heavy bronze candelabrum hung from the ceiling, a rich carpet covered the floor.

Rojestvensky knew it all so well; he knew too, the great walnut table covered with a cloth. Around this table sat solid, important people: admirals, the minister of the navy and other officials of high rank. Some nervous and frightened, others covertly triumphant, they discussed the results of Tsusima. And all this would happen in a day or two, and his name, the name of Admiral Rojestvensky, would be on everyone's lips.

The second range finder in the cabin was smashed. The Admiral turned his head. His face twitched convulsively as if in pain. Then he ground out through his teeth to no one in particurlar, "Abominable!"

But how was the situation to be saved? How could he let the other vessels know that boldness and initiative on their part were necessary, since the flagship had already stood as much shelling as would have sufficed for the whole squadron? They were only accustomed to obey, they were awaiting orders and following the Admiral obediently.

Nothing remained for the Admiral but to lead them after him. There was no way in which the commander kneeling in the cabin could express his will.

The enemy, taking advantage of the opening, increased its speed to 16 knots and moved rapidly in front of our column, heading it off and holding the *Suvorov* in the centre of the bow. At 25 minutes past two the *Mikasa* was already 40 cables ahead and cut off our progress. On our side only five or six of the foremost ships could take part in the battle. One of the officers reported this to the Admiral. He gave the order to change the course four rhumbs to the right so as to open our column along the inner curve and bring the rear ships into action.

At the moment when the battleship was turning to the right, a heavy calibre shell burst through the porthole of the cabin. Some of the people in it were killed and the rest wounded, including the Admiral who was struck by a fragment of shell in his head just over the forehead. The wheel was broken, no one remained at it, and the ship began blindly to describe a circle with the helm to starboard. The *Suvorov* was put out of action.

The column was now led by the next ship, the *Alexander III*. She followed at first in the wake of the *Suvorov* but convinced that the latter was no longer under control, changed over to her former course. She was able to shield temporarily the helpless flagship from the persistent enemy shelling.

Fire broke out near the cabin. Flag lieutenant Sverbeyev went to put it out, but received a wound in the back and was sent to the First Aid cabin. The Admiral sat on deck, his head bent. It was impossible to take him to the operation room across those open decks, through flames and exploding shells. His authority over the squadron of 38 pennants was gone. Colonel Phillipovsky, dripping with blood as he was, tried to direct the *Suvorov* with the help of the engines but the battleship pitched about first to the right and then to the left at 80 rhumbs. She had now a heavy list to port of about six or seven degrees.

A few minutes later a shell struck the cabin from the prow. Shavings of wood and splinters whirled in the air. The Admiral was wounded again, in the leg this time. The captain who had been squatting on his heels was knocked over. He rose immediately to his knees and glancing wildy around grasped at his uncovered head. The skin on it burst open like an envelope and blood streamed out. He was born away to the First Aid cabin. Flag-lieutenant Krjijanovsky, whose hands were covered with wounds from tiny flying fragments, went off into the helmsman's department to put the helm straight. All the apparatus in the cabin had been destroyed and thus communication with other parts of the boat was held up.

About three o'clock the rostra, the upper pilot's cabin, the front bridge and the cabins on it were caught by the flames. The cabin floor was strewn with corpses of officers and sailors. Only four remained alive. Admiral Rojestvensky, Flag-captain Clapier de Cologne, Flag-pilot Phillipovsky and a quarter master, and these were all wounded. A terrible alternative faced them, either to smother in the smoke or be burnt to death. The cabin was now surrounded by the flames like a saucepan on a bonfire. Communication with the bridge was cut off. Only one course remained, to get out by the central post. The four men pushed aside the corpses, opened the hatch and let themselves down by the vertical pipe that ran into the bowels of the ship, almost to the bottom. They were all afraid for the Admiral. If he should lose his hold, he would be smashed to bits on the floor. But he arrived safely at the central post.

Outwardly the *Suvorov* was unrecognizable. She had lost her main masts and stern funnel, the bridges in the stern and the forepart of the ship were destroyed, the whole of the upper deck was in flames, great gaps yawned in her sides, there was nothing about her now to recall the leader of the squadron. Enveloped in a cloak of black

smoke with broken foremasts and one rickety funnel she looked from a distance like the silhouette of a Japanese cruiser of the *Matsushima* type. After the attempt of the *Alexander III* to break through to north round the tail of the enemy just ahead, the *Suvorov* which was floating about helplessly in the battle arena, cut away from the column and appeared on the side of the enemy. The ships further behind which had not observed the circumstances of her getting out of line, took her for a Japanese ship and opened fire on her.

The ship was now being piloted from the central post. Only Colonel Phillipovsky of all the staff remained there. The rest had cleared out. The Admiral had gone, too. Deserted by all he wandered disconsolately for a while about the lower part of the ship limping a little and stopping sometimes to think. He wanted to go up on top but the way was barred by flames. He gave no more orders. The sailors busy with their own jobs, paid no attention to him. On his own ship, he had become as unnecessary as an outsider.

At last they managed to put the helm straight and the ship, directed by the engines alone and keeping in the shelter of her column, attempted to follow the squadron. Silence fell. The officers and men remaining on duty endeavored to put out the fire and bring the ship into some sort of order. The artillery orderlies were called out from the magazines to help to put out the fire and the spare hose pipes were dragged up from the boatswain's store room. The corpses were carried away, pathways cleared along the decks, temporary rope ladders were made to take the place of the broken gangways. On taking a brief survey of the artillery it was found that only the prow and the centre six inch turrets on the starboard side remained intact since they had not been used in the battle, and several three inch guns in the battery and the stern casemate could be used. The ruined funnels would not draw properly and so steam went down. In her mutilated state, the flagship was of absolutely no value in the battle and only hindered the maneuvers of the squadron since it did not like to desert its admiral.

At that moment Flag-captain Clapier de Cologne, who had just come to himself, staggered about the vessel asking everyone the same question:

"Where's the Admiral?"

In the whole history of battles at sea, it was perhaps, the only case in which the captain or, to put it in the words of a landsman, the chief staff officer had lost command of the vessel.

"He passed by here," said some.

"He went up somewhere on top," said others. At last one of the officers was able to give more exact directions:

"The Admiral is in the right central turret."

Shortly before five the *Surovov* appeared once more between our column and that of the enemy, and was again subjected to heavy punishment. All her funnels were now smashed up, great tongues of flames leaped the heap of broken iron like a volcano in eruption. Our ships passed her. It was impossible to look on this picture of devastation and death without a shudder.

Seeing her helpless state the enemy resolved to mine her. A detachment of torpedo boats started out from behind the line of battle ships and attacked the *Surovov*. But the wounded lion still retained enough strength to beat off the jackals that had arrived before their time to get their prey. With the help of the engines she turned her starboard to the attackers, met them with a salvo from her few remaining guns and beat them off, showing so to speak, her few remaining teeth.

The iron clad *Oslabya* had perished long since. While our ten remaining ships of the line as they sped southwards carried on a desperate artillery duel with the Japanese squadron.

The *Suvorov,* hardly able to move, pitched first to one side and then to the other. The upper deck had sunk so much with the heat that it pressed on the battery below. The stokers were suffocated with the smoke drawn downwards by the ventilators. The armor plates on the sides had been loosened, the abutting points had fallen apart, and leaked in many places. But in spite of having been put out of action the doomed ship continued obstinately to float in the water as if she were determined not to sink.

The torpedo boats *Byedovy* and *Buiny* looked like twins from a distance but on closer examination a great difference was apparent. The *Byedovy* was commanded by Captain Baranov. This was an officer of the guards, a man of 49 with a dashing bearing, a long silky beard divided in two below wavy hair and a sloping brow—all harmonizing excellently with height and broad shoulders.

The *Buiny* was commanded by Captain Kolomeitsev a thin, fair, well built man of 38 who had a habit of striding impulsively up and down the deck.

Baranov whenever he happened to meet with any of the higher members of the staff, was always able to report so cleverly and graphically that they involuntarily thought:

"Of course, a man like that could never lose his head no matter what the circumstances."

There was nothing about Kolomeitsev but his modest exterior, his tremendous will power, daring, the resourcefulness and presence of mind of a real seaman.

Admiral Rojestvensky had the highest opinion of Baranov, but did not care much for Kolomeitsev. The latter was very independent and incapable of creeping before his superiors. Reports on his torpedo boat usually read as follows:

"As usual, the torpedo boat *Buiny* was conspicuous by her impetuosity and spoilt the column."

Baranov had never finished his course at the naval college and although a captain went on taking lessons in steering from Colonel Phillipovsky. He was never known to read a book. But Kolomeitsev was well read and had evidently received a good education. He knew several foreign languages and had sailed about the world. From his inferiors he demanded not outward show, but a sound knowledge of seamanship, an understanding of machinery and accuracy of aim in naval gunnery.

Baranov's boat had to be kept as clean and shining as the tsar's yacht. Kolomeitsev kept his boat up to the highest degree of preparedness for battle.

Before the Ruso-Japanese war Baranov had made himself famous by his saying:

"I believe that in time people will invent a long distance apparatus for enabling people to continue their connubial relations."

Before this war Kolomeitsev had been in command of the icebreaker *Yermak* and had proved himself a first rate captain, and now the Battle of Tsusima where real valor and not theatrical show was called for, had placed these two captains in sharp contrast to each other.

The *Byedovy* although she had been ordered to accompany the flagship had never once approached her in the course of the battle. This torpedo boat had not fired a single shot nor laid a single mine. She stole away by night from the doomed squadron.

The *Buiny* had been in the firing line all the time making desperate efforts to repulse the enemy. As soon as the *Oslabya* had been put out of action it was the *Buiny* that managed at great risk to herself to save the crew. And when she saw the crippled burnt *Suvorov* without masts or funnels it was she that went to the rescue of Rojestvensky and the whole staff.

But what had happened to the deserted squadron-leader? This question no longer interested anyone. No one even mentioned the *Suvorov.* Hundreds of the living remained on the battleship. Perhaps they were hoping that the staff would remember them and give orders for the transfer of the doomed flagship's crew to some other vessel. But the staff was busy arranging for its own flight and had forgotten all about its duty.

As afterwards learned the *Suvorov* met with a terrible fate. At the end of the day shortly after seven o'clock in fact, torpedo boats appeared from the Japanese side and went like a pack of bloodhounds, straight for the once powerful but now dying lion. The latter gave its death roar. The last three inch gun blazed away as before in the stern casemate. Ensign Cursell remained at his post. Only by going right under the nose of the ship and thus placing themselves outside the direct range of fire from the stern could the Japanese send their mines nearly point blank. The mutilated, tortured battle-

ship received three of four salvos simultaneously; threw up a tall tongue of flame like a golden wing and sank rapidly wrapped in a cloud of black and yellow smoke.

Not one man was saved.

Five cables away from the *Suvorov* the *Kamchatka* gave up the ghost a few minutes later. She had tried to defend her flagship in spite of having only four little forty-seven millimetre guns. A great shell burst in her bows and she swiftly followed the battleship.

Not one of all the *Kamchatka's* crew which had included more hired hands than regular seamen remained to tell the tale.

> The rest of the battle was spent not in fighting but in finishing off the scattered Russian ships. The remains of the ruined squadron floated about in small detachments in different parts of the sea. During these wanderings the ancient cruiser *Dmitri Donskoi* and the torpedo boats *Byedovy* and *Grozny* met with the *Buiny*. The vessels slowly approached each other. Kolomeitsev knowing that the engine of his boat was out of order, the boilers coated with brine and the coal almost finished, suggested to Rojestvensky that he should change over to the *Dmitri Donskoi*. Rojestvensky thought for a moment and then for some reason or other gave orders to transfer him to the *Byedovy* although the latter had behaved so treacherously with regard to the flagship a few hours ago. The whole of his staff transferred together with the admiral. And although the order had been given for Vladivostok the first question asked as soon as the staff had boarded the *Byedovy* was:
>
> "Is there a white flag on the ship?"
>
> The staff was already thinking of giving itself up. Baranov smiled pleasantly when he heard this. It was all quite clear to him now why Rojestvensky had chosen his torpedo boat.
>
> And those simple folk, the sailors, still went on thinking that the vessel was going to Vladivostok while on the captain's bridge measures were being taken to bring about a meeting with the Japanese.

The *Byedovy* and the *Grozny* went along in the same direction without putting on speed. Some unknown ships were racing after them at a much greater speed. To the right ahead, the contours of Dagelet Island could be seen. The officers on the *Byedovy's* bridge were exchanging opinions.

"Some of our cruisers that lagged behind are following us."

"Yes, that's right. They left the squadron behind yesterday and now they're hurrying to catch up."

"That's clear. The fact that they're following the same course as we are proves it."

Lieutenant Vecheslov remarked gloomily:

"And supposing they turn out to be Japanese?"

But Colonel Phillipovsky put him down at once with:

"Japanese boats never go in pairs, but always in fours."

Lieutenant Vecheslov was not to be put off, however:

"In any case we should get up steam in the two remaining boilers."

But the commander objected to this:

"Why should we do that before it's time? Let's wait a bit and see whose the vessel is. If it's ours all the better for us. We can always get up steam if it be necessary."

Clapier de Cologne and Baranov went down to the Admiral and began to talk to him about something.

Two single masted vessels made their appearance astern. A little later it was obvious that they were torpedo boats. The first one had two funnels, the one behind four.

The *Grozny* signalled: "Enemy torpedo boats."

On the *Byedovy* the engines were even now working with only two boilers. The mechanic increased speed on his own initiative. The decisive moment was coming. The commander and the staff officers began to be anxious. How should they disguise their intention before the others? An awkward kind of game began. The mechanic Ilintovich was called up to the bridge and told to get up steam in the rest of the boilers.

In a couple of minutes Flag-captain Clapier de Cologne reversed the order.

Baranov called up the head stoker Vorobiev and began to questioned him.

"How long would it take to get up steam in the other two boilers?"

"About forty minutes your excellency. That would allow us ample time."

"Why should it take so long? The water must be hot, isn't it?"

"No, your excellency. It's had time to cool down."

Then the commander thought of a new question:

"How much coal have you got?"

"We've still got a good bit of coal, your excellency. Plenty."

"You'd better go down to the coal bunkers and have a look. Make quite sure about it and then report to me, do you hear?"

"Yes sir," replied Vorobiev. He puzzled over the commander's order on his way to the coal bunker.

He saw Popov, the mechanic on deck as he was going down the hatchway and nodding his head in the direction of the bridge muttered:

"They're trying to throw dust in our eyes. It'd be better if they said straight out, 'We don't want to fight any more.' I never wanted this war, I'd like to have finished with it long ago."

"I noticed sometime ago that they were going about with their tails between their legs," rejoined Popov. "We'll make a show of ourselves if we give in without a fight. There'll be such a row in Russia when the whole story comes out." In the meantime the signallers had been given orders to make a white flag out of a table cloth and a Red Cross flag and run them up in the halyards.

A hurried and rather bewildered conversation was taking place between the commander and the staff officers on the bridge.

"Our *Byedovy* is only a hospital ship," said Baranov glancing from one to the other as if begging them to confirm this ridiculous idea.

"Of course, that's perfectly true," agreed Colonel Phillipovsky, stooping forward and nodding his bandaged head. He was much calmer than the others, but for some reason or other kept tearing his pince-nez from his thick nose, polishing them hastily with his handkerchief and putting them up again to his dark, slightly bulging eyes.

"There are so many wounded on this boat, of course," Captain Clapier de Cologne agreed drawing his thick black brows together in a dissatisfied frown.

"And the chief thing is that the commander of the squadron has been put out of action," declared Lieutenant Leontiev.

It was all a downright and flagrant lie, but they went on bringing all sorts of evidence in favor of the new situation as if they wanted to convince themselves and each other that it was the truth. And no one brought forward the obvious objection that according to international law, hospital ships were obliged to bear various distinctive marks and be painted a special color to distinguish them from the other boats, and that the enemy was always warned of this beforehand. In this case the torpedo boat was being called a hospital boat on the very slender foundation that a few wounded happened to be on it. Any cruiser or battleship then could be placed under the protection of the Red Cross that way.

The *Grozny* caught up to the *Byedovy* and going round her starboard semaphored:

"What are we to do?"

"At what speed can you go?" asked the *Byedovy* in her turn.

"Twenty-three knots."

"Go to Vladivostok."

"Why go? Why not fight?"

But the *Grozny* could not wait for a reply to her last question.

The Japanese torpedo boats were within shooting range. The *Grozny* sounded the alarm and began to put on full speed. On the *Byedovy* the gunners took up their posts without waiting for orders. But a whistle rang out immediately and after it the voice of the boatswain Chudakov:

"Don't touch the guns!"

The staff officers came down from the bridge to the deck. Lieutenant Leontiev ran from one gun to another shouting at the gunners:

"Don't dare to do that! Not one shot must be fired! Don't you understand, we've got to save the Admiral's life?"

"What does all this mean, your honor? The Japanese will drown us like a litter of pups."

"They have no right to. Our torpedo boat is a hospital vessel."

Colonel Phillipovsky tried coaxing the sailors:

"Now look here, lads, we're trying to save the Admiral you know. He's worth more to Russia than the boat."

And Clapier de Cologne added:

"A torpedo boat is nothing. You can easily build a new one, but you won't be able to replace an Admiral like that."

They wanted to run up the flags then and there but the captain caught himself in time and sent Lieutenant Leontiev to announce his intention to the Admiral. Leontiev ran below with Midshipman Tsvet-Kolyadinsky and returning immediately declared:

"The Admiral has agreed."

In a moment a white flag was waving on the foremast, a Red Cross flag on the main mast. Then they signalled: "Wounded on board."

The *Grozny* made off full steam ahead. A two funnelled torpedo boat *Kogero* started in pursuit. They fired on each other. The other Japanese torpedo *Sazanami,* a four funnelled boat opened fire on the *Byedovy.* This took place at twenty-five minutes past three in the afternoon at about five or six miles on the left coast of Dagalet Island. The enemy shells missed the Russian boat always either falling short of it or passing right over. The officers on the *Byedovy's* bridge were flustered. Midshipman O'Brien de Lassy ran to the stoker's to burn the signal books, the maps and secret documents. Baranov ordered them to stop the engine, and then:

"Run down the flag astern." Lieutenant Leontiev and Signaller Tonchuk ran to the quarter deck and the St. Andrew's flag disappeared.

Baranov hid behind the boiler casings and squatting down on his heels, screamed out:

"Curse them! What are they shooting for, cockeyed savages! Can't they see our flags?"

Then he rushed up to the signal halyards and sounded the siren as if he were asking for mercy from the enemy.

The *Grozny* got further and further away every moment trying to repulse the *Kogero* as she went.

The *Sazanami* was silent at last. It approached the Byedovy cautiously and then began to go around her with shouts of *Banzai! Banzai!* The mechanic Ilyutovich gave orders in the engine room to be prepared. Then he went up to the flag captain and said: "Permit me to sink our torpedo boat. In ten minutes she will be at the bottom."

But Clapier de Cologne seized his head in desperation.

"What are you talking about? You don't want to drown the Admiral, do you? The doctor says he must not be moved."

A little later a Japanese sloop came alongside. At that moment practically the whole of the crew was on deck. Commander Baranov stood by the ladder in front

of the rest. He stood as if at attention stroking his silky beard. The Japanese officer who as they afterwards learned was Lieutenant-captain Iba, the commander of the *Sazanami* drew his sword suddenly as he came up on deck. It looked as though he had gone crazy with excitement and was ready to cut off his captives' heads. Some men shuddered, many closed their eyes in horror. But he ran past the people to the wireless cabin and cut the wire. In the meantime Japanese sailors swarmed in the stern and ran up the flag with the Rising Sun. After that Lieutenant-captain Iba ordered them all to stand in line, and announced in English:

"I'm Commander here!"

The staff began to explain why the *Byedovy* had surrendered. Semyonov, a lieutenant-captain was one of those who happened to be there. For some reason or other he felt greatly relieved. He stood at attention, emboldened suddenly and even attempted to talk Japanese to the enemy. Lieutenant-captain Iba listened attentively and cross examined the officers. What was his astonishment when he learned that the Commander of the squadron, Vice Admiral, Lieutenant-general Rojestvensky and his staff had fallen captive to him as well as the other officers of the vessel. Iba was a nimble boyish-looking fellow. He showed his few teeth with delight and drew in his breath with a sharp sucking sound as if he were gulping hot tea from a saucer. His yellow, clean-shaven face with its oblique black eyes took on a peculiar expression as if a miracle had appeared to him. He nodded his head and said breathlessly:

"I shall take the Admiral on to the *Sazanami* with me."

The officers began to dissuade him:

"We beg you to leave the Admiral on the *Byedovy*. He is badly wounded. He will die if you move him."

They then came to an agreement: instead of the Admiral four offiicers were to be transferred to the *Sazanami* as hostages.

"Where is the Admiral?" inquired the Japanese.

"He is in the Commander's cabin. The doctor says he must not be disturbed."

"Oh, no. I won't disturb the Admiral, I only want to look at him."

The Japanese officer minced away rapidly to the stern gangway and went below. He was obviously excited as he opened the door pointed out to him. The Admiral lay in the bunk. He glanced wearily at the unfamiliar face, without expressing either surprise or alarm. Their eyes met. The door closed softly behind the Japanese.

A few minutes later Rojestvensky was informed by the flag captain that four officers were being taken on to the Japanese torpedo boat as hostages. He asked for them to be sent to him. When they entered the cabin he was sitting up on the bunk in his nightshirt, his legs dangling, his deathly white face with its scorched beard bent.

The bandaged head slowly raised itself and rolled weakly from side to side. His eyes brimmed over with tears. His mouth went awry, and in a broken voice he gasped out:

"My poor fellows, poor fellows."

He who had always been cruel and heartless and had never been known to pity anyone, suddenly burst into tears. It was an extraordinary sight, as unbelievable as the sight of a she-wolf crying over the puppies that she had formerly stricken with terror. The officers looked at their commander in silence. He kissed each of them goodbye.

Soon the Japanese sloop was bearing away her officer and the four Russian hostages to the *Sazanami*.

The *Dmitri Donskoi* and the *Buiny* never got to Vladivostok. As soon as the latter had signalled "In trouble," the whole crew, including Kolomeitsev and the unfortunate survivors of the *Oslabya* were taken on to the *Dmitri Donskoi*. The torpedo boat was then sunk by the Russians themselves so that she might not fall into the hands of the Japanese In spite of the fact that the target was practically immobile and at close quarters the firs

six shots missed the mark. How then could an artillery as badly trained as that hope to sink the Japanese fleet?

The *Donskoi* was attacked by the pursuing Japanese squadron. At the last moment she fought heroically and did a good deal of damage to two Japanese cruisers. Then shattered as she was, with water soaking in through her hold and listing heavily at an angle of about five degrees, she managed to get away in the twilight to Dagelet Island. There they all landed.

The Japanese vessels appeared once more. But the *Dmitri Donskoi* was already lying quietly with her sea cocks open on the bottom of the sea. The Japanese got nothing but captives.

Only the torpedo boat *Grozny* and two small craft arrived in Vladivostok. And that was all that remained of the squadron.

But let us turn back to the 14th of May.

The flagship *Suvorov* had suffered so much right from the beginning of the battle that she never could recover. She was out of action. The squadron had no one to guide it and was left entirely to itself. And just at that moment the battleship *Alexander III,* a name that will always be associated with the worst of the Tsusima horrors, appeared on the scene to take the *Suvorov's* place. She placed herself at the head of the column and led it after the squadron had been deprived of its Admiral. Twelve Japanese ships fired on her, and she bore the whole brunt of the salvos and thus saved the rest of our vessels throughout the day's artillery battle at the cost of her own destruction. She showed such initiative as she was capable of and in the hopeless situation sheltered the *Suvorov* more than once and attempted to break away northwards round the enemy's flank. Once she managed under cover of the fog, to draw the squadron out of range of the enemy fire. For several hours she carried on the battle with superhuman courage against overwhelming enemy forces.

Towards evening it could no longer be called war, but slaughter.

The battleship *Alexander III* was unable at last, like the other boats to hold out longer against the enemy. By six o'clock she was listing heavily and was out of action. She looked frightful. Scores of holes gaped in her sides, her superstructures were smashed to pieces and she was enveloped in a cloak of black smoke. Fountains of flame burst from the debris. It seemed as if the fire would make its way to the bomb-cellar and that the battleship would be blown up. But after a little while she righted herself, and still making feeble attempts at firing took her place once more in the column. It was a last brave effort to repulse the enemy, a last deathly endeavor not to lag behind in the fight.

What was happening on her bridges, in the cabin, the turrets and on the deck while the battle went on? Who actually was commander, who succeeded in maneuvering so cleverly in the deadly grip of the Japanese attack? Was it the commander, Captain Bukhvostov, his assistant, Plemyannikov or perhaps the youngest of the midshipmen remaining? Maybe when none of the officers were left on the ship the chief boatswain or just a helmsman had guided the boat and after her the whole squadron? It will remain forever an impenetrable mystery to future generations of sailors. But the conduct of that proud boat in the most terrible sea battle that history has ever known, will continue to call forth amazement and admiration.

The battleship when she returned to the ranks, took her place in the centre of the column giving up her honorable position at the head to another of her own type, the *Borodino.* In her new place the *Alexander III* managed to keep up for 20 or 30 minutes more. But it only took a few more shells to rob her of her life forever. This time she heaved over to the left. Obviously, the helm belt was mined: the helm lay on the side. Water rushed into the ship, dashed over her listing side and all was over.

The cruisiers *Admiral Nakhimov* and *Vladimir Monomakh* watched the *Alexander III.* They could see her roll over on her side like a felled tree. Many of her crew

threw themselves into the sea, others crawled along the bottom as she turned, towards the keel. Then the battleship turned over suddenly and kept afloat for two minutes in that position. People clung to her huge bottom overgrown with seaweed like a green beard. Those sailors who had been floundering in the waves climbed onto her, thinking that she would probably keep afloat like that for a long time. It looked from a distance as if a great sea monster with its strands of seaweed and a rusty keel of a backbone was floating there. The people crawling about on it resembled crabs.

The rest of the ships went on their way, fighting as they went. There was a strong breeze. There, where the *Alexander III* had been, great waves rolled, bearing on their crests bits of wood, dumb witnesses of the frighful drama. And no one would ever know of the torments endured by the folk on that battleship, for not one of her crew of 900 survived to tell the tale.

Three Japanese Poems

SONG OF THE DAWN by Ruusai Kin

The daybreak is at five o'clock: it sparkles
Upon the grass that is moistened with dew.
Four young men are gathered
At the foot of the iron bridge at Arakawa:
We are the selected phalanx of the dawn—
The active corps of Y in the northern district.
While we await the handbills for agitation,
We are singing a better world's in birth
With voices vibrating the mist
Which is vanishing at dawn.
It is our salutation to the factory district of Oji,
Reverberating on the surface of rivers
Which slumber in fallow flow.
It is our battlefield, the Oji district.
The smokestacks emitting soot.
The whistles plumes of steam
In the early morning air
Above the streets of struggle and labor.
Now our phalanx encroaches upon them.
Over the walls of the factory
We cast the propaganda bills of Y
For the black stout hands of our comrades
Who have been sucked into iron doors of silence;
To the wounded hands, to the pale hands of women
We give the strong words of the party.
It makes us feel the warmth of blood in the struggle.
O, comrades who stain your fingers
With bourgeois print, comrades who wash your
Sleepy faces by the immense waters of the river,
What do you say?
That the view of the Arakawa,
Which reflects the morning glow of the sky,
Is beautiful? We will cast boulders
Upon its placid surface that you may know
The depth of our hatred in Arakawa
Until the captain of the bill squad comes
Running and singing, our voices resound
Through Arakawa at dawn—
The International Soviet
Shall be the human race . . .

AT LAST, FROM TODAY by Nakano Shigeharu

At last, from today, I am going to live in a six foot dungeon.
The warden closes the door behind me
And I am close, so close to the walls, in the lockup!
I look around . . . In the corner a chamber;

On the steepness of the wall an iron grate.
What! Rapping from the cell next to mine?
I am going to rap back as a demonstration of freedom.
It is my liberty to knock on the wall
To transmit through it the solidarity of labor.

At last, from today, I am going to live in a six foot dungeon.
In this six foot square I will achieve
The continuation of my work.
The stealthy steps of prison espionage
Will not stop me.
The flaying iron and the leadening hose
Will not keep my mind from growing.
I will grow big!
I will grow strong from your political persecution
And will add annual rings like the cross-section of a tree,
Preferably, let us hope, the oak of labor
And my comrades will batter the walls from without!

GROW, CHILDREN! by Kei Moriyama

Your voice is husky and your hair dishevelled
And your limbs are frozen by the stream of the wind:
You are selling the evening paper
At the corner of a darkening street.
Discovering me, you suddenly shout from gladness.
O, my little girl, Our comrade!
I embrace you and ask you of your mother,
But you like to speak of your father—
Your father who is in prison.
For long past he has heard only the sound of the rain,
O, he is strong: no torture can conquer your father.
But he lives with bitter uncertainty
Thinking of you
And the course of the revolution.
O, he is strong: no fortune can conquer your father.
Prison walls are damp with loneliness,
But he holds the hope of our welfare in his heart.
It is spring, now, and he may have heard
The song of the weather from his prison yard.
I hold you in my arms, Ikuko!
You got by! Better than any wench of a millionaire.
No one could interrupt the strength of your courage
And no prison can arrest the passage of time.
Seeing you, my heart grows warm with sadness:
You hold the remnants of the evening paper,
Reporting the decay of bourgeois civilization—
But your stride is vigorous and your heart is brave
As the scarlet temper of the revolution!

Adapted from the Japanese by Norman Macleod,
Masaki Ikeda and Ynobu Konomi

WHITE SEA-BALTIC CANAL

Maxim Gorky

Education by Truth

The falsehood of bourgeois, quasi "humanitarian"—i.e., philanthropic culture has in our time been completely exposed. All the phenomena of the social world are created by the activities of people and the force of this same activity has unveiled the inhuman nature of the phenomena which lies behind the "laws" and honeyed phrases of the humanists. In our time only idiots and "word wizards" are capable of affirming that philanthropy is conformable with self interest—the foundation and "soul" of bourgeois society. Almost the sole manifestation of the "humanitarianism" of the bourgeoisie has been the construction of hospitals—repair shops for the human organism. It is well known that the more care that is taken of a machine the less it spoils and the more profit it produces.

Towards man, regarded as an article of exploitation, as labor power, the self seeking bourgeois has always acted with the most idiotic ruthlessness and, in the face of all its laws—"uneconomically." Hospitals never meant, nor do they mean now that the dominating class looks after the health of the toilers, or cares to create such living conditions as would guarantee the toiling masses from sickness, from premature exhaustion of their strength, from premature death. The expenses incurred in healing spoiled people are covered a hundred fold by the profits accruing from the production of innumerable medical appliances, salves, instruments, etc. Sickness, for the shopkeepers, becomes a source of profit.

The bourgeoisie fought against the illiteracy and the ignorance of the "people" only in so far as this satisfied their demand for literate slaves and defenders of their regime. They would, of course, have cut down their beggarly "expenses" on the education of the working people if only technique could, prepare lackeyes, police and the less important civil servants out of iron. Then in all probability, they would order their technicians to make their high priests of religion and philosophy out of tin plate. And if you could put a gramaphone record of a speech made by a banker or some respected armaments industrialist into such a machine, it would show to decided advantage as compared with live priests on account of its long life and low maintenance costs. Continuing the good work in this sphere, one would soon be able to fill parliaments with members made of oak, or dummies—they would say what was needed, and no need to feed them! And then the living human, turbulent, small fry, such as workers and peasants—could be conveniently reduced in number, or—in view of their uselessness, could be altogether destroyed in some humanitarian way or other.

All this would sound like gloomy fantasy, if we were not aware that attempts have already been made to manufacture iron slaves—Robots, and that some of these attempts have been highly successful; recently, the European bourgeois press reported that an iron policeman had been demonstrated in New York, and that somewhere or other an automatic valet had been invented and constructed—worked by electricity and somewhat inclined to theft.

Yes, everything is possible. The bourgeois world has not only become an habitual liar, it is psychically sick. Its press, the source of lies, libel, dirty gossip, and sadistic

stories—not infrequently relates things far beyond the flight of gloomy fantasy. Here is an example of what is printed in one of the papers:

The number of insane persons in America was never so great as at present.

Their numbers are constantly increasing and the authorities are viewing with concern the fight against this national danger.

A certain well known psychiatrist has calculated that if the development of mental diseases continues at its present rate, in 75 years time half of the population of the U.S.A. will be housed in lunatic asylums and the other half will be working for their upkeep.

Even if this gloomy prophecy is rather exaggerated, then at any rate, the statistics illustrating the growth of mental diseases during the last 10 years point to an exceedingly alarming state of affairs.

In 18 states, the number of mentally diseased people doubled between 1921 and 1931.

New York spent 47 million dollars in 1931 on the maintenance of 73,000 insane; compared with 1921, this is an increase of 350 per cent. In the state of Massachusetts, one fifth of the income is spent on the maintenance of homes for mental defectives.

With increasing frequency—and equanimity, the papers report increases in the number of suicides, particularly in Germany, where the skilled intelligentsia has found itself in a veritable cul-de-sac. Among the suicides are professors, lawyers, judges, actors, doctors,—all of them people whose education has cost the bourgeoisie considerable sums. In my opinion, suicide is quite a lawful action; it is the self sentence of a person who has recognized the criminality of his activity of inactivity. In Germany, people kill themselves because activity is impossible ,and inactivity is fraught with poverty, degradation and death from starvation.

There are innumerable facts which disclose the diseases of the bourgeois world and at the same time throw into sharper relief the poverty and impotence of bourgeois thought, the exhaustion of the intellectual energy of the universal shopkeepers.

The life of the bourgeoisie is an endless chain of meaningless crimes—the greatest were perpetrated in 1830, 1848 and 1871, but in the course of this century, too, the shopkeepers have succeeded in doing something along these lines. They are trying to organize a world shambles which will eclipse the great war of 1914-1918.

Over an area stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean and from the shores of the Arctic Ocean to Transcaucasia and to the slopes of the Pamir, the grand and universally indispensable work of training people in the truth of collective effort is being consumated. Once more do I bring to the reader's notice the construction of the White Sea-Baltic Canal, as one of the facts which graphically demonstrate the success of our educational system.

Enemies of the Soviet Union describe the work of socially penalized persons as forced labor. This is of course, a quite understandable lie on the part of the people blinded by class hatred, a lie uttered by persons who feel the need of blackening in every way the young socialist state which fills them with fear. It is the libellous chatter of the heartless servants of the capitalists, gossip for the sake of filthy lucre. These lackeys are fully aware of the fact that forced labor is compulsory for convicts and prisoners in all capitalist states and takes the same inhuman forms which, prior to October, were common in the prison camps of Tsarist Russia and which excited the cheap and habitually hypocritical indignation of bourgeois humanists. These lackeys are not so ignorant as not to comprehend the fundamental difference in the attitude of the bourgeois and the proletariat toward "criminals." The bourgeoisie looking upon lawbreakers-begotten by itself—as incorrigible, irrevocably casts them out from society, and even castrates some, as is done in the U.S.A. Punishing, the bourgeoisie takes revenge. For the proletarian court, the criminal is a bourgeois product and, in the

majority of cases, an enemy of the working class only through misunderstanding, through ignorance. Destroying an insignificant number of incorrigibles only when their class instincts have developed particularly sharply and inhumanly, when "man really becomes beast"—the proletariat-dictator is able successfully to re-educate a mass of socially dangerous elements, change their quality, discover and develop the socially valuable capacities of individuals.

During the space of 15 years, from among former *bezprizorni* (waifs) and "criminals," in our O.G.P.U. colonies and communes thousands of highly skilled workers have been trained, and not a few hundred agronomists, doctors, engineers and technicians. Such facts are impossible in bourgeois states, where, on the contrary, for insignificant (in comparison with the activities of the big capitalist) infringements of the law, such talented persons, as for instance O. Henry, go to prison. It is quite possible that if the Tsarist government had not murdered the revolutionary, Nicholas Kibalchich, the aeroplane would have been invented in Russia twenty years earlier than it was in Europe.

In the construction of the White Sea-Baltic Canal, several thousand persons participated who varied in the degree of their danger to the construction of socialism, their class enmity to the dictatorship of the proletariat. The vast majority of this mass of humans was composed of thieves, hooligans, kulaks—i.e., inveterate proprietors and exploiters of the peasant masses. It should be borne in mind that kulaks are nothing more or less than the same parasites, the same Razuvaevs and Kolupaevs, who were depicted so sharply and ably with such "righteous indignation" in the liberal popular democratic press and in novels. Nowadays emigré democrats, like dogs who have lost their master, squeal and howl over the bitter fate of these very kulaks and parasites, whom they had studied but not learnt to hate from Gleb Uspenski, Saltikov-Shchedrin and other honest teachers of life.

Foreign democrats of all shades and parties howl and squeal, lie and libel only because they, along with the parasites of all sizes failed in their scheme to participate in the exploitation of the working and peasant masses. They failed and now can never succeed, for the kulak is becoming a worker and they, emigrés, will soon die out.

How did the process of re-training socially dangerous and socially useful persons develop on the construction of the White Sea-Baltic Canal? What methods were used for this purpose? The variegated army of criminals, wreckers, and enemies was told: The White Sea has got be joined by a canal to the Baltic Sea. You have to build a waterway 227 kilometers long; you will have to work in forests, in bogs, blow up masses of granite, change the course of swift-running rivers and raise their water level 102 metres by means of locks. Over 20 million cubic metres of earthworks have to be thrown up and over 10 million cubic metres of gravel have to be dug up. All this work has to be completed in the shortest possible time. You will be given good food, good working clothes and boots, decent barracks, you will have movies and clubs. Apart from this, the government doesn't promise you anything. Your work will prove your worth.

The morale of this socially nondescript army of future fighters against nature and organizers of nature's forces, was, of course, highly varied. In the O.G.P.U. labor correction camps they teach you to read and write, and the rudiments of political economy. Man is an intelligent animal and foolishness is seldom a quality which depends upon his constitutional peculiarities—more often it is a result of bourgeois class coersion. Among the scores of thousands not a few were found who understood the deep state significance of the work proposed. People who were physically fit, who loved and were used to overcome opposition, wished to "prove themselves." The stormy Karelian rapids and the bogs, fields and forests strewn with enormous boulders, the elemental work of glaciers—here was something worth fighting.

Some people there were who had begun already to see faintly the absurdity of the struggle of man against man—a struggle forced upon them by all the conditions of bourgeois society; they saw something of the absurdity of working for capitalism, which is the mainstay of poverty. In this army, there were also wreckers, serving sentences of up to 10 years. One of these, an old man 60 years of age, at his trial, said: "If the interventionists had landed, I would have joined them immediately." In the past he had solved many difficult technical problems, had made a big name and a large fortune for himself. In his own words—"I lived well, wanted for nothing." He was sentenced to 10 years, served two years in a camp and in the spring of 1933, in his autobiography, wrote: "In the Karelian forests, in the technical workers' barracks, I got to understand what is real work. . . . what it feels to be an engineer, endowed with genuine energy, comprehending the aim of his efforts—the working masses."

Even in my old age, I am unable to philosophize much but the idea of re-educating people by labor in camps is extraordinarily healthy and beautiful. As regards its practical realization apart from myself let the two thousand udarniks, released long before their time, tell the tale.

Several other engineers were also to be found, they displayed "exceptional self denial and energy" in their work; one of these was given the following recommendation from the chief of works, "Exceptionally industrious and persistent in his work. Displayed allround activity in social life. In spite of his disabilty (he had lost a leg) he traveled widely in the field, visiting various sections where by his able political speeches and personal example he raised the initiative and enthusiasm of the camp inmates in overfulfilling their production tasks and in training cadres."

It goes without saying that all these heroes of labor have been released before expiration of their terms. But before this, for nealy 500 days, they had mingled among thousands of "socially dangerous" prisoners, who were fully aware of the fact that these engineers were "counter-revs." However, even though they were "counter-revs" they worked with complete self-abnegation. This fact could not but excite wonder even among very hard-headed people, and wonder always excites a wish to know: "Why?" And the question was answered both by those whose conduct raised the question and by the "dreaded" chekists, only a few score of whom were on duty amid the thousands at work.

How did the Kulaks work? Here are a few examples:

The Poldipinski gang of the first section consisted of 32 kulaks. During the last ten days of May it made a record of 256 percent of the production norms set for soft levels. This gang did not quit its section even when its relief turned up. It was relieved only on direct orders from the Section Chief.

The "Answer to Order A 1" gang consisted chiefly of kulaks. It worked on the quarries of the Sixth Section, produced 130 to 150 percent of the set norms, was given a premium and put on the Red Labor Roll for high production figures.

There were scores of such brigades. What effect did collective effort in the fight against nature have on the inveterate proprietor? The kulak always reckoned himself able to exploit other people's labor, but was himself a good worker in the field. As a the cock of the walk in the village, the "aristocrat" among the moujiks, was not only robber, he saw himself cleverer and bolder than those whom he robbed. He was used to scorn sluggards and idlers. He calculated thus: if a fellow's poor, then he's a fool, then he's no good. And here he, this ambitious and supercillious fellow was placed under conditions which showed him that idlers, sluggards, thieves and any and every kind of ne'er do well and anarchized small fry could work better than he. Under his very eyes, one time idlers, criminals, and bums ,whom he hated with all the might of a proprietor, became skilled workers, foremen, organizers of labor. Some of them were already managing his energy and, moreover, managing because they understood the technique of labor better than he, the "boss," the village princeling. This could not but

hurt the pride of the kulak, could not but excite his ambition and force him to join in the competition with people whom he hated and despised.

Among these people were many hundreds who refused to work, saying: "Do with us what you will, we won't work!" From morning to night they rolled in their barrack beds, begetting dirt and refusing even to sweep the floor. They yelled out songs, gambled with handmade cards and fought with each other. Sometimes, fed up, they went berserk, broke their plank beds and windows. After these fits of mutiny, some one or other of the "dreaded chekists" would make his appearance. His comrades would warn him: "Look out, be careful. They may do you in." "O.K." he would answer and crawl into the nest of asps and gadflies. He would be met with catcalls and insults, they yelled at him "You can't persuade us—we won't work!"

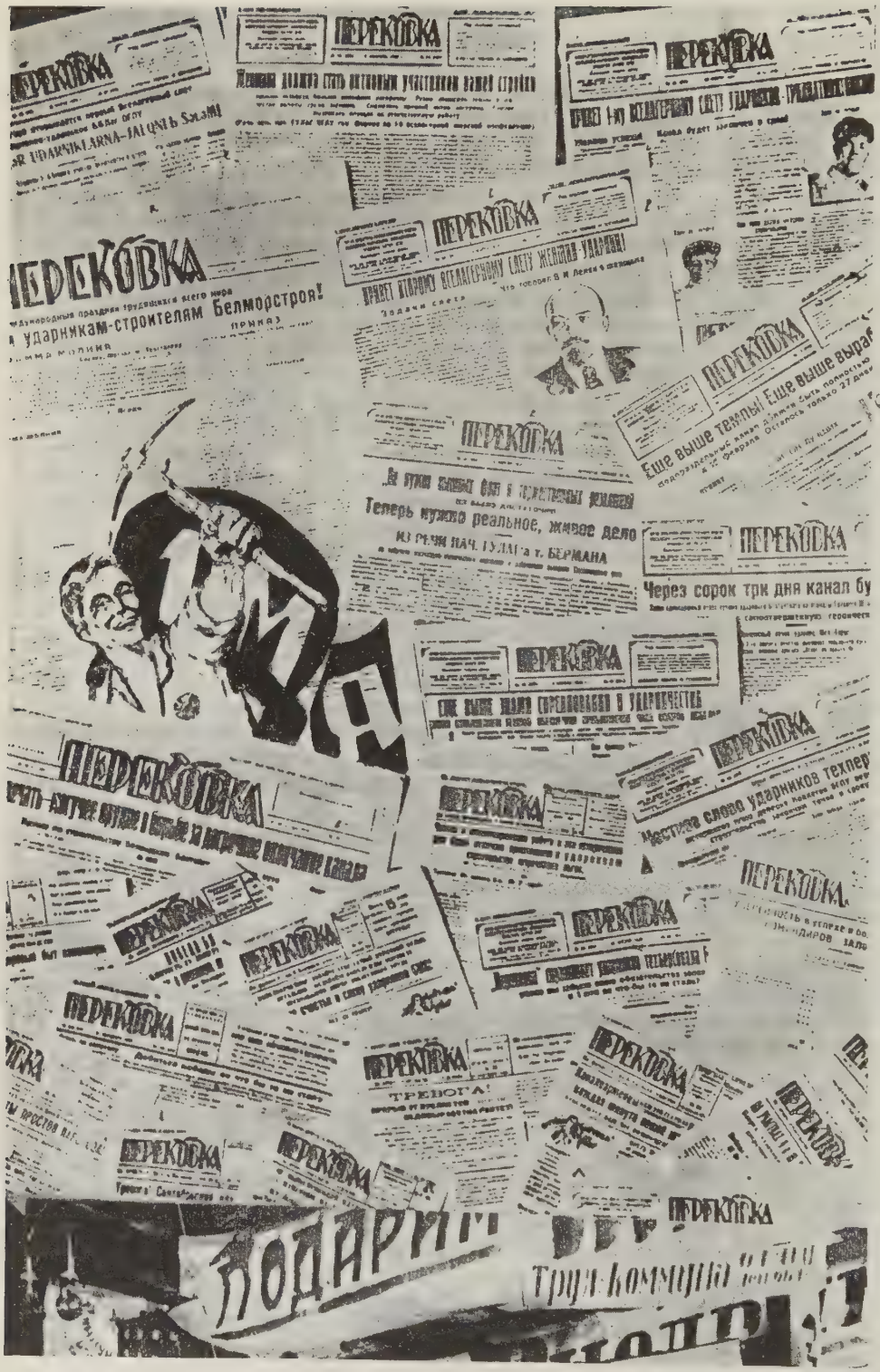
And here began that very coersion so loudly and fiercely and falsely trumpeted by the whole bourgoeisie and all the shop-keepers headed by the lords and the prince of Christ's most holy Roman Catholic church, preaching "love to all men" for the sake of the "mites" received from them. As a matter of fact, the coercion of people, anarchized by class society, consisted in a simple introduction to truth—to that awful truth, whose victims these people are.

"—Well, fellows, you won't work, eh? The counter-revs are working and others who were worse and more dangerous than you but you have decided to accept gratis the bread of the workers and peasants, the masters of the Soviet Union? You want to live like parasites, like rats and mice? You are young yet—your life is still ahead of you—think it over—why did you fellows become criminals and law-breakers?" Very few had even given a thought to this question. Why? And here they were forced to ask themselves this question. Separate lectures were read to those whom this question plainly agitated—they were trained as agitators of truth, agitators of honest labor. In a short while, people who did not fear the supreme penalty, death, began to be afraid of being chalked up on the black board, were afraid that they would be shown up as "white livered chickens" in their newspaper *Reforging*.

What results did the Soviet Government and Soviet society achieve from such coercion? Small articles, whoever may be their authors, can never give a full clear account of the work done on the construction of the White Sea-Baltic Canal. This can only be done in a book and people have already started on it. The gist of this article is: a large army of skilled workers has been trained. Acquainted with hydraulic technical engineering construction, this army will work on the Moscow-Volga Canal, on the Kamyshinski Dam and other colossal constructions indispensable to our country.

Hundreds of talented persons have been salvaged from the "criminal world" such as, for instance, a former thief who is now a talented sculptress. Tens of thousands of former criminals have either been awarded civil rights, or had their terms reduced. This is sufficiently eloquent and demonstrative of the usefulness of training people by truth, and of the excellent results which it gives.

AT THE WHITE

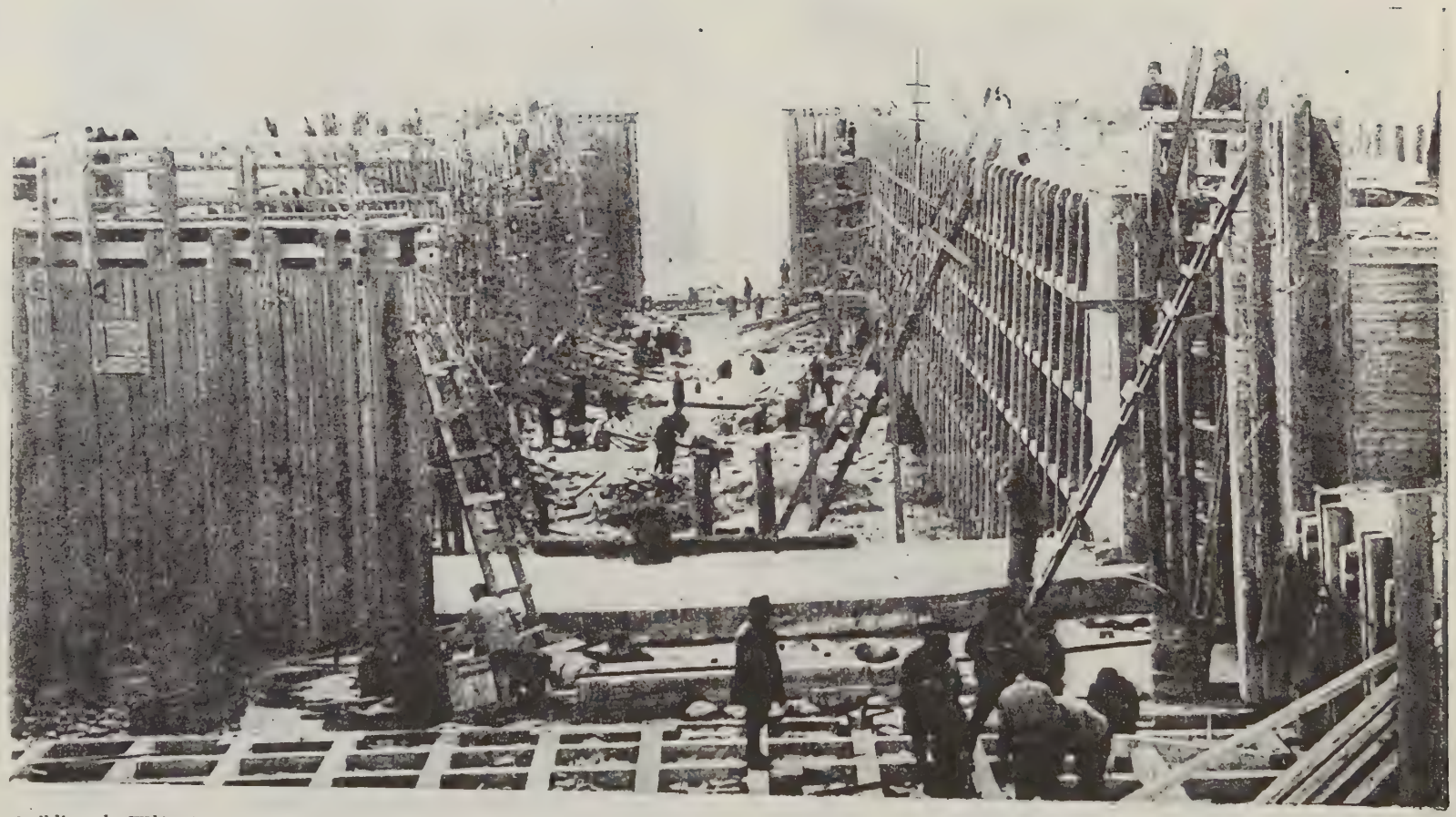


An Exhibit of Reforging *the Paper of White Sea-Baltic Canal workers, daily proof of the Re-making of Man*

SEA-BALTIC CANAL

Open-Air Theater for the Presentation of the Workers' Own Theatrical Plays

Sculpture and Painting Studio of the prisoner-workers on White Sea-Baltic Canal



Building the White Sea-Baltic Canal where New Men were also Built

THEN AND NOW

Related by the Builders of the White Sea-Baltic Canal

I WAS A THIEF

When I was 17 I eloped with a young fellow, and at once fell into the underworld of thieves. Easy money. Merry company. Dining parties. In spite of the fact that I was beaten up more than once, this kind of life appealed to me. I was young.

In a few months, I was already up on my first trial for theft. And that set the ball rolling—theft, trial, prison. You do your time, are released—and start again. . . . I really can't remember how many aliases I had.

Last year I was brought to the Baltic-White Sea Canal Construction Camp. Here everything surprised me very much. People worked so, you couldn't believe your eyes.

I was taken into the "New Path" Labor Collective, and sent to work on the dam. I refused to work.

They took me "in tow." That annoyed me—who the deuce were they to teach me? They were just like me! Only just learnt to work themselves and teaching me already!

I decided—"Well, you just wait, I'll show you!" Next day I went to the laundry. I worked. Worked my hardest. My hands ached! I wasn't used to it—felt like chucking it up! But I've a stubborn character: nearly rubbed the flesh off my bones, but I did what I wanted—went over the 100 per cent line first go! And then when I got used to things, nobody could catch up with me. In the days of the shock-brigade attack, I turned in 200 per cent every day! And caught up with those who wanted to take me in tow!

In the labor collective, we had reading and writing classes. I was illiterate and had long wished to learn to read and write. But then, when I was free, I had no time for that. But here I decided to study. I learnt quickly.

I commenced to read the newspaper. It interested me. Was drawn into social work. Then I joined the political circle.

One day our teacher came to us, and said:

"Come on girls, there's a movie today in the club for those who are udarniks!"

Well I, of course, slipped off like greased lightning to the club. Took a back seat, next to the movie apparatus. The movie operator started the picture. And I stared at him with one eye on the screen—it was awfully funny to see him work. I looked and wondered how in creation he managed things. Started talking to him, and he showed me how and what everything was for. And then I was struck with a burning desire—I wanted to be an operator. And I got there! In our club, I operated the movie apparatus myself, and not so bad, either. Everybody was satisfied and no complaints!

Now my time will soon be up. I received privileges and good marks as an udarnik and social worker. When I leave this camp—The past is over! Now I know how I've got to live. Now I am a movie operator and a working woman.

L. P. Pugacheva

I'LL TELL THE WHOLE WORLD ABOUT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT

My ill luck started with card-games. When I sat down to gamble, I would lose my head. I'd gamble away my own things, and other people's too.

Once I lost 500 rubles. Had to pay and no money. Where could poor Ali find money to pay? Had to pinch it. . . .

I stole once, twice and then it became a habit: it's hard to throw away bad habits—you pick them up quite easily. And in a short time the whole world got to know that Ali Shilikbaev was a horsethief, that he stole peoples' horses.

They brought me to Karelia. It was hard to live there—cold. Couldn't run away, because it was too far away.

Began to gamble again. I gamble—need money—and once more I have no money... Again I've had to steal. . .

The commander said:

"You ought to work, Ali. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. See—all the nationals are working. Nobody gambles but you. Nobody but Ali steals. He's the only thief."

Has a horsethief a conscience? I listened to nobody. Again I gambled, again I stole.

Then they gathered all the non-Russians together. Said that they would organize separate camps for the national minorities—we'd have our own kitchen, a separate hospital and our own theatre.

It was hard to remain by myself. I joined the collective and was accepted. But I didn't work—I just loafed around. Then, my comrades said that I was spoiling the work of the whole collective. On account of me, they were producing less than they should. This was hard to hear. And then one comrade said to me:

"Ali, are you an enemy of the Soviets or not? Why do you work so as to help our enemies? See, the Mullah and the bai (kulaks) try to hinder us just like you."

I didn't know what to say. I didn't want to help the bai at all. Let Shaitan (the devil) help them—not me. Do you think that I will ever forget how they robbed the poor in the old days? Do you think that I will ever forget Bai Kussa in Tanashev, who forced my father to work day and night for a mere pittance?

I went to the chairman of the collective and said:

"Ali also wants to be an udarnik."

This was long ago. Last summer, for the first time I hit the 120 per cent mark. And then produced more—180 per cent of the norms. It was good to live: earned a lot, received big rations, good dinners. Had no time to think of cards because there was plenty of work. Now I don't want to think of them. They brought me too much bad luck. I will always be an udarnik now and will always remain an honest man. Ali will never take cards in his hands any more!

I was respected very much in the collective and in the whole camp. Soon I will be going back home, to Turkmenistan and I shall tell the whole world the truth about the Soviet Government. Let them all know how the Soviet Government turned Ali, the bandit into an udarnik and an honest man.

Ali Shilikbaev
Translated from the Turki.

A NEW LIFE OPENED UP

I was a kulak. Had a large farm. I was disposessed, and I boiled with dumb, ferocious hatred against the government. The idea of revenge, burned deep in my soul.

And one day, I resolved, took my old gun, waited for a dark night and. . . .

I was arrested and sentenced to 10 years for murdering a representative of the government. I was brought to the White Sea-Baltic Canal Construction Camps .

"What shall I do now? How shall I find my place?"

And so I started to look for my place in our socialist construction. And found it.

I began to work—to work genuinely. I decided not to spare myself, to devote all my strength to wipe out my guilt before the Workers' and Peasants' Government, to earn its pardon and the right to become one day an honest kolkhoz worker. I started

work on the rocks. My average output for four months was 200 percent of the set norms.

During all the time that I worked here, the comradely attitude displayed towards me did a lot to keep my courage up. I was well fed, given preference, as are all udarniks and nobody ever reproached me for my past, for having been a kulak. I saw that I had done the right thing and that I would not fail to find my place.

I have just received a great privilege—my sentence has been reduced by three years. This has made me so happy that I feel altogether a new man. If they have reduced the sentence given to me, a former kulak, by three years, then it means that I can and will be an honest worker devoted to the Soviet Government.

I have been told that I worked very well indeed on the Baltic-White Sea Canal. And I say: "I will work better still in the future, wherever I may be sent. Because a new life has opened up before me.

A. P. Strelnikov

I WAS ROBBED OF 35 YEARS OF LIFE

Have you seen the farmers' mills on the outskirts of Odessa? No? They are dastardly contraptions, but they have their own philosophy. When you want to grind your grain, you unharness your horses and lead them to a wooden wheel. This wheel is placed on a steep slope. Hay is placed in front of the horse. The horse wants the hay and reaches out and the wheel goes round and the miller collects his flour.

As a young man, I was harnessed to such a wheel.

To talk frankly, my life could fill ten 500 page novels.

All my life has been a thieve's life and now I want to be trusted, at least in my old age. For 35 years I have been nothing but a thief, although my real trade is tanning. I am tanner from the village of Smela, near Kiev.

In 1905, I was 28 years old. In that awful year, our village was marked for a pogrom. I was young, strong and hot tempered. I didn't wait to be asked to join the defense detachment. I reckoned rightly—better a bullet in your head than a knife in your belly. They gave me a Winchester—you know the sort, 16 cartridges and a hook lock. Up and down, up and down it goes. We hid on the roof and fired. I don't think that I killed anyone. It was the first time I held a gun and I was in a terrible hurry. My wife and kids hid in the neighboring block.

They left me. A year later I was let out from the Odessa prison. I could get no work. But once, in the street, I met a thief I knew. He took me to a drink shop, gave me supper, and said:

"Sam! We did time in one cell together, and I know that you're not a fool. You are awfully sore I know. Do you really want a job, Sam?"

I didn't answer yes or no. I didn't wish to find my fortune in other people's pockets.

I met my acquaintance again soon after this, he was dressed up like a tough. He smelled of good wine. Before we parted, he took out his gold watch to see the time. My family for the last ten days was eating nothing but egg plants, and all our things were in the pawn shop. Hunger loomed in the future. I took the thief's arm, and, not believing my own ears, said:

"Let's have your job."

And now, I'm 56 years old. My children are studying in the high schools and despise me as a socially dangerous element.

It's a sad story.

The wheel rotated quickly under my feet. I escaped from Riga to Berlin, from Berlin to Paris, London, Ostend. I wandered over North Africa and hid in Italy. Perhaps there are people still living who remember my doings in Australia, Hungary, Belgium, North and South America.

My memory is still excellent. I talk six languages better than I do Russian, and can wander through Paris blindfolded. You want to know where I lived? Examine the prison lists of Sing Sing, of the Poltava, Rotterdam, Kiev, Moscow and Odessa prisons. I walked out of prison only to reenter the next day.

Yesterday, the chief called me out. Do you know what he said to me? He shook my hand and said: "You've had a hard life, Kvasitsky. We are releasing you now before your time is up as an udarnik. See that you don't let me down, Kvasitsky. I wish you a hundred years of good work!"

Look at my ticket. Say—its made out properly—eh? The day after tomorrow I will be chatting with my children. They don't dare not to recognize me. The chief promised to find me a job and fix me up with a passport. For five years I haven't stole so much as a single match.

I haven't told you all, yet. I returned to Russia from America. It's a sad story. Disciplinary battalion, three times in the convict's regiment and one desertion from the Second Eastern Siberian Artillery Brigade. I still hoped to cut away from the sink of iniquity and, in my letters to my wife, I promised to reform—swore to it, and continued to steal.

Even the revolution couldn't stop me. I ran fast on my devil's wheel. I wanted to hop off but the company of rogues held me back.

Do you see the stripe on my sleeve? You are talking to the guide of 540 persons. In these barracks there are young thieves, murderers, prostitutes, bandits. Each one of them is building the canal, in each one I see a bit of myself.

For the last five days I have been watching a Leningrad robber. A lad of 21 years of age. Sixteen times indicted. He has worked only one week in the camp and each day is worse than the day before. 75—60—40 per cent of the set work! That sounds like the Strict Regime Detachment. This morning I turned over his mattress to examine his sheets, and found a supply of dried bread. It was clear to me why the lad was reserving supplies. They don't feed escaped prisoners with roast beef at the railway stands. I led the lad aside and said to him:

"You listen to me and don't argue, because I have enough experience to make a dozen thieves like you. You have decided to run away, eh? You depend more on your legs than on your hands—lay more store on a false name than on an honest passport. All right, then—run. . . go and hunt for your fortune in other people's pockets, leave your finger prints with the Criminal Investigation Department, catch syphilis from prostitutes. My, but you've got a merry life in front of you."

Then I changed the conversation. I showed him newspaper cuttings with photos of Kovalev and other udarniks of our collective. I asked the thief what he could do. It appeared that the boy draws a little—draws badly, but it'll do for a start.

In the evening, we drew up our wall newspaper. He drew the cartoons. And he laughed with pleasure and didn't want to go to sleep. He laughed—and that's very important. In another week, he'll eat his bread without waiting to make his escape.

One of these days I'll write a book about that wooden wheel and about Kvasitsky. Such a book—it will make people cry and then laugh and then run and work. I'll write it in six languages.

Most likely, it will be the story of a robbery. A novel, relating how a tanner was robbed of 35 years of life.

Samuel Kvasitsky

IT WAS LUCKY THAT I DID NOT RUN AWAY

As soon as I was told that I was going to Karelia to build a canal, I immediately decided: I'll run away.

I was an old hand at escaping. I had escaped from labor colonies, investigation and

A Theatrical Group of the White Sea-Baltic Canal Workers in Rehearsal

ordinary prisons. You make your escape, get hold of forged documents for an alias, and there you are, until your next arrest. And then—a new getaway and a new alias. You get used to it!

On that account I was glad to go. Take me with you, I figured—I'll make my getaway all the same!

We arrived. Looked around. It's not so easy to escape from here. Too far away!

Decided to postpone my escape for a bit. As to work—I didn't dream, of course, of that. Do you catch me wheeling wheel barrows? Not on your life! Straight away I was sent to the Enforced Discipline Detachment. Promotion! Well, I didn't care a hang for their Enforced Discipline. Besides—it was better here—among friends!

One day, Vetoshkin—he's one of the guides, came to our detachment. Started to talk us into organizing a collective—and to declare ourselves udarniks (shock workers). Of course, we laughed at him at the very beginning. How we reviled and abused him—it couldn't have been worse! Anybody else would have given it up as a bad job straight away—and he stood there, repeating—

"If you don't want to organize a collective,why, you don't have to. Then join any collective—try it out!"

As if it wasn't all the same.

"Udarniks get this, and that, and the other," continued Vetoshkin. "They get privileges, and udarnik rations, and good marks, and are respected."

I listened to him and thought—he's lying, of course. Wants to fool us and make us work. And suddenly I decided—O.K. I'll try you out.. I'll see how the others live in this camp. Not everybody has been sent to the Enforced Discipline Detachment. Went up to the guide and said to him:

"Alright then, sign me up in a collective. Only, if you're lying—watch out. . ."

Joined a collective. Surrounded me, questioned me, made me ashamed of myself. I had to give my word that I'd work together with them.

Started to work. Gave me new clothes, grub, you couldn't wish for better. In reply I put my shoulder to the work—and I got a recordman's rations. Went up to the 200 per cent mark!

I myself can't tell you what happened to me in that collective. You might think that I was a changeling. I got so excited at my work, at the canal, that I forgot everything. When they started forming a gang to storm a breach (in the work on the Water Divide Canal) I volunteered to be sent there. I returned with an udarnik badge. This completely cut me off my past. I was very proud of my badge and still am, and will never part with it—not for anything. And the badge demands from you that you must always be an udarnik!

Now, I am a free citizen. I'm very glad that I didn't run away then. Because, here on the White Sea Canal, I found my place in life.

P.A. Garochin
Released before expiration of sentence.

I DON'T BELIEVE THE RICH PEOPLE ANY MORE

My misfortune consisted in the fact that I believed in the kulaks. It was difficult for me, at first to realize what was going on around me. I tramped over the broad Kazakstan steppes and did everything which the bai (kulaks) told me to do. For me, they were the most respected and wisest people. And together with them I reviled the Soviet Government, told the Kazaks not to pay taxes and was myself first to refuse to pay.

The kulaks led me on to do this—and I did it and thought that it was good. Then I was put in prison, and they brought me here. At the beginning it was very hard here. I didn't know what to do, what would become of me. There were some bai here as well—but, once bitten, twice shy. I soon got to know my friends from my enemies.

Our guide helped me very much. He told us, from the national minorities, about Lenin and Stalin, told us about the Soviet Government, about the bai and how they fooled the workers and peasants. Then I understood that my guilt was great before the Soviet Government, and understood what I had to do now.

I joined up in our national minorities' collective, "The Kazakstan Builder." Started to work honestly. I knew the nature of the big work which we were doing. I was proud of being an udarnik on this job.

I have learned much at the White Sea-Baltic Canal Works and most important of all is that here I got to know my friends from my enemies.

Kovan Gumarov
Released before time.

I AM A HARDENED THIEF

Yes—that's me—Soloviov, Grachov, Tkachov, Petrov—a man with five aliases and six escapes to his credit. I built that dam. And now its finished, my dam is. I—a hardened thief of 20 years standing, have become a Concrete Research Laboratory Man. How it all happened I myself find it hard to explain. I suppose that I was stunned by the trust they put in me. Several thousands of people like myself were brought here and let out in such a place—even a legless fellow would have made an attempt to get away. And there wasn't any guard or any fences, either!

N. M. Kovaliov
Concrete Research Laboratory Man.

TO WIPE THE STAIN OFF THE PAST

Maseov, Viasemski, Zoubrik—these names are always heard on the White Sea-Baltic Canal Construction, when the talk goes about people whose creative mind has enriched Soviet hydrotechnics with constructions and engineering feats, and glorified the new waterway and its builders.

These three engineers are of different schools and varied experience.

Maslov has great erudition—he possesses in full the engineer's "sixth sense"—the sense of accurate technical calculation. Zoubrik is a man of many years practical work and experience on innumerable building jobs. Viasemski, as an engineer, is many years younger than both, he graduated from a Soviet technical college and the White Sea-Baltic Canal Construction was, no doubt, his first big job.

The three of them were united in the past by ties of wrecking activities. Several years of their lives are branded by this heavy crime against the Soviet Government. they allowed themselves to be fascinated by the mercenary agents of the bourgeoisie, flattered themselves in their sorry part of bosses' lackeys. They attempted to stop the powerful advance of socialism's victories by their wrecking activities.

It is not easy to talk with them on their past.

"It's hard to remember that. . . .THAT is worse than death. . . oh, why ever did THAT happen!

But THAT has been expiated. And Maslov, and Viasemski, and Zoubrik have become three of the most brilliant designers and builders of the White Sea-Baltic waterway. They worked intensely in order to hasten the end of the work. They were all dominated by one thought.

"When the water flows along the new canal, bearing boats from the Baltic to the White Sea—it will wash away the past, it will wash away the stains of our wrecking activities."

And now—the canal is finished! The pressure of the water in the lock chambers is firmly held by the high, well built gates. They are made of wood. This was hitherto unknown in hydrotechnics. Nobody had succeeded (in spite of many efforts) in constructing heavy wooden sluice gates for such a tremendous pressure. Maslov, however, succeeded. The sluice gates, indeed, are called—Maslov gates.

Zoubrik contributed another, no less remarkable innovation in the construction of the canal. He designed No. 28 Dam with large under pressure but with inclined, wooden piles.

It is quite plain that the substitution of timber for other, material which would have had to be imported from far away districts, was of no small significance for a canal running through Karelia, timber district.

But if Maslov and Zoubrik helped tremendously economizing materials, then Viasemski saved TIME for the canal. According to his plan, the stormy waters of the river Vig were damned by a weir—an exceedingly daring and peculiar one. Concrete foundation, then stone and earth-work and a wooden lining—quick, cheap and, as it turned out—firm! And when the Vig was damned, many jobs were conducted on dry land, as a result of which the job was done miles ahead of scheduled time.

This trio, Maslov, Viasemski and Zoubrik are now united by other ties. They are bound by the love of the White Sea-Baltic Construction and their devotion to the land of the Soviets. They are convinced—only the U.S.S.R. assures genuine emancipation of humanity and the unlimited development of its servant, technique.

The government has awarded all three high honors, The Order of the Red Banner of Labor.

A. M.

Soviet Writers on the White Sea-Baltic Canal

In August 1933, 120 Soviet writers visited the White Sea-Baltic Canal Construction.

V. Ivanov

(author of *Armored Train No. 1469, Partisans, Asiatic Tales* and other stories.)

I'll tell you the truth—I'm very sorry that I came so late to these grey-blue and rocky forests. They remind you of Siberia—stern youth and nature, of the stern duties of man. It fills you with even greater love for our young, our exceedingly fine, our stern and yet gentle, Soviet land.

People who, only a year or so ago were unable to do anything, did not want to work, people who frankly and sincerely despised work, are now—excellent mechanics, concrete mixers, turners and machinists.

I saw these people, spoke to them eye to eye. I walked through the secluded sections of the camp, stopped people at random and each one, in his own way, told the same story—they saw a new and grand world of labor, the only one for them, a world of socialism. The country has now tens of thousands of excellent new workers and citizens. And the country will receive many more thousands, yet.

In the space of nineteen months, over wild unexplored ground, the land of Karelia, and you should never forget—under hellish weather conditions—two seas—the Baltic and the White Sea—have been linked together.

C. Malishkin

(author of *The Fall of Dant, Sevastopol* and other stories.)

I have seen many big construction jobs, but the White Sea-Baltic Canal—perhaps because it was bound up with peculiar human fates—agitated me most of all. I am a "one story" writer and can't get away from the theme, that has been keeping me busy for the last two years. But I feel that this canal has triumphantly "invaded" my work. How? First of all, with the characters of the people I met there, the chekists and the prisoners; like music it inspired one with complete certainty, and once again I experienced that pride which gives your spine that pleasant icy feeling—pride of the land in which I live.

L. Kassil

(author of *Conduit, Shvambrania* and other stories.)

It is a well known fact that writers are lovers of sensation. We have all seen lots of interesting things, we are all saturated with the most varied sensations. Some of us have traveled abroad, others have flown, have sailed the seas, descended mines, dived under water, lived on great construction jobs. It's not easy to surprise such people. And yet, this wonderful journey amazed even the most hard boiled writers—they were staggered by what they saw and heard, by the tempo, the scale of work, by the stupendous tales told by the chekists, the directors of the work, and by the stories of one time thieves and rogues, pickpockets, burglers and bandits who are now the heroes of an unprecedented creation, people who have passed through a disciplinary school and who have been returned to life renovated and whole.

Ilf and Petrov

(authors of *The Twelve Chairs, The Golden Calf.)*

We have often been asked as to what we are going to do with Ostap Bender, the hero of our novels, *The Golden Calf* and *The Twelve Chairs*—whose conduct in the pages of two novels has by no means been flawless.

It was hard to answer.

We didn't know ourselves. The need of a third volume had already arisen in order to settle our hero down to a quiet life. We didn't known yet how to do it.

Does he remain a semi-bandit or does he become a useful member of society, and if he does, will our readers believe in such a swift reform?

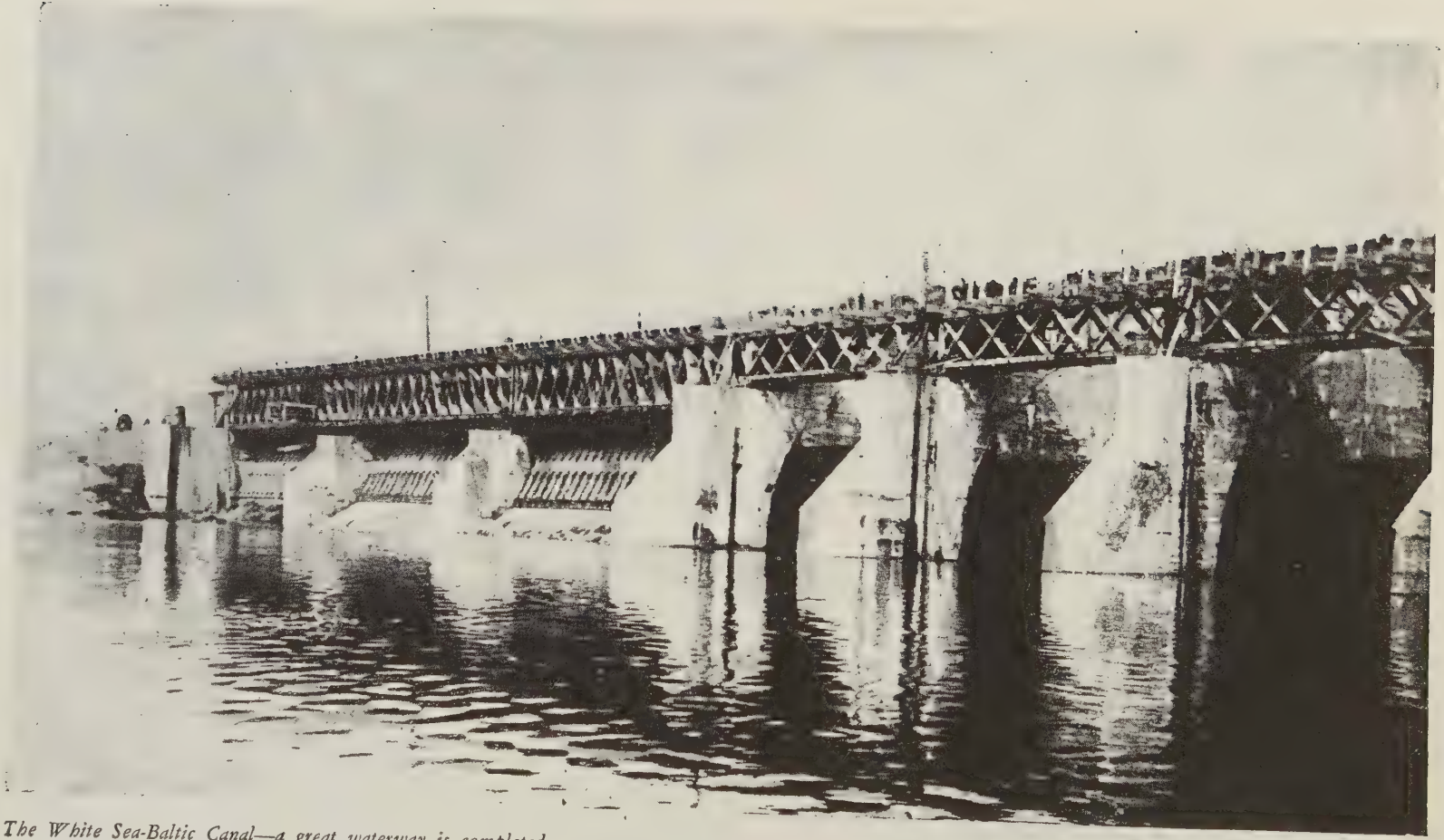
While we have been debating this question, it seems that the novel has already been written, printed and published!

This took place on the White Sea-Baltic Canal! We saw our hero in a multitude of persons ten times more dangerous in the past, than he.

And it took them only the 18 months of this colossal canal construction to complete this journey, in regards to which the authors wouldn't have dared to risk laying their pen to paper without having prefixed that:

"Twenty years went by. The stern school of life hardened Ivan Petrovich" and so on and so forth.

The talented and daring authors of the canal are destroying the traditions whereby life is but slavishly copied—they are re-making life anew.



The White Sea-Baltic Canal—a great waterway is completed

Gafur Gulam

On the Turksib Roads

Along the road,
Old and long,
Passed to and fro
Alexander who conquered the world,
The great Ceasar,
And the murdered Genghis.
And Tamerlane left his traces,
And the Mongols took vengeance,
And China attacked.
They murdered men
And they robbed the gardens.
Blood, blood.
It was bad for the living where Jugi went.

Along these roads
Very ancient,
Across these steppes
And mountains and valleys,
Went slaves and widows,
Their necks in iron chains,
Five, ten, hundreds of millions of men
Condemned, weakened,
Hunted out by sorrow—
And they came again to sorrow.

The caravans with crosses and rosaries
Under the ringing bells and beating tambourines,
Went for months and years.
Confucious and the shamans,
And Islam and Buddha,
Calling to God and offering sacrifice,
Went along these ancient roads.
A grey-haired wall, but a great chain—
A bright arch built of human skulls
On earth moist with blood,
A minaret kissing the sky,
Masses of columns and a sea of flags,
Heroism, pride, and a personal immortality.

Yes, these ancient roads knew many things.
So many things.
On them rushed the hundred-million army
When the conqueror waved his finger.
The Tsar went down these roads on white elephants
To his bleeding throne.

The crown trembled on his empty head
Like a sooty lantern.

And ruin flew from Pekin to Rome,
Ruin went from Moscow to Bombay,
And the unconquerable army moved.
And all the roads were spread with human bones.

Since these roads were ancient,
Then tell us, History,
How many Tsars passed along this way—
These conquerors, these shadows of God?
Did everything melt like smoke,
Or can you count them?
Are there in your heart traces
Clear as amber, bright as a tulip,
Across the sheet on which you, History, are written—
A sheet as great as the earth,
On one side written in blood
And on the other in bleeding gold?

The roads pass as in a half-dream,
Gloomy and grey as smoke,
These roads in the silent spaces of the steppes.
This silence of the steppes is sharper than a sharp knife.
Let a wolf with bleeding mouth
Or a lame dog cry or howl—
What is it about?
Let one strike an alarm,
Then, as a stone thrown into a pool
Speeds rings of water to the beach,
So through the steppe, spreading in rings,
The howling of wolves swims towards the horizon
Along this very ancient road,
For the first time and the last time,
Proceeding with honor, and built with honor,
A knight opens new pages in history.

On this very ancient road
Now only he is conquerer
Only he is winner
With the red flag carried without tiring
From Siberia to Turkestan.
Along this road he carried like a flag
Rails and locomotives.
From Pekin to Rome, from Moscow to Bombay,
Through the desert where snakes crawled,
To the honor of blood and tears,
He carried a road and he created it as a memorial.
And we—pressing the victory in our hands—
We make the road obey.

There is much sense in our skulls
Which are like globes.
A milimetre gives a thousand kilometres.
This is will and knowledge,
This is the Gosplan.
And this giant thing is the way to victories
Which Tamerlane never saw.
We have surrounded the head of the world with a hoop,
And into the veins of history we have poured moulten iron.
On these roads, old and long,
The roads of the new front,
The locomotives with their lances of smoke
Have pierced the heart of the horizon—
With pride and glory ,treading on the ties
Under which are buried religions, traditions,
And out-worn customs that have no place to go,
Crushed by the bronze five-pointed heart of the locomotive.

Along these ancient roads which have seen so many things,
From China to Iran, from India to Turkestan,
Across the whole world the myriads of the proletariat
Will pass quick and fast as a steel caravan
In union and solidarity.
These ancient roads are our immortality.
And along these roads
Will pass a gale of liberty
And not the smell of blood.

Give to Comrade Shatov the last word:
For this steel road
Let's have locomotives
From the red factories!

Translated from the Uzbek by Langston Hughes and Nina Zorokovina with the author's assistance. Tashkent, 1933.

I. Sheinman

In American and Soviet Shops

The Experiences of a Soviet Engineer In Two Countries

I picked the Mining Academy or, more accurately, the metallurgical department there, because I have long been interested in the scientific study of the changes produced in metal by heat treatment. I have always been inclined to practical problems. I did not go to an Institute although that was where most of my fellow workers in the Palace of Labor, where I was employed as the secretary of the shop committee and at the same time of the Komsomol nucleus, usually went. In 1929 I was graduated from the Mining Academy as one of the first five specialists in the USSR on the forging and hot die casting of metal, and was assigned to the Stalingrad Tractor Plant which sent me to America to obtain practical experience.

Our studies at the Academy were pursued under severe conditions. The building was one previously occupied by a "School for Blind Orphans." On the fourth floor of the same building was our dormitory. The house was undergoing continual and prolonged repairs and we were always soiled with clay and whitewash. At the dormitories we slept on plank beds and mattresses filled with wood shavings. At the lectures we sat in our coats and warm winter boots. The teachers often wore the warm winter boots in the room too. I remember that professor Grebenchi wore winter boots so large for him that the toes turned up. He would wipe the blackboard with his sleeve and shake it off there and then.

Almost all of us students held jobs at the same time. Many of us had besides tremendous obligations put upon us in social work. We had to work on tens of different committees. All this of course prevented the normal pursuit of our studies. We studied with energy. Before examinations we would sit for a month and "cram" day and night. We often spent up to 20 consecutive hours on drawings. Every year I spent some time on practical work. I worked at the Revdinsk, Nadejdinsk, Sormov, Tula plants, am familiar with the *Serp i Molot* (Hammer and Sickle) plants in Moscow. But even the practice I had was an insufficient training for the work at the Stalingrad Tractor Plant. In fact I can hardly imagine what I should have done if I had not been to America. Everytime I come across a new technological problem I must turn for a solution to the experience I obtained in America.

We had only a faint idea of what awaited us when we left the USSR. Like going on any other trip, we took along some soap, a towel, a toothbrush. My friend, also just out of school, tied a large metal tea kettle to his tremendous box filled with technical literature. The tea kettle was purchased out of our common funds and with this tea kettle we started for Berlin.

On the platforms of foreign stations we went Indian file. At the very first station in Poland my friend was arrested for calling over a porter and addressing him as comrade.

The First American Plant

The first American plant at which I came to work was that of the John Dere Co. at Waterloo. I have never seen such forge shops as at that plant. I also first saw tractors at this plant where I was put through a short intensive course on them. Two weeks I worked on die pressing, then I went over to annealing. I set myself the task of going through all the main operations as a workman. It seemed to me, and my opinion grew stronger later, that all engineering problems are practical ones. The engineer must know the machines, must know by experience the behavior of the metal in the press and so forth.

The school where I studied the tractor was conducted by an experienced engineer. Whenever necessary, he threw off his grey coat, rolled up his sleeves and went at the machine. Sometimes he put on overalls over his clothes and pothered around with us in oil. Not only he, but all engineers there, were not afraid to get dirty at the machines, handled spoiled parts, took part with the workmen and foremen in fixing them. This is an excellent trait of American engineers.

We lived, together with my friend Sibin, in one room, and evenings we did not fail to note our experiences of the day in our notebook. There was so much that was new, that everything seemed new. We described the shops, the organization of work, the machinery, the production norms, the material, the labor, in fact filled and endless amount of paper.

Soon I was transferred to the drafting room. We were very hampered by not knowing the language, although we began to study it intensively before starting out and continued to study it. Siblin spent an entire evening once constructing a phrase when he wanted to get the specifications of the steel, so that he might ask for them the next morning from the laboratory chief. You can imagine his wonder however, when on pronouncing his well studied phrase, the fat American only opened his eyes wide, then began to laugh and everyone in the laboratory laughed with him. When we got home we made a thorough study of Sibin's phrase. He had meant to say: "Permit me, Mr. Hicks, to take out your specifications," and instead said something like, "Permit me, Mr. Hicks, to take out of your specifications." Just an extra little word "of."

The next plant at which I worked was the Allis Chalmers Manufacturing Co. at West Allis. There I worked at the die shop. I took care of the cleaning of the dies, observed the wear, and took care of all the needed repairs. Then they put me on as apprentice on a 2,000 pound hammer. There I first found out that a fraction of a millimeter means a lot with this enormous machine. At the Allis Chalmers plant I got a wholesome respect for the millimeter, using a micrometer gauge with an accuracy to one-tenth of a millimeter. I found out there that disregard of this quantity brings with it spoiled dies, rods or broken parallels.

When I returned to the USSR I found a total disdain of fractions of a millimeter. It was a remnant of handicraft days. Workers and foremen used to do forgings at the older plants with tolerances of 10 to 15 millimeters on hot die casting where tolerances greater than 0.37 to 0.5 millimeter can not be allowed. Dies were spoiled one after another. Dents appeared in the parallels and in the hammer teeth. Only then the importance of accuracy became clear to all. However, even to this day one comes across people that flourish diplomas and look ironically on demands of extreme accuracy.

The John Dere, Allis Chalmers, and Case plants at which I worked in succession, were not on mass production. My first experience with a conveyor production was at the hog packing plant at Waterloo. This was a subsidiary plant of the famous Chicago packers. From the third floor one could see the yard where a car filled

with hogs stood. There were wild squeals. Through a narrow boarded gate the hogs were driven into separate cells where a Negro worker expertly threw a noose around the leg of each hog. The noose was connected to the chains of the conveyor. As the latter slowly revolved, the hog was drawn up on it. One after another at intervals of five meters the hogs came on the conveyor and disappeared inside the building.

We entered the slaughter house and saw a large hall and several dozen squealing hogs on the chain conveyor. A tall giant stood on a platform and stuck each hog as it came along with a long knife. The hogs came up at intervals of one minute. After being stuck the hogs rolled off the inclined part of the conveyor into a boiling cauldron. In the cauldron the conveyor both rotated and moved forward thus dipping the carcass in and out until it reached the end of the cauldron, coming out clean of all bristle. At the end of the conveyor a workman made a cut in the leg of the carcass and attached it to the next conveyor on which the further operations were made.

The Ford System

At the Ford River Rouge plant I at last saw mass production on a large scale. At the Ford plant they put me on as heater on a 1,500 pound hammer. The furnaces were covered here by wide metal cones. The furnace worked softly and the flames did not shoot out. The frame, light in color was alluminum painted and brilliant.

Every day as I came on the shift, I put some thin steel rods into the furnace. I moved methodically, in harmony with the general rhythm and particularly with the working rhythm of my teacher the die master. At first I grew very tired from the heat. I drank endless amounts of cold water that came from pretty fountains out of nickled faucets along the wall.

Two men attended the furnaces daily. One carried a pail of aluminum paint, the other a spray gun and pipe. The first scraped any soot covered places on the furnaces with a long scraper, the other rapidly covered them with the spray gun.

Traveling between the furnace and the hammer I came within range of the spray and everyday I went home from work covered on one side with aluminum paint. It seemed to me everyone in the street looked at me, as a matter of fact no one paid any attention to me whatever. The workmen often went home in their overalls just as they were at work, they went this way in the street cars, busses, and their own automobiles. I sometimes even thought they do it purposely to show off that they are working.

After a week's work as heater I had learned enough to go on to work on the die press. I stamped small details.

Twice a day a small barrel of water was rolled up to the hammer on a special carriage. A Negro worker dipped up the water with a pail and dampened the floor. He threw the water right under my feet but I soon got used to it. It is not permitted to stop work even for washing the floor. Another Negro worker wiped the floor with a brush while the first one spread soda over the wet floor. A brigade foreman supervised the operation and saw to it that fresh barrels of hot water were delivered on time.

The floor of the Ford forge shop was covered with white brick, stood up on end, the bricks were laid so close that one could hardly notice the cement filled seam. After brushing the floor it was mopped dry. The entire process of floorwashing was thoroughly thought through. The barrel was brought on a special hand truck on which it stood so surely and well that a single person without fear of spilling the hot water could easily wheel it about. The floor wiping was also mechanized. The Negro worker lowered the mop into the pail and stepping on a pedal brought together two cylindrical rolls and it was squeezed dry.

The work of these floor washers in the forge shop is more hygienic than the work of our dishwashers. The floor washers work dressed in white caps and apron. The Ford plant administration in general prefers white. I often observed the tool makers working either in white coats or in their own white shirts with the sleeves rolled up. By their clothes one could not tell them apart from the gentlemen walking leisurely in the street. The engine driver that drove the locomotive into the shop to take the waste out was also dressed all in white. The engine shone without a trace of dirt, oil or soot.

Two inspectors for the entire tremendous shop, both of them old men that had spent long years at the plant, looked after the proper heating of the furnaces. They went from furnace to furnace looking into everyone of them. Once I was surrounded suddenly by a group of men. They observed my work and conferred about something, called over the furnace inspector and pointed to the furnace. It developed that due to the poor heating of the furnace (I had not noticed it) the details I was making were covered with a thick coat of scale. From under the press the details were taken by a conveyor to a gallery on the second floor to cutting presses and were there inspected. The inspector found the details produced by me defective soon after I started. They found me, the offender, by the number stamped on the detail by the hammer.

Near me on the furnace wall hung a board ruled into eight squares. At the end of every hour an inspector entered on one of the squares the number of details I had stamped. Every press had a board like this. I tried to reach the standard of production which, rounded to the nearest ten was easy to remember. We knew all the standards for each machine. At the end of the shift the inspector totalled the entries in the square and wrote out the total on the board.

No one rushed or made any fuss in the shop. The repair men squatting on their heels were removing with a chisel the packing stuck to the cylinder head. The repair man removing the packing plates for the hammer was chewing tobacco. The inspector, spitting the greenish yellow tobacco juice, went from press to press inspecting the hot forgings. It was all done silently, with concentration and fairly slowly. But it was being done uninterruptedly, methodically, everyone was continually occupied. This methodical continuity gave the impression of persistence and the inevitable achieving of results.

Special men cleaned the windows with standard tools consisting of long scrapers having a rubber edge. Water was thrown on the window and it was rubbed down with the soft rubbebr scraper. Rags were not needed to dry the windows. The glass was as clean as a show window at a store. The window cleaners sat in suspended chairs that were drawn up, or sideways, or lowered by means of block and tackle from above. The windows were washed like this every day.

For two weeks, hardly able to bear the heat, I hammered out distributing shafts, punctually fulfilling the standard task. A hundred an hour. The inspector continually counted the pieces and hung them on the chain conveyor running along the line of hammers. The hot forged pieces heating the air around them trickled to the end of the shop where they rose to the cutting press room. There the workers took them off the conveyor cold cut them in presses from under which they fell on to a belt conveyor. At the end of this conveyor workmen caught the pieces and distributed them to boxes standing ready. The pieces came so fast the workers hardly could keep up with them. The cuttings remained on the conveyor and fell off at the end of the conveyor to a flat car.

There is no office in the Ford forge shop. There are only two office men—the timekeeper and schedule man. The timekeeper collects the time cards from the rack in the morning and enters them in the book. On Fridays he distributed the sealed

pay envelopes. The schedule man goes the round of the presses in the evening and enters the totals from each one.

The amount of metal coming into the shop was also easily kept track of. The metal came from the rolling mill in bundles. The quantity was marked on a standard tag attached to the bundle. The foreman took the tags off and made a package of them. In this way the whole office was in one of his pockets.

Many Ford workers told me that the main principle was to make a daily improvement of some kind, even of the simplest. I soon discovered that this was really so. I noticed an improvement in the shop every day—even in nonsensical details.

Now a new design of die, now hot release was changed to cold, now a new size of rod came which was easier to handle, now instead of one, two details were being pressed at once. These small changes gave a large total effect.

Perfect Mass Production

I was fortunate however in seeing an even more perfect organization of mass production at the Smith plant in Milwaukee. The plant made automobile chassis and consisted of only one big hall. There were no moving people in the plant. The people stood at their places and the machinery kept moving. When looking down on the shop from a platform above it looked as if the entire room was moving. The sheet metal for the chassis was sorted automatically by magnets. The magnet put the heavy sheets on one side and the lighter ones on the other. The sorted plates went on a conveyor to the forge shop and were stamped in one operation. Then the sheets were automatically riveted together and cross pieces automatically riveted to them. There were only 200 men at this plant and with this number of workers the plant could produce from 10 to 12 thousand chassis a day. One almost saw no workers in the room. When looking down upon this room from the platform one could think it was only a very accurate drawing. One could see that the designer had thought out, lived through, every movement of every machine and every detail.

When I was leaving America the economic crisis was beginning to be felt. The stores were well stocked but there were few purchasers. Whole pages of newspapers were filled with ads of machinery for sale. At the gates of every plant there were crowds of unemployed. Ford had gone over to three days work a week. General Motors two. Two weeks after I had sailed the Ford plant closed altogether for "repairs of the water supply system," as the Detroit newspaper had it. All the American plants I had visited had closed by that time. In Detroit they had said: "If Ford stops—everything stops." This is by no means exaggerated as to serve the Ford plant at last 40 other plants are kept working. Strikes appeared now here, now there. Demonstrations appeared on the streets.

2

Moscow seemed new after the long absence. Tverskaya Street was paved. Piatnitzkaya Street was paved. The Red Square was shining with cleanliness. Large apartment houses had come up: the government house, the house on Sretenka Street. On Okhotny Riad the small houses where they used to trade in fish and meat had been taken down. The place was enclosed and some tremendous structure was being built. Trees had been planted and it looked encouraging. Everything took on a happy, even a gay appearance. I looked at every detail with just as much curiosity as in the foreign countries I had visited. It was as if I had to note everything to tell about at home.

At Stalingrad this sense of newness did not leave me. At the hotel everything was just newly finished. One could not tear one's hands away from the table, the arm clung to the oilcloth. The clothes closet smelled of linseed oil, glue and paint. From the window one could see the brand new main office building that strongly reminded one of the Ford plant.

I was appointed assistant chief of the forge department. I saw the forged pieces for the first tractors made by hand at the neighboring metallurgical plant. The forgings had a pitiful look. They were two to three times as heavy as die pressed ones. The valve looked like a big mushroom on a too long stem, considering that this valve stamped is graceful and light. Some of the smiths that make these parts are working here now. If they were shown a crankshaft made by them for the first tractors and were asked to make another like it by the old method they would think it crazy. But their crankshafts were made that way all over the country.

I looked at the shops in our plant. The assembly room was so long it was a task to look it over from end to end. Such a large shop is a rarity even in America. The forge shop in height and breath is a tremendous structure hardly inferior to Ford's. The building is high, plenty of light, cement lined floors. A five ton overhead crane. Two rows of hammer presses. A truly new, American forge shop.

I made the acquaintance of the chief of the forge department, Turchninov. He was a tall man with a worn face, fallen in cheeks. He was always busy and continually in motion. He was always sighing, slapping his thighs and running into the shop at every incident. He was always changing place. He would run into the office, sit down, write a note rapidly and run out again, sometimes putting the note in his pocket, not trusting the messenger with it.

In the drawers of his table there was a collection of everything under the sun; catalogues, folders, drawings, old inkwells and so on. When he had to find something he would put his hand in and turn everything upside down as if he wanted to make a uniform mass of it. There was no time to have a talk with him. Turchaninov was always too busy.

Days passed and everyone of them brought new incidents at the forge shop everyone of which dropped on us like thunder from a clear sky. Once the entire forge shop suddenly stopped. It developed there was no oil and we had forgotten to place our order for filling the reservoir. It was impossible to determine who was supposed to look after what. Even Turchaninov's and my own duties were not clear, he and I both occupied ourselves with the same things and it was impossible to come to an understanding with him as to a division of duties.

However, by the course things took, Turchaninov was taking care of the current business while I was beginning to take hold of the planning, tried to organize the accounting. Together with Ustratov, a young engineer who had also been in America, we attempted to draw up schedules. I felt the necessity hourly to put the work of the shop on a schedule. Mass production without a schedule is impossible.

We worked up a monthly schedule with Ustratov. We were at it day and night until it was done. We had no data to go on—we had no production standards, no norms, no data on stoppages, on spoiled parts, etc. We used the standards of American plants, took the advice of American engineers working in the shop, made use of the fragmentary material obtained verbally from foremen. Our schedule fell down the very first day.

At the end of the month we began a new schedule making another, a five day one, parallel with the monthly one. We thought the five day schedule would be more actual—but it also fell down the first couple of days. Together with the planned schedule we made up a schedule of actual performance which of course bore no resemblance to the original. It was wasted labor. We were planning blue air because metal, forgings, transport—nothing went according to our plans.

The die shop was part of the tool manufacturing department. On a shop scale transport was neutralized. With regard to metal we never knew what kind and when it would be received. The distribution manager paid no attention whatever to our schedule and worked according to a schedule of his own. He marked down in his note book by a system of symbols the numbers of details, how many were made and how many were needed. These symbols in his note book were hieroglyphics which no one but he could decipher. Alongside each number he had symbols in blue and red. A red dot above the number meant one thing, below another, a blue one again something else. In the end he depended mostly on his memory.

But we have 104 different details and it is not so easy to remember them all, and as the figures on each changed every day it really required a phenomenal memory. This system of hieroglyphics and memory work could not insure proper planning even for a single day. At the end of the month we found in our actual performance schedule many peaks on the one hand and a total failure on the other. Many details had been made in sufficient quantity for months ahead, others were not made at all. It was necessary to plan differently.

I determined to install distribution managers in each shift and make them work according to a schedule. The old one was deadset against this so we had him go. I broke up the forge shop into sections and put on young workers as distribution managers. I handed each one a schedule. These young workers, mostly drawn from the Komsomols, proved capable of understanding the schedule and it was not a dead letter to them. They set themselves persistently to learn the new system of planning.

The schedule showed everything necessary for the work, the details needed, the program for each detail for the month and for the next five days. As against this the number made each day was noted, thus showing how many must yet be made. The section foremen knew their ground and could tell immediately just where the trouble was.

Together with the distribution manager Sorokin, the plant had to part also with a number of other people determined to stick to old traditions in this new production. One of these was the foreman Volkin. He used to march around the shop and see things moving—but he could not cover up a breach. He knew how to place his men to best advantage but he could not tell why so many details were spoiled or how to mend the situation. He was a foreman executive; in the shop he became a sort of statistician, lost his authority over the younger workers, because very nervous, said he lost his ability to sleep, saw nightmares continually and it became necessary to let him go.

The third foreman—Miasnikov, and several others with him, considered die forging dull work. He would say: "Here it is only necessary to put material under the hammer and squeeze out details. I am a smith—I can forge out a portrait, a rose." I answered that if it should become necessary to forge roses we would make a die for it and turn out five hundred per shift. Besides, the die cast roses, I assured him, would be much cheaper and of better quality than even an expert like him could turn out by hand. We had to let him go too.

Now the shop is run mostly by youngsters. Many of these youngsters had never been in a shop at all before coming to Stalingrad. These young foremen do not administrate only but give technical management and are continually learning. They often have to take over the hammer and run it themselves,or set the die. They go from hammer to hammer and observe the work. There is no time to yawn. The forge shop produces work to the amount of 110 rubles every minute.

When I was advanced to the position of chief of the forge department, the tool making department and the heat treating room were turned over to me. I thus got the right to decide all questions that concerned the work of the shop myself. My hands were untied. We got rid of the conferences which took away so much time and producing no results just racked one's nerves.

But Valkov—the chief of the tool making department that came under my charge was inclined to constant discussion. He stood for absolute "cleanliness" of the tool room and resisted all attempts to make them do work not connected with the making of new dies. He chased out foremen coming to him with dies to be repaired, refused orders for wedges, packing. And the forge shop was continually hampered by a lack of these small things. There a wedge is needed, here a bolt does not fit, or a plate is needed. Even drilling a hole in a gasket was hateful to Volkov. In order to get such work done it was necessary to go to the repair shop—because Volkov argued and argued.

Ustratov who was shift engineer was worried sick over these small items and was in a constant fight with Volkov. Ustratov was quite sure that to get these small items done it was not necessary to go into a lot of correspondence with other shops but they could easily and simply be made in the tool room. Ustratov having worked in such shops in America knew that mass production can not be maintained without such small details of standard dimensions. He knew that dies were useless if these items were missing. It became necessary to put in Ustratov instead of Volkov. Now these small items are regular production.

We had absolutely no drawings of the dies. We put our entire designing office on this work. But the drawings produced were full of errors and inaccuracies. They were being made far from the shops and were dead paper. In good old Russian style the designing office was separate from the shops.

I sent the chief draftsman, Comrade Berutzky, into the shop as shift engineer. From the very first day Berutzky saw the effect of a mere half-millimeter error—the delays, the nervous fever which this "nonsense" produces in the making of the dies. Berutzky began to run to the designing office and raise the devil. He made sketches himself and demanded that the dies be made without waiting for drawings.

After five months of practical experience in the shop I put Berutzky in charge of the designing office. He succeeded in coordinating the work now with production requirements. He put each designer on a special line of work. The designer is required to follow through the manufacture of the tool or fixture he designed. The tool or fixture is set up under the supervision of the designer. He makes all corrections, right away. His work is not accepted until his designed tool or fixture actually produces correct details. The foremen and repair men are beginning to go directly to the designer. The designer spends a good deal of his time at the machine. This speeds up the work and makes it more interesting all around.

While we were still producing only 20 to 25 crank shafts per shift Comrade Esin, who was then working on a detail of the differential asked to be put on crank shaft work. That's good. When a man picks out the work that interests him and wants to go over to it, there's a guarantee of success. I gladly put Comrade Esin on crankshaft work. He became a pupil of the American Hartman. He did better and better every day and at the end of only two weeks he already got a bonus for producing 35 shafts in one shift.

We then declared a new bonus for 50 shafts per shift. Esin went after it. He was already die casting like an expert. He shifted the center of gravity of the work to others. Three workers handed the incandescent ingot to the hammer. Holding it together with the apprentice by means of tongs Esin pressed the pedal with his right foot. With a light tap he pulled the end of the square piece. The apprentice pushed it into the die, and Esin showed him at what point to stop. Esin gave another light blow. Two or three heavy blows bent it the right shape. Eight blows and Esin drew the piece out of the die. The apprentice and two workmen caught the piece now looking like a broad branch of some fantastic plant and with tongs took it to the cutting press. Then it went into the hammer again. Three more blows and the crank-

shaft was ready for trimming again. After this was done a single blow gave the finished product.

After two and a half months Esin got the second bonus for 50 shafts per shift. Hartman, the American, declared that more could not be done: "In America 100, in Russia, 50," he said.

Mr. Ball who is now the chief of our heavy forge shop and was then working as instructor asserted that the crankshaft can be made in one operation. That very day Ball showed some "class." Esin was his apprentice. Ball did not work—he "played" on the hammer. Every motion was exact, rhythmic. Eight blows and the shaft was ready. The last blow Esin gave while Ball was already opening the door of the furnace. While the crankshaft was being carried to the shelf workers were already taking hold of the next piece with their tongs. Ball's method speeded up the work and production rose again. It rose 70-80—and then to 90-100 and to 105 shafts per shift. In social competition with Kovalev, Esin soon got the third bonus for reaching the American standard of production.

On another hammer Kubasov and Dolotov were working. They entered into socialist competition on the making of the forward axle. Dolotov, a 20 year old Komsomol, had already served as a volunteer in the Red Army, and was a porter. He had worked only a short time but had exceptional success with the front axle. Kubasov was also a beautiful workman. Kubasov is tall, well knit, a figure almost as if specially designed for work on the long graceful front axle. When he worked it looked as if the man was a part of the machine. Strong blows rained easily and precisely according to his desire. The work proceeded evenly and rhythmically. The standard of production rise every day,—80, 90, 100, 120, 130 front axles. The American standards were outstripped.

We celebrated the overtaking of the American standard of production by a banquet with speeches. I remember the speech of the Red Partisan Comrade Galushkin. He said he had first learned to work on his machine at the plant, and his respectable age notwithstanding, he was not ashamed to turn pupil. He said young workers are growing up that are familiar with every minor detail and know the new methods of production. He compared the work here with the work at the front during the civil war and got so excited he had to stop. He went away from the platform in tears. After him the young foreman Yakovlev, a Komsomol, began to speak but soon lost the trend of his speech, began to search for words and stammer, and at last gave it up with a wave of his hand, and only said, "The Komsomol will not leave you in the lurch." He sat down among the presiding group and whispered in my ear: "I hate speechmaking—I'd rather turn out 400 connecting rods in a shift."

. . . . I turn over in my memory the names of all the comrades together with whom we are struggling with and overcoming the difficulties we meet. They are mostly youths—rarely older than 25, 26. Their heroism consists not in carrying heavy loads on their shoulders, that's unnecessary—there are cranes for that. Their heroism consists in that they spend two and three shifts at the shop. This bears witness to the fact that we still do not know how to organize work. Their virtue is in their painstaking, methodical, persistent efforts to master the technical principles of a new method of production. But they will be the ones that, having gone through the painful process of installing the first mass production plant in our country, will develop new and newer gigantic plants, will create socialist plants.

G. Remisov

The Steamer Did Not Stop Here

By A Worker of the Stalingrad Tractor Plant

I should really tell about some event—a fire in our village or about the civil war—but I have lived through no such thing.

I was born in the village. My parents were very poor, and ours was a kulak village. My father was a hired man and my brothers were also hired men. We had one horse. Father worked for the rich and they gave him two calves. I shall not say much about father: he went to the war with Germany while I was still a youngster. He went and we remained with mother.

Until I was 12 and hired out to work I ran around in one shirt. I should have liked better clothes but there were none to be had.

When I was 12, I hired out as herdsman's helper. I worked for Mike Suchov. He was the owner of 36 heads of cattle. I hired out to work from fall to fall for six pouds of bread. He also gave me a Soratov accordion—I drove the cattle with it. I watched well. My season ended—Mike gave me eight pouds of bread instead of six for good work. I ate there too; mornings we'd get milk, doughnuts, evenings, after you had driven in the cattle, whatever happened to be there. They gave me a cloak—a kind of overall.

The next year the boss found himself in straightened circumstances and he did not herd his cattle separately. The community hired a herdsman and engaged me to assist him—that was in 1924. The hunger year came just then. The herdsman got half a poud for the season and I, as keeper, got ten pounds. The herdsman took an advance in the spring, but I wanted to get mine in a lump in the fall so I could buy something. But that fall there was a bad harvest, I got very little. After that I went home. I had enough of herding. I hired out to work for Igor Koslov.

But here my uncle asked for my help. "Drive over to Chernushkine," he asked. And I lived in Perfilevsk. The railroad was far away, about 40 versts. I had never been over one, nor even seen one. Uncle lived even further from the railroad. I went, worked through the fall so that I might go to school in the winter. So I stayed there. There was a school there where their children went and I also attended. One of their kids was in the second class, the other in the fourth, and I was in the first. I was backward, but they encouraged me and I tried hard.

The next winter I started at the hamlet Mansky—ran three versts to school. It was winter, I was poorly clothed, but I ran just the same. I froze and I ran. I spent one winter at school and two months of another winter and then I dropped it. I was grown up already and had to go to work.

I worked a little at home and just then they began to organize a kolkhoz. We got in in 1928. Then I became a Komsomol.

In the spring of 1929 I took a course in the tractor school. I was studying and working on a tractor in the Kolkhoz at the same time. I first worked on a Fordson but it was a complete wreck. I worked on it for one season and then ten new tractors came—ten of the Putilov kind. I began to work on a Putilov tractor.

Next fall I went to work in the tractor station. I got the hang of machinery. They even nominated me for brigade commander at the Kolkhoz but found me too young—there were older people there. I was left on duty with the column of tractors in the field. I was uneasy about the tractors, wanted them to be in repair, tightened the bearings, and when mine was in good shape I got after another one. That is what I did. The

tractor drivers came and began to crank them. One says "Mine don't work," the other says the same. Then they began to blame me. I had done them no harm, but the drivers wrote a letter to the director of the tractor station. The report was like this (though I didn't do as they said I did) :" . . . he hitched them back to back and tried to find out which tractor was stronger." It was not like that at all. The fact is I had cranked them. I cranked about four of them. I was just interested. I started them, did not stop them at once, but drove them into the furrow.

I worked at the tractor station for a little while longer and then the *yacheika* (Communist Party nucleus) sent me to the Tractor Plant as one of a thousand. They took me off a tractor and I went as I was, didn't even have a chance to step in home. My brother gave me 13 rubles and I had a suit of underwear with me and a box. The underwear was somewhat dirty. I had on a padded shirt and padded trousers. That's how I went.

I took a note at the district committee and went to the station. I met a friend there, Alex Babushkin, also sent to the Tractor Plant as one of the thousand. I had only a box, he had a suitcase. We got our tickets, got on the freight train and crawled under the planks that served as beds in a corner. There were a lot of people—emigrants with children. We went to sleep and did not notice how we arrived at the place. As we got near Stalingrad there was a lot of noise in the car—the plant could be seen. But we kept on going and going, it seemed to me we had gone a long way, and still there was no station. Then there was a bridge, a lot of people. . . We got off and didn't know where to go—we both were here for the first time. We stood and didn't know. We were shown the Plant but we didn't know just how to get there. At last we were shown where to take a tram. So we arrived.

I had never seen a city yet then, so I wondered a lot. Many people ,noise. . Even a little fearful.

They did not let us into the plant yet, I worked on construction. We dug foundations, dressed stone, made concrete, poured the foundations. We built a kitchen-factory, then a house on the sixth building lot. When the question of the factory school rose in our *yacheika* I asked our secretary to be sent. "Right," he said, "you should be sent: good lad."

I studied only a month at the trade school and was assigned to the plant. Since then I have been working there as blacksmith.

I entered the plant for the first time when they took me to work at the forge shop. Of course it seemed terrible. Hammers at work—and nothing could be heard. There was one lad I knew there and he introduced me to the foreman. He said: "Come tomorrow."' I left. That was the way I worked—just did what I was told. After a while I was cleaning the burrs off castings. I was laughed at. But I took it like this: do what you are told. I was alone. I had no relatives there and was afraid. I was afraid of the people and I was afraid of the hammers. Then I got used to the work.

Then there was more work. One smith went to the Red Army, another one just left. I became an apprentice. I worked as apprentice for a long time. Now they have advanced me to be a smith on the five thousandth hammer. They advanced me because I have been working there long, and there is a shortage of workers, there are few smiths.

In '31 while working as apprentice to Kovalev in his brigade, I became an udarnik. I got a premium once—80 rubles. We competed with Kubasov's brigade. Kovalev (that's our brigadeer) makes 140, Kubasov—150. Kovalev comes in in the morning and sees that I was the only Komsomol in my brigade. I was asked to call five minute meetings—so I did. Say there was a lack of thongs—we soon found it out in time and saw to it they were there next morning. We put in our best efforts—we wanted to set a record. The papers wrote about it. Kubasov tried hard and so

did Kovalev. Kubasov got the Order of Lenin, Dolatov got it too, but Kovalev did not. Although our brigade tried hard it fell behind.

When I worked on construction I carried almost no social work obligations but when I got into the shop I was given two at once—both on cooperative and union work. This year I have been elected secretary of the link *yacheika* of the heavy forge. Lately I have conducted meetings on the decisions of the regional committee and the Plant "Red October" which did not deliver the metal they were supposed to on schedule time, so we got in touch with the Komsomols of "Red October."

Just now my main ambition is to put the *yacheika* on its feet—whatever it may cost. The regional conference of the Komsomols has decided to grant the honor flag (pennant) for 150 tractors. The flag is at the office of the Plant committee of the Komsomols and will go to the *yacheika* which will fulfill its social contract and the terms of business accounting. I should very much like to get that flag.

I consider that the best time of my life has begun here. At the village I would have remained a tractor driver. Maybe I would have advanced to brigadeer after a long while. Here, see where I got in only two years. Among people one begins to understand more. I am studying at the party school. I grew more in the two years here than for the entire period of my life in the village. There I had nothing. If I had not come here I would probably have stayed the owner of one padded shirt, and maybe not even that.

When we first got to the plant we went to live in barracks. There was a room there for 20 people. There was almost nothing in the room. It was only just coated nd was still drying. We occupied a corner and threw our baggage in a heap. We began to look for a cot. We went to the housing department. They gave us orders for cots, mattresses, blankets, and sheets. We went to the storehouse where they gave us wooden cots, mattresses which we then and there stuffed with straw.

The suit of underwear I had brought got dirty. I hung it out to dry and it was swiped. So I remained with only the one I had on. Here the bed clothes were so clean, new, and I had on dirty clothes. And pay was not due yet. They gave us an advance of 35 rubles each. I had already borrowed some money, so I had to pay up. That month I could buy nothing. I had to shift for this month. Then I got another 29 rubles advance. I bought two shirts and trousers. Since then I have been buying a little every pay.

Then they gave me a separate room to share with only one comrade. Just as I was accepted in the plant. I got myself another pair of trousers, some shirts and shoes. I began to get quite a few things.

On the construction job I was getting 70 rubles and in the trade school a stipend of 48 rubles. But at the plant after the first month—cleaning burrs, I knocked out 102 rubles for only two weeks. I had never earndd so much money. I bought myself a pillow, soap, tooth powder and a toothbrush. In the village I never cleaned my teeth—but here I saw people use tooth brushes every morning so I got interested to try it too. I also bought a towel. Another time getting my pay I bought a whole suit of clothes at once. I had never worn one before. It was a black suit, of cloth, a very good suit. I also had never worn a tie. To put one on seemed funny. But I went ahead. I bought another shirt, an overcoat, and two ties—I put them on a couple times. They lie around most of the time—I am not used to wearing them. In the village no one wears them but here I see they are worn. Everyone wears them—so I bought a couple.

Then I went to the party school to study. The class was in the main office. I love to study. As soon as I would get my pay I would always buy a couple of books. I got a three volume set of Lenin—paid two rubles twenty for it. Then I got Bubnov—we studied the history of the party from this book. I spent a ruble eighty five for this one—a ruble sixty five for the book and twenty kopeks for the binding. We also

used Popov's book on the history of the Party. Then I got a book in my native language, mathematical books all about fractions, then all kinds of stories at twenty and thirty kopeks each.

When I moved from the barracks into the room, I washed it clean and went to the market where I bought a clock, two chairs, a stove, two cups, two glasses, two saucers and a mirror for which I paid a ruble. This spring I spent three rubles on pictures of Lenin, Stalin, Litvinov, "Battleship Potemkin," "Execution of the Baku Commissars" and of a funny priest—there's a session, a party like, at the landlord's and he stands there with his mouth open.

This year I expect to enter the Red Army. If they do not accept me I shall paint the room, put everything in order, paint the bed, buy a good blanket and bed sheets so that everything will be clean. I would very much like to get a tabouret and a special table with drawers—a writing table. I intended to buy an accordion. I got 275 rubles but went on a vacation and didn't buy one, now I am sorry. I absolutely must buy a radio—they have them at the "culture" store. I also want a wash stand with a faucet that you push open with your hands. And a wrist watch. One must always know the time at work—in the village one didn't need a watch. I am making more than 300 rubles a month now. Last month I drew 305 rubles, the month before 313.

What I do want most of all is to learn. When I am not studying I feel terribly lost. If they take me into the Red Army I will study like mad. And if I remain here I must finish the second course at the Communist University. I must know enough to write for the papers. I love this kind of thing. When I was the leader of the investigation brigade in the forge shop I wrote for the *Come Across with the Tractor*. Three or four of my articles were printed. I am now in my second year at the Communist University. It's pretty tough stuff! Dialectics, philosophy . . . it's hard alright. I should have spent another year on the first course. But I am anxious to raise my education to a higher political level.

In June we attended the third regional Komsomol conference. For the first time in my life I travelled by steamer. The steamship *Koltsov* was a good one: the cots with springs, soft ones, mirrors, everything you want. You'd go out on deck—there's the sun, it's warm. Beautiful! We were in a cabin by ourselves with a comrade. We came to Saratov on the second night, and spent the night on the steamer. With the dawn I wanted to see Saratov—the regional center. Everyone was shouting that the automobile is coming to take the delegates. We sent the machine away and walked.

I also went afoot in order to see the town. I came to the regional committee of the party. There they gave us our credentials and all that's necessary. They took us to the Astoria—a big house where they gave us rooms. We got through with the conference and went home.

I am never so homesick for my native village as for the plant. When we were coming back from Saratov and the Tractor Plant came in sight I felt like jumping out—but the steamer did not stop here. . .

ARTICLES and CRITICISM

Soviet Literature and Dos Passos

A Discussion Held in Moscow

In the spring of 1933, the Organization Committee of Soviet Writers and the editors of the magazine *Znamya* organized a discussion of the work of Dos Passos, his position in contemporary American literature and the attitude of Soviet writers towards his books. The discussion lasted three evenings. A substantial paper by A. Leites, (Soviet literary critic) entitled "Dos Passos' Course" and an additional paper by the well known Soviet dramatist V. Vishnevsky, were read, after which there was a lively discussion by a number of Soviet writers and critics. The discussion raised a tremendous amount of interest among Soviet writers generally.

We give here some excerpts from the main papers and the more interesting speeches without, however, taking any responsibility for the contents as they are given only by way of information—*Editor.*

A. Leites

"Whom are you with, masters of culture?" this question, raised by Gorky is now being solved not only in abstract declarations and articles of writers but in the very process of the struggle for creative methods. When the American bourgeois economist Stuart Chase proclaims the necessity of "corking technical progress up in a bottle," when we hear the slogans of curtailing and putting the brakes on technical progress not only from the Spenglers and Bergsons but from many radical bourgeois scientists we cannot but conclude that the question of literary technique in the field of bourgeois art has been corked up in a Tight vessel for the past 20 years. Think of Marcel Proust, that greatest of sluggards, confined to a cork panelled room for 15 years in a small little world. Then take Chesterton secluding himself from modernity in the "club of inventive people," author of the book *Tremendous Trifles* the very title of which speaks eloquently of the nonsensical themes many literary snobs deliberately choose and then take such stupendous pain in elaborating. Finally consider James Joyce who is talked about so much and read so little. This Joyce —who takes 700 pages of close print to tell of one grey day of a grey Dublin philistine, who expands on tens of pages on the act of coitus, or gives a most minutely detailed stenographic account of the night thoughts of the little-bourgeois Bloom. This Joyce is the best expression of literary technique corked up in a bottle.

In the field of artistic refinements Joyce broke some kind of record. The question remains—what kind of record?

Record breaking is a disease of bourgeois society. The wider the crisis spreads the more ugly forms it takes in the West. Not so long ago the American newspapers were full of a Mr. Conkers of Boston who was persistent enough to roll a peanut with his nose some 27 kilometers. Can you picture this scene? A certain amount of training, persistence and cleverness are required for this also. But how paltry is the nature of such cleverness and training!

Now, it is of course understood, I do not want to minimize the question of Joyce's great talent. I know that Joyce is a past master at rendering infinitely small psychological changes, but what I want to emphasize is that Joyce demonstrates this mastery and fine craftsmanship on really insignificant material. Joyce has, at any rate,

beaten the record for a writer's aloofness from contemporary political movements. Only to think that in an era of wars and revolutions, in a world where a storm of political passion is raging, Joyce was capable of sitting like a one eyed Cyclop first in Switzerland, then in Paris showing absolutely no desire to notice the times. He did not even try to be "above the battle" as Romain Rolland did. He was simply down "below the battle," sunk in a mess of sexual and physiological eccentricity.

So what interest does Joyce have for us? In this, that in him we find an outstanding example of the unique "tragedy of waste." A tremendous creative potentiality is wasted in the most outrageous fashion on playing with an extremely narrow range of themes, available only to an even narrower circle of readers. If in the economic field, capitalism in the period of the crisis is compelled to waste, throw into the sea hundreds of thousands of bags of coffee, destroy bread and break up machinery, in the field of art the capitalist system squanders the colossal creative potentialities of its talented artists on trivialities. If the era of decay of capitalism is one that in the economic field can be characterized by the tremendous discrepancy between technical achievement and the possibility of its application, it is no less characteristic that there is an equally collosal discrepancy between the development of literary technique and the possibility of its advisable application.

In any event bourgeois artists at present avoid the broad themes of space, time, motion. Once upon a time (when this class was still young) bourgeois realism could take the social milieu by storm.

"Give the social milieu complete, without forgetting a single situation in human life, a single type, a single profession, a single character or subject, that is my object," wrote Balzac.

"I hope to capture all humanity on paper, travel all over France with my work," wrote Emil Zola. Most bourgeois writers of that period were fraught with the same "enthusiasm—to know everything, weigh everything, measure everything."

Today James Joyce through the mouth of Stephen Dedalus (in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*) says: "To stop, that is the problem, only false art is dynamic. True esthetic emotion is—static."

To many the peculiar immunity of American bourgeois psychology seemed axiomatic. When in the East of Europe "good morning" is said, "good nights" still sound in America. Geography tells us this. It seemed that the stormy dawn of socialist revolution would not soon disturb the serene slumber of the American. But it only looked that way. The social storm has raged over the entire 42nd parallel. Historical truth has smashed through all the old philistine platitudes of the inviolibility of the American spirit.

And even in the secluded provincial town of Gopher Prairie (in Sinclair Lewis' *Main Street)* they speak of the distant Bolsheviks.

After *One Man's Initiation,* came *Three Soldiers.* In few years *Manhattan Transfer* appears. Then *42nd Parallel.* Then *1919.* These are the main works of Dos Passos.

It is remarkable that the wider the horizon of his philosophy grows the more radically Dos Passos is compelled to change the structure of his artistic prose. At first he gives a psychological study of an individual—*One Man's Initiation.* Then a small group of men—*Three Soldiers,* then he concentrates his characters and events topographically—*Manhattan Transfer,* then he takes a geographical section—*42nd Parallel*—and finally an historical chronological one—*1919.* But the broader the scope the more difficult is the problem before the artist.

How does Dos Passos manage this material? It must be admitted that this tremendous material often overwhelmed Dos Passos. It must be remembered that Dos Passos while in Paris not only absorbed a tremendous hatred of capitalist civilization but was also influenced by the temptations of bourgeois literary decadence in the form of the socalled Joyce microscope, i.e., the method of piercing psychological vivi-

section. But his revolutionary temperament did not permit Dos Passos to seclude himself with this microscope in the confines of a study. He was drawn into the freedom of open space. What happened? He got out into space with his microscope, the "camera eye." Dos Passos was the victim of an unconquered Joyceism. This affected the composition of his novels. He was compelled to combine mechanically several methods of creative work, various modes and genres. I repeat, combine mechanically, not dialectically, not organically. One can regard the "camera eye," the "movie chronicle," and the biographical interludes with which he breaks up the trend of his novels, variously, but one thing is incontestable: the effectiveness of the novels is weakened by the mechanical coexistence of these various genres. Such composition clearly indicates a discrepancy between his world perception and world philosophy. What is characteristic of the compositional structure of Dos Passos' novels? It is his distribution of the political and personal elements of his theme on different shelves, so to say. The political side is separated out, as if in a different print, and is not organically integral with the artistic woof of his story.

Does our analysis of Dos Passos' methods of composition signify that we are opposed to diffusion of genre in a single work? Not at all! Our period requires a maximum of tension and an organic fusion of all stylistic methods. We are on the road to a great variety of methods. . . But not only a great variety of creative method is necessary, it is even more important to be able to fuse different methods and genres. Only that artistic work will rise to the full height of creation. Only that artistic novel, in which all forms of literary arms from the light cavalry of verse to the heavy artillery of prose will be artistically fused. We are not opposed to diffusion of genre, but Dos Passos' prose suffers from the fact, that having set in motion the most various methods, genres and stylistic intonations—from sarcasm to lyricism, from stories of life to political grotesques— he does not compel them to serve a single artistic purpose, and these methods, evidence of the rich gifts of the artist, advance in disorderly fashion. . . .

Some years ago Dos Passos wrote: "The power of plot and language and materialist precision of thought come to the writer only as the result of merging himself with the working masses." "In this sense," continued Dos Passos, "all really good writers are proletarian writers." Excellent words!

. . . The stronger the hammer of the capitalist crisis beats on that layer of intelligentsia which Dos Passos represents, the more clearly this intelligentsia recognizes the need of joining the ranks of the disciplined army of the proletariat. This alone is sufficient to make us believe that Dos Passos will overcome all the vacillations of the anarchist artits and grow in the direction of the party. We find confirmation of this in the literary practice of Dos Passos during the past few years. Take his essay *At the Point of a Gun* or a great many parts of *1919*. It is not in vain that in his biography of John Reed he speaks of the Soviet Union as of a tremendous steel plant forging great ideals. This makes him turn to the Soviet Union more and more frequently in order to forge his own style in this gigantic forge of ideals.

Thus we come to the inter-relation between Dos Passos and Soviet literature. . . Dos Passos is learning from the Soviet Union, it is too bad that he learns nothing yet from Soviet literature. . .

Dos Passos is the literary representative of the bourgeois intelligentsia of the West which sympathizes with the proletarian communist movement, but this sympathy is more passive than active. . .

. . . When we speak of Dos Passos' great creative powers, that he is a great artist, it is because belonging to the "tame generation" as he himself has said, he has found in himself the strength to overcome the burden of tradition that has sucked in many a Western artist. This strength, of course, Dos Passos found not only in his great talent but also in the proletariat to whom he is invariably drawn at all stages in his career.

The actual creative meeting between Dos Passos and Soviet writers is not far off.

He is young, so anxious to learn, and our Soviet literature engaged as it is in plowing the virgin soil of new untouched problems, imbued with the thought of our great party, which, as our leader has said, knows "in which direction to conduct affairs and is not afraid of difficulties"—this literature will help the American writer raise his art to even greater heights and put it altogether at the service of the communist ideals of humanity.

V. Vishnevsky

Before coming here I again looked through a number of things not only of Dos Passos' but also of Joyce's. I looked these things through in order to carry with me the feeling of close intimate conversation with these writers. I have listened to the paper read by Comrade Leites. He approached close to a full grasp of the artistic material, the essentially artistic only at moments. I think he approached this only twice, when he quoted two excerpts. Up to and after that there was a sociological, political analysis, an analysis made by what I should term an impatient critic.

Some writers are accused of being mechanical. Look at yourselves, friend critics! Impatient remarks, impatient demands that Dos Passos see things, think the way I, the critic do, sitting here in No. 50 Vorovsky Street. . . . Don't you think every artist is entitled to follow his own course? Don't you think Dos Passos will continue to be formed under the influence of events in the U.S.A. and not those demands you address to him from here? Where is the consideration of the specifically American and Dos Passos' place in American literature, his influence upon it, etc.?

Marx, Engels and Lenin enunciated some laws which explain the development and fluctuations of the capitalist world, explain wars and the forms of war, the causes, and phenomena that provoke wars, the causes of unemployment and so on.

In the realm of art there are no such laws discovered. The thought of proletarian artists is only now engaged in groping for this material. We are guided by the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin. Their work (in this respect—Tr.) has unfortunately, up to now, not been systematized, integral, into a great: "Esthetics of the proletariat, esthetics of the classless society." In the realm of art, the realm of esthetics, there are no laws which would make it possible for us to grasp the cause, forms and interdependence of artistic phenomena. We cannot deduce style, genre, fluctuations, trends from a purely economic basis. Criticism does not take the trouble to study the creative processes taking place in people, follow the influence, fusion, association of the most complex phenomena. All this is little, if at all known to critics. And when one delves into art thoroughly, this extreme discrepancy between the requirements of the artist and the level of criticism is poignantly felt.

I do not insist on this accidentally. The analyses of art, analyses of artistic works today leave us very much dissatisfied. Language, color, image, composition, manner, style—all this is left out of consideration and comprehension. Much is made of formalism: "Beware of it!" There isn't a gathering lately at which the evils of formalism are not mentioned. I would advise however a little thought on the matter. Do not forget that we are also talking about the form we are beginning to master, we are also talking about what we are doing on this territory conquered by us, what we organically create, we are talking also of forms that are wholly dedicated to the interests of the movement, of a new class and a new humanity being born. We are talking both about form and about that without which the artist cannot live or breathe, his inner, specific being. We shouldn't just spit at form. There is no art without form.

But let us take Dos Passos. I am not accustomed to consider him from the point of view of our own literary disputes and interests. You must admit that they always lack depth and breadth and often—knowledge of the author. Dos Passos is a figure of international calibre. The schoolmaster's tone which is heard here tonight is, to my

mind, altogether unsuitable with respect to him. Are you sure that you are without error in discussing Dos Passos' methods? Why must he write the way you wish him to, for instance, on juicy subjects, with family details, following the classics, etc.?

I think that the serious discussion now raised on the problems of the West, novelty etc. is too much cumbered up with irrelevant polemics, superfluous passion and, worst of all—ignorance of the subject. The article by Makariev is an example of how "dragging, not freely speeding to the West" is carried out. Again a beaten path is shown, a ready list of masters given.

Why the discussion, why the deep interest in the phenomena of Western art? Because we understand perfectly the battle raging there; because the phenomena of the world crisis work havoc with human psychology. The keenness of our interest in Western affairs is due to the fact that tremendous class battles are raging there, battles which will draw upon our strength also. We are preparing and waiting for the time when the answer will be given on a world wide scale to the question—"Who wins?" When we observe the West, reach out for Western literature, want to grasp what is going on there—such articles as Makariev's and Selivanovsky's virtually demanding "Don't let them !" are out of the place. We take what we are interested in independently and purposefully. There is no phenomena in the realm of art or culture which should be tabu to the Soviet artist, which he can be forbidden to understand in order to properly evaluate and analyze. That was the way Marx did—he was not afraid of either Hegel or Feuerbach, the Bible, Goethe, Paul de Coque or Dumas—he read them all, could comprehend and create, live a full life. Only people incapable of living a full life try to dictate to those that can, a sort of "rules" for writers. A totally fruitless work. It will leave no trace in the history of our literature and culture except some articles in *Pravda* correcting our critics.

The artist will find what interests him. The critic that does not understand these processes often finds himself up a blind alley: "What path do you follow? Why do you like this or that Western writer? Beware... beware!" This is superfluous.

Some things I cannot define accurately, but I know when something has come into my field of vision and my senses are sharpened, are immediately applied in absorbing it and passing it through my inner consciousness. The phenomena should be explained, but unfortunately no one can. The psychology of creation is neglected.[1]

In the West there is a crisis, decay, the signs of disintegration, etc. I want to ask our critics: you, dialecticians, do you really fail to understand that in the regularity of the disintegration, the decay, the perishing of a descending class, something tremendously new is regularly rising? And when we look at Grosz, look at Proust, look at Picasso who got to things entirely dead—we should be able to see that behind them, beside them, a tremendously new seed is already sprouting. One must understand where it is and grasp it, taking culture as a whole under investigation "even" the enemy, "even" bourgeois culture. We must take into our hands everything that is best for our class which is transforming humanity into a tremenodus classless integral society.

The connections with the past, "even" the inimical—are extremely complex and yet governed by law. Revolutionary poetry grew regularly, absorbing all the experience of the Symbolists, Futurists and others—forging new forms. Nothing comes by itself from the void.

The best representatives of our Party, teachers of Marxian thought, took from the

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[1] I think it a great error that critics do not engage in systematizing the views of Lenin and Gorky. There they could find very definite utterances on what the "artist can find useful for himself in any philosophy.... even idealistic..." (Lenin, letter to Gorky 1908). In Gorky's writings they would find the following: "one must learn not only from the classics, but even from the enemy if he is clever. To learn does not mean to imitate in any way, but to master the methods of skill." *(Izvestia,* 1929, 168)

culture of the enemy everything there was to be taken, everything that could push us ahead, that taught men to be uncompromising and fearless. Only thus can one work.

Who is Dos Passos? In time and space he is a good companion in arms, a participant in the world war. His biography tells us that. Take the biographies of all those present here. They are—the world war—the revolution—something tremendously new—an advance. It is not so definite, so clear with Dos Passos and his friends. With us, on our territory this is all developed in the best, the vastest forms. Over there their path of development is not like ours, it is much more difficult. We must not forget the strength of social pressure. Think of how you thought ,lived and opposed the old regime.

In 1917 did you go with the Bolsheviks at once? How did you go in 1918, 19, 20? *(from the hall: "Many haven't arrived yet.")* That's why I say: how difficult is everyone's path and among them Dos Passos'.

We, happy in our fifteenth anniversary, see our future clearly. One can shout Mayakovsky's words—how really *good* it is! But put yourselves in place of those now working in Berlin, in place of those expecting every moment Hitler's blow on the head. . . . Take inner account of yourself: how would I act under these circumstances?

Dos Passos is always working under such a threat. He is at a distance from us and cannot have the influence of our work daily, the influence of things and events that take place the way they do here. . . . Here is the house of the Orgcommittee once belonging to Wagau. I go about this house like the owner, I feel good here. . . There they must stop before every house and think: "How would I storm this house? From which windows would machine guns be aimed at me?" What a tremendous difference in perception of the world! And notwithstanding this, Dos Passos and others go about and work and do themselves things. And in this plane, in this perspective, from this point of view, these phenomena, these situations, they must be judged. I never forget this. I know that tomorrow, like yesterday we may get the wire: "Japanese revolutionary writer killed. . ."

You would like that Dos Passos today or tomorrow, or at the latest the day after tomorrow should give us a book that would at once satisfy all our critics, who are accustumed to—say Fadeyev. In fact that is just what you are talking about! Dos Passos, I dare say, has the right to be among those that will not write according to set example. Everyone comes to communism by his own way of working. Dos Passos does not give us any reason for thinking he is going to our foes.

What is good in Dos Passos? The roots here are very deep. One must consider the influence of Joyce (and before Joyce—his definite literary predecessors; among them are Lotreamon and others—even Gogol!)

What's good in Dos Passos?

That he is seeking. That he is active and hates the old world. That he has experienced on his own skin the meaning of peace and war (capitalistic). That he is broad. That he is candid. That he is simple *(cries of—"yes! yes!")*.

That from the planimetry of the old literature he has gone to the stereometry of life. When you read the old well-known books, "even" Tolstoy, you see a smooth form of story telling. Whatever and whomever they paint, it is in even colors. Life gives tremendous strains even in trifles. And the artists that come at the points of great historic periods, artists that grow within capitalist society and already protest against it, these artists produce embryos of new searchings (in the West). These searchings must inevitably develop into a new American-European proletarian movement.

Dos Passos gives one a feeling of the tremendously many phases of life, and you simply come to him and say: naughty-naughty! you are a mechanist! why have you got the "camera eye"? and so on.

Tell me please, what is your process of thought? Does it follow a definite plan rigorously, along precise rationally planned channels, or do you perceive various new things, think about them, doubt, retreat, search, do not understand. . . You undoubtedly

dream at times, let your fancy run. . . Is it possible that you haven't got a tremendous psychic complex which compels you to think over the problems of existence?

For example: at any moment I can stop my reading of Tolstoy and ask: "and what else happened to Levin or Karenina at this moment?"—because something else was happening at the time, there were other events that were not exhausted. There is hence, an additional possibility of drawing on these events. The artists of the newer, kind attempt to do this. In defining dialectics Lenin has said: "events must be taken in all their multitude of phases and complexity—which humanity will never do," said Lenin, but one should try just the same.

To me personally—this is a creative problem.

So, if you stop to think about this, deeply—"to the bones"—you will perhaps arrive at the thought: besides my literary hero there is still humanity, besides humanity there is still the universe. Everything goes in the direction of this thought. Men's eyes are trained up, ahead, to the future, into space! Man thinks: we will get "there" too—into the heart of the earth and into the heavens!. . . The history of humanity has only begun. . . From the ice age of capitalism man has crawled out and is moving ahead with tremendous power. Hence we shall dare! Trust the artists to seek. . . Do not stop them, you—stuck on the ridge of old art formations. These formations are also lawful. One must only get away from the fantastic débris of : "two fingers!", or "three fingers!"[1]

Remember that Dos Passos and the "innovators" (we'll use this term in the absence of another) dedicate all their work to the needs of revolutionary humanity now being born. There can be no doubt about that. This is established even from the political questionaire angle.

What else in Dos Passos is good? It is good that he renders with shattering palpability the system of capitalist life. You may say he is melancholy, that he pictures heavy people, etc. But perhaps you will also think of why this is so and you will discover that—that's the way it has to be.

Those that return from the West come flying here, begin to breathe freely, smile. . . The air is different. And wise Dos Passos who has been in Moscow, has lived here, wandered everywhere—is it possible this man does not know what material is needed, what colors, what tones in order to tell how mean and empty life in America is? Dos Passos must show what is happening there, because only through form, only by giving the feel of things can you understand America. You say he does not picture "the soldier in action." Let's be honest about it: are there many "soldiers in action" there yet, and to the extent that he sees them and understands them Dos Passos gives them to us. Tell me, who of our writers wrote a big book in 1917 about our Red Army and our tremendous victories?. . . (*Silence*) To Dos Passos—it his "year 1917" now . . . and relatively, in time, he does not lag. . . Everyone comes to communism in his own way. . . .

Talking about "foresight"—I must recall to you: was not the last plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission an actual revelation to many of strategy of the party for the entire four years (1929-1933)?

When I begin to think of how Western material can be utilised a number of people stop me: "careful, watch your step: there is the petty-bourgeois consciousness and disintegration." I feel like telling them: "my dear comrades, worthy comrades, just wait two, three, four years and see what Soviet artists will do with this material that life is giving them, from the West ,the East, all that is happening before our eyes." One breathes lighter, writers are publishing books. . . It is hard to write books. Novikov-Priboy worked 26 years on *Tsusima.* Read how M. Shaginyan

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[1] A reference to the clerical dispute on whether the sign of the cross is to be made with two or three fingers.—Tr.

wrote her *Hydro-Central.* Do not be in a hurry to draw conclusions for writers. When you have seen what the oviet artist will do when they have mastered the "West" then will be time enough to come with a real analysis, and not a wooden one.

For the present you have the right to guess, but not draw conclusions and prohibit not give one "psychological detail," "secrets of the soul" in any chapter of *1919,* but we see all the "details," and all the "secrets." In Dos Passos' 'chaos' you begin to understand clearly the psychic and social traits of his people.

What will these people be for us when we begin to "handle" them? Will they take a neutral position, be friends or enemies? This is where we begin the study of our probable friends and enemies. This is a most important business. Instead of rejecting Joyce we should persistently feel him out. *Ulysses* (1922) is the culmination point of Joyce's work. It is the Anglo-Saxon *Dead Souls.* The work is written in a rage, in pain, with bitterness, with such fearlessness that if it were only known here we should escape many of the mistakes of Makariev. The artist would speak for himself!

Ulysses exposes modern conditions of existence in the West and gives such terrible pictures of people and their actions that after reading it one can say:—"this is an indictment of Europe!"

This is a very difficult thing to do, many are unaccustomed to it and perhaps do not understand it (perhaps *Ulysses* will be understood if termed a classic?). It is a tremendous work, which already gives and will give its results.

What does Joyce, to my mind, give? In a formal plane—he compels the search for deeper form. Joyce and Dos Passos compel one to think of how one should picture the world, adequately represent the tremendous fullness of the world. It is impossible to neglect these writers that give a remarkable picture of the colossal variety of life, a picture which brings you to palpably feel life, death, the sun, the air. How is this done? Their methods must be utilized. Attempts are already being made and nothing will stop them.

Imitation must be rejected. It is important that one finds one's own way through everything in the West.

Our art must also absorb everything achieved by science. This is another stage of ascent in a definite section of time in human history...

A. Fadeyev

Comrades, it is time we stopped being so "literary." All our discussions, no matter about whom they may be, suffer from one defect—they take place within a limited circle of people and are understood by a limited number of people. While if you come to a production conference at a plant, though you may not even be acquainted with the plant, and what they produce, you will understand, from the speeches of the specialists in their business what these people are struggling for, you will grasp the basic ideas. On the other hand, if even the foremost people not only from the plants and factories or farms, but politically perspicacious people came to our discussion they would yawn, be bored, because we are accustomed to speak about our affairs just as if they are not to be understood by anyone. We operate with a narrow terminology.

Take particularly the discussion on Dos Passos. Let us first see why we are discussing Dos Passos, why people in our country are interested in him, why we publish his works. We are interested in him because he is close to us, because the voice of Dos Passos is that of millions of the broad strata of American petty-bourgeoisie, the ruined, proletarianized petty-bourgeoisie, the lumpen-proletariat and even several strata of the working class. He shows how capitalism in the U.S.A. enslaves, oppresses, debauches, buys, ruins the representatives of the millions of the population of the country. That's

what its all about. And can such a fact be ignored? That's why the question of study cannot be put differently. That's why Dos Passos is near to us and why we need him, why he stands close to the Communist Party. Beginning with protest against enslavement, destruction, degeneration,—he shows how people involuntarily degenerate under the yoke of capitalism, and having begun with an individual protest against this, he also began to perceive the social protest of millions. From a form of petty-bourgeois consciousness he is moving continually closer to us.

One of the speakers here justly reproached him, that in his work he does not indicate the way out which he, as a public spirited man, has already understood, that the working class by following the Communist Party of America will get out of the blind alley in which they are stranded—the way out for the millions enslaved, venalized, debauched by capitalism. However, Dos Passos has not finished his trilogy. We can already see that when he speaks about representatives of the working class, or of people standing close to it, people of the most democratic circles, he gives an excellent portrayal of specific conditions in America. In *The 42nd Parallel* we see that Dos Passos' sympathies are with the really revolutionary elements of the working class. For example, take the figure of the representative of the I.W.W., Bill Haywood. His biography is written in manly tones and one feels how lovingly Dos Passos treats him. This is what we must begin with.

. . . We must not canonize Dos Passos, but analyze him in order that other writers in America, in learning from him, should not grow the same way, but come with bigger strides towards us, overcome all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forms of consciousness. It is clear that this will be of great use to both the American and our own youth.

Ilya Selvinsky

Literary "basic English" with a hundred words, and Joyceism with its dozen dialects are characteristic of the general tendency for record making in the literature of modern capitalism, a literature which tries to get away from the tremendous problems of the period into sporty forms of stylization.

To a certain degree this sport stylism is characteristic of Dos Passos, but just as we distinguish record hunting from physical culture, we must make a distinction between "newmanism" and innovation.

Dos Passos "camera eye," not connected with the text of the novel by subject or association of even tactically, I consider "newmanism." This is not poetic flippancy, not tracings on the margins—it is something from the spinal column, pretentious and sick.

On the other hand the "movie-chronicle" and biographies (Carnegie, Edison, etc.) can be considered innovation. And although the newspaper headlines cannot replace the complex maps of the period they create a kind of background and lack of depth is to some extent compensated for by their pungency.

V. Pertsov

I think Dos Passos will not create a school in Soviet literature, because to create a school some of the newer elements in our perception of the world must be evinced. Dos Passos is the fashion, and I think the fashion of a season, if we speak of the Dos Passos we know today. If Dos Passos grows (as he must) then we will talk about another Dos Passos, but now I shall speak of the one we have now, particularly the one of the *The 42nd Parallel.* Some comrades think that, we must take Dos Passos (and he is compared with Tolstoy—this came out in the discussion) because the old literary

apparatus has broken down, the old literary technique is antiquated. This may sound convincing. . . .

. . . With respect to capitalism Dos Passos is a revolutionary pessimist. On account of this he is close to us. Dos Passos feels the crash of the old world keenly and his entire artistic system is adapted to the expression of this feeling of crash. However, in order to express our content, to create a form for our content we must give our reader, for instance, a feeling of the youth of the world, not the crashing of it, elements of collective success, not a hero's career such as stands at the center of Dos Passos' attention. Dos Passos' heroes all perish, they see no way out.

Dos Passos' form is intimately connected with its content.

Langston Hughes

Letter to the Academy

The gentlemen who have got to be classics and are now old with beards
(or dead and in their graves) will kindly come forward and
speak upon the subject

Of the Revolution. I mean the gentlemen who wrote lovely books about
the defeat of the flesh and the triumph of the spirit that
sold in the hundreds of thousands and are studied in the
high schools and read by the best people will kindly come
forward and

Speak about the Revolution—where the flesh triumphs (as well as the
spirit) and the hungry belly eats, and there are no best
people, and the poor are mighty and no longer poor, and the
young by the hundreds of thousands are free from hunger to
grow and study and love and propagate, bodies and souls unchained
without My Lord saying a commoner shall never marry
my daughter or the Rabbi crying cursed be the mating of Jews
and Gentiles or Kipling writing never the twain shall meet—

For the twain have met. But please—all you gentlemen with beards who
are so wise and old and who write better than we do and whose
souls have triumphed (in spite of hungers and wars and the
evils about you) and whose books have soared in calmness and
beauty aloof from the struggle to the library shelves and the
desks of students and who are now classics—come forward and
speak upon

The subject of the Revolution.

We want to know what in the hell you'd say?

Moscow, 1933.

S. Tretyakov

HANS EISLER: Revolutionary Composer

A Soviet Writer About A German Musician [1]

"Neue Welt", The New World, a large concert hall. The public is going forward in a mass. Active natures push forward, to progress some thirty steps in a quarter hour. Passive natures act as ballbearings to two streams, in and out going. The traffic does not demolish the bearings. Elbows are pressed to sides. Feet take care of the neighbor's shoe shine. The most delicate excuses accompany each poke in the ribs.

That means, this is Germany.[1]

Men's necks are encompassed by stiff collars, but the fingers show labor, many nails are broken. The trousers show a pressed crease, but they are old. The shoes show wear, are shabby. The faces show an unhealthy skin, are grey, the foreheads—prematurily furrowed.

This is proletarian Germany.

In the corridors stand determined looking figures. The collars of their green shirts open at the neck, the pose—a dare! From black hat, sailor type, to varnished chin.

At the gate, the black varnish of *Shuppo* napes, as Berlin policemen are called.

At booths in the corridor—books: Fadeyev's *Nineteen* (the German title of *Debâcle),* Ehrenburg, Reisner. On a cover, the familiar profile of Ludwig Renn. A hand stretches out over heads to take a new issue of *Worker's Theatre.* A voice shouts: *"Moskau Rundschau."*

There two friends are saying goodbye to each other with fists raised to their shoulders.

I turn to one:

"Sagen Sie. . ."

He pricks his ears severely: *"Warum sagst du 'Sie'?"*

My companion intercedes:

In Moscow even communists often address one another so.

The young fellow turns round flashing a KIM blutton.

This is communist Germany. An entertainment for the benefit of the striking iron workers.

The chairman has on a blue shirt, wears no coat.

The orchestra is conducted by a man with an accordion.

The red spokesman—the German Blue Blouse is presenting a number in which physical culture movements are interwoven with demonstration shouts. After the Blue Blouse—readers, dancers. Then the chairman announces two names.

Bush and Eisler.

The names are met by the thunder of hands gone mad. A noise of applause as if elephants had stampeded in brushwood. The newsboys are silent. The vendors from the booths stretch their necks. Leaning on the backs of those before them, columns bend forward to have at least a view of the stage.

The singer Bush. Again coatless. Hands in pockets. An air of independence. That's how young German workers like to stand and look laughingly at the gentleman in a top hat, a little hard of breath, who tries, somewhat alarmed, to hurry past them in order to ring at the front entrance of his house where an enameled plate reads: "Entrance for ladies and gentlemen only. Servants and messengers use the back door."

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[1] This article was written after a visit to Germany just preceding the Hitler regime.

Nothing about Bush recalls the full dress of the singer, the starched shirt, or the roll of notes in hand.

At the piano a little gnome, with a big head dazzlingly bald, and trousers that fall in accordion folds to his feet.

Hans Eisler the composer of the songs Bush will sing.

I have never heard such diction and phrasing as Bush gives. Not a word is muffled by the melody. It is hardly clear at first whether it is a song or just an intimate talk, an ironic tale making fun of the enemy.

For instance, a song about the naive Negro Jim who wants to know why there are two compartments in a car: one for whites—another for blacks. Or another one with the melody tender as a sentimental romance, with all the naivete of a little Gretchen with tightly plaited hair—and the audience sputtering wih laughter, because the song is about a June radish, red on the outside and white throughout, and only the last couplet reveals that the radish—is the Social Democrat.

There is a song of the English striking miners. A threatening song. At once a march and a warning around the words of a genuine miners song.

The song of an unemployed. Exhausted, worked out, sucked out of life blood and disillusioned to the limit, shouting ready for a last explosion when he will tear out cobblestones from the pavement with his fingers. And in the midst of this cry, a parody on a sentimental school song.

The irony is not only in the words—it is in the music. There is a song about Christmas, where the church choral is turned into a brazen, self-satisfied howl, recalling the caricatures of Grosz where the average respectable German is shown as the limit of meanness.

A song of philanthropists with the chorus: *"Yes, this is the pfennig, but what has happened to the mark?"*

And the threatening, final shout: *"Fight!"*

Bush and Eisler come out to bow, go away and come again to bow. Until tired of going they render another song.

The workers ask for their favorite songs. The call for *Seife (Soap)* is heard oftenest.

Before the 1927 elections, the Social Democrats distributed cakes of soap with the words "Vote for S-D" stamped on them. Comrade Eisler wrote the little song then with the ironic chorus of Social Democrats singing:

We work up suds,
And soaping well
We wash our hands of everything.

To soap well, in a figurative sense, means to deceive cleverly in German.

Eisler is famous in two ways: Bush—Eisler, as a workers' vaudeville pair; Brecht-Eisler-Dudov, as a dramatic group consisting of the dramatist Brecht, the composer Eisler, and the producer, Dudov.

Going to visit Eisler with Dudov, I already knew that he is terribly Bohemian—will promise anything and promptly forget, will lose his manuscripts, but there is a man in Vienna, called Ratz who carefully collects every line written by Eisler, systemizes, stores and publishes.

I found out that Eisler's march *Red Weding* had a circulation, in phonograph records alone, of 40,000 and that the march has become the militant song of those going to demonstrations and on barricades not only in Germany but also in Austria, Denmark, Czecho-Slovakia, Holland, Switzerland.

From wide clean avenues, we turned off into narrow crooked alleys of old Berlin. We found our way through yards and gates in stone fences on which in sharp compe-

tition *Rot Front* and *Heil Hitler,* the five pointed star and the swastika, shouted at each other—traces of the recent election campaign.

The entrance to Eisler's rooms was closed. Although we had called him on the telephone before, he had evidently forgotten. We started to whistle the tune of *Red Weding* loudly to call his attention on the fourth floor, to the fact that we had arrived.

It was cold autumn already. Through the closed window we could hear, in answer to our whistle, a Bach fugue.

If Hans has immersed himself in the piano you can be sure he will not hear a steam siren blown in his very ears.

We listened to Bach for a long while and continued to whistle until we hit some kind of pause.

Eisler looked at the music tenderly and extolled Bach. He was trying to find in him an ally in his struggle for a chorus in which the entire audience joins, instead of the contemporary practice of the stage performance and passively listening audience, a chorus of a high cultural order which welds people together, unites them in a common rhythm and one emotion—this Eisler was seeking in those days when the church was cultivating the chorus and drew the genius of the time to its aid.

The concert as musical amusement was obnoxious to Eisler from the start. From the beginning he used the stage to ridicule and sarcastically mock the melodic trance of the public, their philistine love of the sentimental and pathetic, known in German as *kitch.*

"You want to know what *kitch* is," asked Eisler.

"I'll explain. Here is your Russian *kitch:*"

And in a funny shaking voice he sings the melody of the *Volga Boatman,* and then another song, and to demonstrate more effectively its quality of *kitch* he sat down at the table, rested his head on a fist and with the other hand grabed an imaginary glass of whiskey.

In 1925 he already put to music a series of newspaper clippings: *A Marriage ad. A Children's Song of a Little Girl who Lost Her Nose. Ad of Dogs for Sale.* There were performers, as is customary at bourgeois concerts, in full dress and decollete, and and then there was a scandal because in the perfumed concert hall the stench of the decaying scums of the capitalist city spread from these newspaper channels.

Eisler's journalism appears not only in the text. His music is not merely an accompaniment. It is a sounding blow to bourgeois canons of sentimental song, naive tune, pompous march, because life has turned ugly and has hidden its mean mug in its tail.

Eisler's music is not illustrative. Quite the reverse, it is often opposed to its text producing a sarcastic effect.

There are protests all over Germany against the infamous 218th paragraph prohibiting abortions. Forty thousand female corpses the victims of illegal abortions, is the yearly score.

Eisler writes to the words of Brecht a dialogue song of a working woman begging a physician, who stands strictly by the law,to perform an abortion·

You will an excellent mother make
For our industry's sake.
That's what your womb is for.
But then you should be — hep—
Must watch your step.
Enough—the law's the law.
Bear—and fool around no more.

This chorus is in the rhythm of a careless dance and the staid figure of the Herr Doctor in soup and fish steps out in the shameless steps.

Eisler sits down to the piano. He pats it with the palms of his small hands like a child pats the water in its tub. He doesn't pedal, he stamps the pedal as if it were a vicious snake. He breathes loud in rhythm with the march. His voice is hoarse and passionate:

Eh, hosts, we are your guests.
Unasked we're here.
Into our bones you pressed
Your crutches dear.
You said: false limbs are best—
And hand and foot surpass—
You said—blind folk in the dark
Push better than the rest.

In the neighboring room a clock ticks and the neat housewife, accustomed to the musical bedlam of her boarder (up to 11:30 when her husband goes to bed) brings in three cups of coffee which she serves on a low table. The surface of the coffee trembles as Eisler marches on with his cripples.

No matter. Let the other foot
Be also torn away—
But to the bosses' necks
Our hands will find the way.
An army of stumps we are
On wooden claws that ply.
And stamping we bring news—
The world October's nigh.

Eisler rises from the piano. He feels good. Like after a bath. His bald head shines. He tells how hard it is to work in one of the most backward branches of the cultural movement of the German proletariat—in the chorus circles. And he, Eisler, is the leader of the musical opposition.

Social Democracy has for forty years drilled the German worker in choral song which was to have occupied his leisure and raised him out of his grey and monotonous life. In 1927 workers' choruses performed Beethoven's solemn mass and the Social Democrats were triumphant and the Christian Socialists, Catholic and Lutheran priests hugging themselves: Let it be Beethoven—but it is a mass just the same, church singing, whose esthetic charm is after all very close to religious hypnosis.

The first communist songs broke into the Social Democratic concerts. Their programs were sentimental, sweetly ribald and on rare occasions vaguely revolutionary.

Forward, forward, toiling masses.

The communists, Eisler and his group, brought new, burning subjects to these concert stages. The songs became concrete and the musical quality of the new programs so high that after the very first communist concert in 1929 there came a stream of petty bourgeois fellow-travelers.

But the sealed cans of the concert hall were capable of muffling even communist song. Is it not strange that Eisler's song beginning with the words: *Sing on streets* should be sung indoors systematically? The communist song could not stand this long and came out on the streets in demonstrations, strikes, and from the very first it was evident that songs which sounded well on the concert stage were ill suited to the open air. There it was in the sway of the musical turn of phrase and the tastes of megalomaniacs. On the streets, it had to be simpler, rougher, easier to learn, in rhythm with the marching step. But coming out on the street, the song went into a "left deviation," declared the hall banned—and this played right into the hands of reformist song.

So, correcting its error, communist song returned to the concert hall keeping its open air rhythm and the concreteness of its militant subjects. Thus the didactic play originated, of which the first sample was *Highest Mede* written by Brecht, music by Eisler, produced by Dudov.

Highest Mede is the staging of a mass trial. It is the choral rendering of a trial before the control commission which gives its decision upon the report of four underground agitators who were compelled, for the sake of the cause, to do away with a fifth one, who too weak and undisciplined, put the cause of the party in danger.

The chorus not only puts questions to the reporting communists. It also sums up its opinion in choruses, one of the best of which is *Hail the Party:*

The individual has two eyes,
The Party has a thousand eyes.
The individual knows his moment,
The Party days and years embraces.
The Party sees the peoples of the Earth
The individual only his own block.

"These choruses," says Eisler, "are not just musical compositions performed for listeners. They are a particular kind of political seminar on problems of party strategy and tactics. The members of the chorus work these problems out, but they do so in the easily remembered and attractive form of chorus singing. We built this play not for concerts. It is only a method of pedagogic work with students of Marxian shools and proletarian assemblies."

On a special dais the four agitators appear and demonstrate before the chorus in consecutive stages the way things happened. They don half masks, yellow, with Chinese eyeholes, throw a rope over their shoulders and there is a group of Chinese coolies singing its barge hauler's songs, while the soft hearted comrade forgets all about agitating and runs, instead, to put stones under the slipping feet of the hauling crew.

The agitation comes to naught. The foreman gets the others to quarrel with the comrade. The four comrades explain the mistake to him. The chorus sings a song—a fugue on a quotation from Lenin:

Wise is not the one that made no errors,
Wise the one that knows how to correct one.

Unlike the street song, the didactic play does not limit itself to primitive melody. It draws upon all the mastership of the composer and the entire technical armory of the modern concert. The play put anew the question, so recently ridiculed, of a broad canvas, only the canvas is not used as a screen for throwing on it figures of the imagination, but as a path that leads to communism.

The play intends to transform people. It is a process of revaluating the world. This is the slogan of the proponents of the didactic play.

Thus communist music becomes the heavy artillery of the battle for communism.

Eisler's songs and melodies, like the first transient flames of a grand conflagration, flare up now in the hall, now cutting in on the gayety of the march in the streets, now in the classroom. And here men in lacquered helmets are already running, trying to put the fire out by means of rubber clubs, put them out by means of hooves of police horses. Remember that *Red Weding* was written to the order of one of the agitprop troupes. These agitprop troupes and their entire repertory are strictly forbidden in Germany.

On a Berlin street I once saw how a big heavy guy in a green uniform and pince-nez tore into a group of small children, scattered them, slapping their cheeks. He slaps their

cheeks and pulls their ears to put out the flame of an Eisler song the children had started to sing.

Brecht-Eisler-Dudov made a film *Coulet-Vampe* about the unemployed who settled in tents on the outskirts of the city and the great lesson of solidarity among the workers.

Whose street—this street?
Whose world—this world?

the militant song of the film asks ,and ends:

—But don't forget—Solidarity.

The film was first cut, mutilated, then altogether prohibited.

Eisler writes choruses about unemployed, about *Murder Of a Peasant Revolution,* but in one of these choruses are the words:

Place the red roosters
On manastery roofs.

Hence—Prohibited.

Eisler makes the music for the film *Nobody's Land.* But in the film there is a chorus:

Worker and farmer, arm, grab your guns,
Keen the proletariat's bayonet...

Hence—Prohibited.

Eisler visited the U.S.S.R. He went to Magnitogorsk and noted the songs of the migrating Cossacks, new songs, in which the word *magnitka* already figured, he saw how young communists build their blast furnace, and how a city grows up where yesterday blank fields stared.

He was thus preparing to write the music for Evens' film *Magnitostroy.*

I remember an evening at the hotel Novo Moskovskaya. From the window the frozen Moscow river and the lights of the Kremlin could be seen. Eisler was walking about the room steering away from the gilt bentwood chairs. He was excited—only a half hour ago he finished a song. The trousers fell in accordion folds down to his heels. He sat down to the piano and, unbelievably distorting the Russian, sang in this language:

Urals, Urals!
Iron ore watch.
Urals, Urals!
Steep is mount Atac,
By the Party's orders:
Pig iron must be got, must be got!

The sole hammers at the pedal. The hands strike the keys. The voice hoarsely ratches:

And the Komsomol has answered:
The blast furnace is hot.

In time to feet and hands, he violently shakes his head demanding that we join in. And together, in one chorus, to the consternation of the hotel management, we sing the concluding lines:

The lapse and shady blades
We fought with brigades,
Built and now erected stands
Magnitostroy.

A. Lunacharsky

On Dostoyevsky

Marxian criticism, which occupies itself considerably with Dostoyevsky, has taken up the question of the class genesis of his work. On the one hand the opinion is expressed that Dostoyevsky, in distinction to the writers of the aristocracy, is the first great writer of the middle class ,the poet primarily, of the unfortunates of the city, their sufferings and strivings. On the other hand, there are many indications and expressions of Dostoyevsky himself, that would place him as a representative of the decadent aristocracy. From this point of view Dostoyevsky is brother to Pushkin, who was also the representative of the aristocracy decadent in its time, although not so impoverished yet and discouraged as the aristocracy of the period and the circles that interested Dostoyevsky, and Turgenyev, who reflected the displacement of the aristocracy, and Tolstoy, who experienced the storm of protest against advancing capitalism, that raged in the stable, rural Russia of the country gentleman. On closer scrutiny however, it must be admitted that this question is by no means of great importance. Dostoyevsky's first works are undoubtedly devoted to the small man of St.Petersburg, and the nobility plays no role there whatever. In the novels there are many hints at the former greatness of this or that hero or personage in these philosophical works, however, each time we find we have to do with a nobleman unprooted, turned into a city tramp, a government official, an undefined city pauper, or at times, an adventurer. How far Dostoyevsky himself saw that this kind of nobleman had merged with a new class of society, the new middle class which was made up of the old middle classes, ruined merchants, ordinary citizens and denobled noblemen—can be seen from the fact that in a letter to Katkov he speaks, for instance, definitely of him several times as the descendant of a once noble family.

Tolstoy reflected the disintegration of the old order in the country, among the landed gentry. Dostoyevsky reflected the same process in the city. That is his chief significance as a writer. In this reflection, what came to the front was naturally, as might be expected for that time, not the proletarian and capitalist, but the figures that stood closest to the typical intelligentsia, the city's poor on one hand and the professional intelligentsia on the other. These are the strata of the middle class whether descended from a lord of the manor or retaining some of the traits of a nobleman.

The whole of this city population, created to a great extent by capitalism (at first by the growth of mercantile, then industrial capital) suffered or at any rate was tossed about in the atmosphere of the advancing capitalist order or, to be more exact, capitalist disorder. Great writers are generally born in the wombs of great crises; they reflect all the colorfulness and all the restless dynamics of the crisis, and the mainspring of their work is their anxiety to find some kind of solution, a consoling answer to the burning questions of life.

Discussions are also taking place as to the kind of middle class that Dostoyevsky represents; was it a decadent middle class, i.e., a class without perspective—then its exponent should of course be a dark pessimist. It is obvious that the representative of such a class can seek escape from his pessimism only in bitter cynicism or in mysticism.

But can the middle class of the seventies-eighties (in Russia—*trans.)* be considered decadent? Did not capitalists rise from its ranks, was not this middle class goaded by a thirst for profit, by wild careerism, by a passionate desire to live like the rich, by readiness to do anything and everything in order to achieve success, in a word, imbued with the lust of life? Such a class can not be called decadent, a growing bourgeoisie

is not decadent; we may not sympathize with its aims, its course, but we must admit that in the beginning of its reign it is a powerful and even peculiarly creative class.

And finally, everyone knows that the middle class of the period gave birth to a group of populists including such real figures as Chernishevsky and Dobrolubov. Yes, and Pisarev can hardly be called a decadent.

The fact of the matter is that all these three varieties of middle class existed at once, as one class, and at times the frame of mind of all three could be contained in one breast, in a single person. A successful member of the middle class created a cynical philosophy for himself, decided that everything is permissible, became a man of affairs, a merciless profiteer. Dostoyevsky knew this, portrayed these people and detested them. Not only that, but even the desire for happiness generally which lived mightily in even such a person's heart, Dostoyevsky tried to besmirch, claiming this desire to be part and parcel of the inhuman egoism of these detested rising or risen bourgeois. This desire for a fuller happiness, this lust of a new class for life, particularly strong in the ordinary citizen of the time, might lead not to the pursuit of personal profit, but to struggle with the general chaos, by organizing an orderly society, by struggle against rising capitalism—by becoming a weapon of socialism. It was thus that a sympathy for Utopian Socialism arose in the best of the bourgeoisie and the most energetic in mind and will became revolutionists of the type of Chernishevsky, whom we gladly recognize as the direct and worthy predecessors of our great revolution.

Dostoyevsky knew about this too. People of this type attracted him powerfully. In the beginning of his career he joined the circle of Petrashevsky and not only was he captivated by Utopian Socialism (Fourierism) but developed truly revolutionary enthusiasm and declared himself several times that the existing barbarous order should be forcibly overthrown. But even if Chernishevsky at times spoke bitterly of the fact that at that period this road was bound to lead to defeat, and at the end of his life after imprisonment and exile told the sombre story of the sheep who wanted to become a goat—a hint at the tragic prematureness of the revolutionary movement of the time—Dostoyevsky, in face of the furious attacks of the black forces, was unable to defend these advance posts with that unexampled dignity which we find in Chernishevsky and Nechaev. Dostoyevsky after being sentenced to death and then, the sentence commuted at the very point of execution, subjected to the tortures of hard labor and exile, was broken, or rather bowed. After a tremendous inner struggle while retaining his hatred of the bourgeois spirit he inflamed himself with a hatred of the revolutionary spirit. He tried to combine them, tried to see in the revolutionist only the haughtiness of a mind that has renounced life, only lust, attempting by crime to achieve success, in a word "godlessness" to use his terminology, the lack of conscience, love. By such an operation the revolutionist became a devil; Dostoyevsky had to throw together and condemn both the bourgeois and socialist courses in order to justify his choice of the third course, of which he was the greatest exponent.

What was this third course? This is really the course of the decadent middle class. Of tens and hundreds of thousands of tortured people, people who have touched bottom, lack any means whatever of struggle, with no hope of bettering their lot; with their only escape in suicide or a life of darkeness, drunkenness, debauchery or finally in making religious peace with the world, supported by belief in another better world where they will be compensated for the injustices suffered in this.

It is among such classes that the doctrines of humility, and non-resistance thrive. Dostoyevsky tried to build a similar philosophy out of patriotic pride, pronouncing Russia a land of special atonement and suffering, and out of christianity, which had its origin in similar social circumstances, and principles like: "all are guilty," "love is the only reaction to any evil," "penitence is the only atonement for sin," etc., etc. From this point of view the struggle against the autocracy could be abandoned, it could

be recognized as the lawful expression of divinity, the old order that was receding, could be pronounced a blessing, and a merciless struggle declared against both capitalism and more particularly socialism as devilish temptations.

This Dostoyevsky actually did. He was not, however, inwardly certain of the final triumph of his christian humility, theories and feelings. Quite the contrary, the revolutionist within him continued to live and from the cellar into which he had been driven, shook the walls of Dostoyevsky's chapel with his protests. Hence the partners of "Satan" —Ivan Karamazov, Stavrogin, Raskolnikov—however he tried to libel them—came out interesting, extremely significant figures, triumphant tirades were put into their mouths (for instance the conversation between Ivan Karamazov and his brother Alexey and the famous legend about the inquisitor); while on the contrary, the proponents of love—the Sonyas, Aleshas, and Myshkins—in spite of all his efforts to lend them holiness and depth, seem rather flat, boring figures and their preachings lack all novelty or strength.

Dostoyevsky himself admitted this in *The Brothers Karamazov*. He gave great battle to his own doubts, his own protests against his surroundings, against the whole "world" and wrote his friends that he failed to conquer these opponents of his own imagination. And besides this, in a conversation with Suvorin, Dostoyevsky admits that he is dreaming of a final part to *Brothers Karamazov*—the novel is far from finished: in this last part Alesha "of course" turns revolutionist.

The fundamental problem of middle class morals—shall one adopt the ways of humility or egoism, or the ways of revolution and socialism—tortured Dostoyevsky all his life. And this is characteristic of a representative of a class in which all three tendencies prevailed. With unequaled mastery Dostoyevsky portrays the intolerable conflict which arose in the people of this class as a result of the shattering of the old ties, the extreme uncertainty of the future and the extremely difficult present.

All Dostoyevsky's work, his whole being teaches us that the only way out of the chaos of his time was through revolution and socialism. It is true that were he to have persisted on the road chosen in his youth the autocracy would undoubtedly have destroyed him as utterly as it did Chernishevsky. To a great extent it was an instinct of selfpreservation that threw Dostoyevsky finally from the camp of the advance posts of the peasantry and, indirectly, the future proletariat, into the camp of the decadent middle class, which stood close in its creed to the black hundreds.

The government always had its doubts of Dostoyevsky, it understood the tremendous complexity of his psychology and philosophy. Society also, has all along understood that beneath the sombre exterior of the apostle of renunciation, the preacher of the orthodox faith and civil obedience, a martyr was hidden and a rebel who though half stifled in this atmosphere filled the works of Dostoyevsky with elements that boil with revolution, who though held fearfully in check, nevertheless succeeded in making his voice heard.

Today that part of the intelligentsia can love Dostoyevsky as their own writer, that has not accepted the revolution and tosses about feverishly under the advance of socialism, as it once did before the onset of capitalism. For the healthy part of our society, the proletarian primarily, Dostoyevsky is interesting as a colossal monument of a very important period in history, as an original and great master of emotional writing and keen analysis, and finally as the expression of those moods of disintegration and doubt to which these sound elements must not close their eyes inasmuch as they still have in their midst side by side with their Dostoyevsky—similar fellow travelers. It must be remembered that Dostoyevsky became exceedingly famous in Western Europe; at present, during the crisis this fame has still further spread. This is because the middle classes there are living through a period of tremendous disintegration. Thus we must know and understand Dostoyevsky, because the spirit of Dostoyevsky is still alive, is still developing in the consciousness of the intermediate classes.

SIX GERMAN REVOLUTIONARY

Gegen den imperialistischen Krieg!
Her zur roten Einheitsfront!
Wählt Ernst Thälmann!

POSTERS BY ALEX KEIL


SPARTAKIADE
JULI
1931
BERLIN
R51
ALEX
RGO. SPORTINTERNATIONALE


ANTIFASCHISTEN
VEREINT IM KAMPF
UM
ARBEIT
FREIH
BROT
WÄHLT
KOMMUNISTEN
LISTE
4


So darf es nicht kommen!
AX

Letters From Writers

THREE LETTERS FROM AUSTRALIA

KATHERINE SUSANNAH PRICHARD — VANCE PALMER — JEAN DEVANNY

The Literary Scene

Literature in Australia has a hard row to hoe. First of all because it has to overcome all the difficulties incidental to creative effort in any of the countries dominated by capitalist ideology, and secondly, because as a dominion of the British Empire, its writers are forced to seek publication in London or America for their work to have circulation of any significance.

There are publishers in Melbourne and Sydney, but their output is very limited. Until recently, the writing of books about Australia was discouraged by publishers who happen also to be booksellers, on the grounds that: "Australians do not want to read books about Australia."

That this is not true, but a trade shibboleth, is generally recognized. A new firm, The Endeavour Press, has sprung up to give it the lie direct. The fact of the matter is that a majority of the Australian people cannot afford to buy books by their own writers, published abroad, and sold locally for 6/—or 7/6 a copy; and while the market is flooded with cheap reprints of popular books by English and American writers, these sell more readily than the highly priced works of Australian writers which do not achieve many editions.

Katherine Susannah Prichard, Australian novelist and playwright

For this reason many young writers of talent seek fame and fortune abroad, rather than eke out a miserable existence on the smell of an oil rag at home. They invariably become anglicized, or americanized, away from Australia, and lose any intimate quality of the soil. Several writers of ability have been working at home, though, in recent years; and there is a growing feeling for novels, poems and plays which reveal the life and work of the people of Australia.

But the writing of novels remains rather a costly hobby. Few, if any Australian writers could earn a living by the royalties they receive for their books. Most of them have to depend on some other trade as a means of existence, or write stories and articles for the newspapers and their weekly editions. The *Sydney Bulletin* provides two or three pages for short stories and verses. The daily newspapers and weekly journals accept topical articles and short stories of a light popular kind. "Art in Australia" concentrates on the decorative arts, reproduces the work of painters, etchers and sculptors, with critical sketches. There is no outlet for the serious work of independent literary craftsmen in prose or verse.

Dramatists are handicapped even more than other writers. Dramatic production in Australia is controlled by one firm which presents all manner of shoddy American and English farces and melodrama rather than give the writers of the country an opportunity to prove their metal. Amateur companies have set up small theatres in every state of the Commonwealth, and occasionally the work of Australian playwrights has an airing in them. Betty Davies' play, *The Touch of Silk,* for example, has been produced by repertory companies in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide, with great success; but still the commercial theatre is indifferent to its appeal for wider audiences.

These amateur companies, mostly bourgeois in character, retreat from anything in the nature of revolutionary propaganda. So that the future

of free expression, both for literature and the theatre, in Australia, seems to be bound up with the development of the Workers' Art Clubs.

Workers' Art Clubs have been established in Sydney and Melbourne, with a magazine and company of players to produce work bearing on the life and struggles of the working class. The clubs are as yet, in their infancy; but already Toller's *Masses,* Tretyakov's *Roar China,* and two or three short plays by young Australian writers have been produced in Melbourne. In Sydney, the work of other Australian writers was tried out, and the W.A.C. is girding its loins for a strenuous season next winter.

A stupid and very absurd censorship is another difficulty Australian writers have to contend with. Books which circulate quite freely in England and America are detained by the customs' officials in Australia. Norman Lindsay's *Redheap* for instance, a realistic study of life in an upcountry town was banned by the censor in Australia and nowhere else. Even *International Literature* it seems is now to be on the list of prohibited publications.

Katherine Susannah Prichard

(Author of *Working Bullocks, Black Opal, Coonardoo* and other novels)

Australia and the Soviet Union

It was a great pleasure to get the copy of *International Literature,* which I have read from cover to cover. What a vital magazine you have made it! I used to enjoy it in its earlier form, but this is better, and more comprehensive. I was amazed by the tables at the end, showing the number of books published in Soviet Russia to-day. If our writers in this country only had such opportunities! The position here is that there is very little publishing, except in the matter of newspapers and bourgeois magazines. The country is flooded with books, imported mainly from England and, as far as fiction is concerned, mainly rubbish. So that though there is a 'literate' public, accustomed to read, it is not accustomed to any sincere representation of its own life and the problems, economic and social, that surround it. All its reading is really 'escape' literature and it is very hard for our own writers to break through the barrier of its prejudice. I sometimes think that Russia was lucky in having such a large proportion of its people illiterate before the Revolution; their imaginations were not distorted by the false and trivial romanticism which the people of other countries drink in with the morning's milk.

We have a few writers, with either a democratic or working class point of view who are doing good work. One of the best is Katharine Prichard, author of *Working Bullocks,* which I hear had been translated into Russian. She is a brilliant writer, and knows the conditions of working class life all over the country. Another good writer is E. T. Brown, who published *This Russian Business* in England a couple of months ago. It is extremely well written and has attracted a good deal of attention. Though he has strong communist sympathies it is written from a slightly detached point of view. I am also sending by this mail a copy of my last book of short stories, *Separate Lives.* Most of them have no special direction: they merely represent different kinds of life in this country, though their figures are mainly from the working class.

Vance Palmer

Melbourne, Australia

(Author of *The Passage* and other novels)

The Workers Art Movement in Australia

Though the organizational and cultural level of the Workers Art Movement, in Australia a movement only recently initiated, is extremely low, yet the potentialities for a rapid swing towards and the development of higher standards, is everywhere discernible.

Even bourgeois art in Australia has been circumscribed and stultified to a degree probably not experienced in any other country, the reason being the peculiar conditions of the country's settlement and development coupled with its isolation. Few indeed are the worthwhile products of Australian literature, and in painting and sculpture one doubts if a single piece displays unusual talent or workmanship. In cartooning and caricature alone Australian artists have commanded a world position inferior to none, and of these George Finey, who played a most prominent part in the formation of the Sydney Workers Art Club, probably ranks first. Finey's genius, however, failed to secure him against persecution for his rebel ideas. From the foremost and highest paid position in Australia he has been driven to an insecure freelancing. As with John Reed, his finest work has been done for the working class organizations, members of which have watched with interest this evolution from the influence of reformism to a sounder political basis. Australian writers and platform artists in the bourgeois world have almost without exception gained recognition overseas and few of them are more than a name, even if that, to the mass of Australians.

As for revolutionary art, until recently in literature the writers who have succeeded in bringing even the germs of working class influence before the public could be counted on the fingers of one hand. The "democratic" traditions of Australian social-political life have been a sturdier clamp upon the growth of proletarian art than the aristocratic and undemocratic traditions of the older countries have been. The liberal magazines and press of the Old World and America, which have provided channels of expression, to some extent at least, for the aspirations of the workers, has had now, no counter-part here. In the whole six states of

Australia ,with its population of near seven million, outside of the new worker press and that of sympathetic organizations like the Melbourne University Labor Club, there is scarcely an avenue for proletarian or even radical liberal expression. And until recently the widely distributed population (Australia is the same size as the United States of America) has mitigated tremendously against a market for proletarian group views.

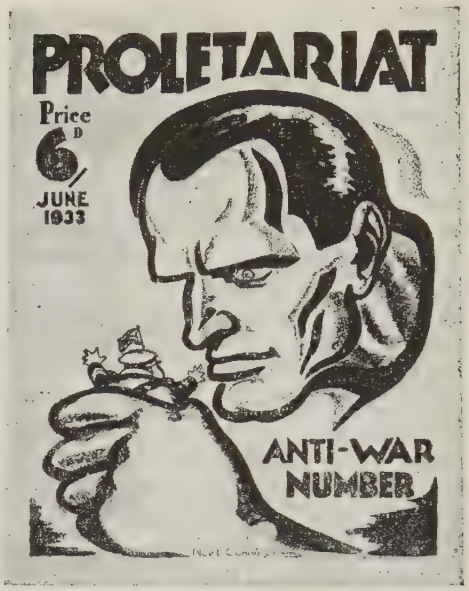
Revolutionary Culture Grows

Of present day fiction writers the justly renowned Katherine Susannah Prichard alone shows working class influence and of the past the poet Henry Lawson alone produced at least some fine rebel poetry. The writer of this letter is a New Zealander resident for some time in Australia. Of her own published novels and short stories only a few contain germs of workingclass ideology, all of them being written while she was still confused by reformism. Though she has written much revolutionary material she has been unable to secure publication of such. On her return from her tour of the Soviet Union in 1932 she wrote a long book on her travels only to have it rejected by her English and American publishers for its revolutionary bias, her agents refusing even to negotiate it.

In 1932 an attempt was made by a non-party group in Melbourne to float a workingclass monthly called *Proletarian,* but it disappeared after a few issues. The pre-social-fascist era knew some good reformist papers but today one can find only sporadically featured workingclass ideas. During recent years unorganized attempts have also been made by the labor movement to develop the drama but not until the beginning of 1932 did there appear any organized effort in this direction. This organizational activity can, of course, be traced to the revolutionary upsurge of workingclass ideology under the leadership of the Communist Party. The establishment of the fraternal organizations was the forerunner to the appearance of a number of weekly and monthly workingclass journals. At the same time the Melbourne University Labor Club issued a most successful and theoretically fine magazine entitled *Proletariat.* Recently news comes from New Zealand that some young radical enthusiasts connected with the Auckland University have issued a quarterly of the same nature.

In 1931 the Sidney Friends of the Soviet Union gave impetus to the development of an art movement proper by establishing a drama group. The groping first efforts were marked by the presentation of some execrable stuff as Workers Art yet the impulse was virile and when the original group broke down by reason of its own anarchy its component parts reappeared as separate entities functioning on a much higher level.

Melbourne, Victoria, started a Workers Art



Cover of the monthly student publication of the Melbourne University Labor Club

Club which under "left" influence, titulated for some time between dissolution and Bohemianism, finally settling down. Nevertheless, even at that period it achieved some notable effects, chief of which was the exhibition of painting by Jack Maugham, wherein for the first time in Australia worker and anti-war art gained recognition, and the single issue of a magazine. Attempts at dramatic production were mostly unsuccessful because of lamentably weak direction.

Sydney Workers Art Club

1932 saw Sydney, New South Wales, throwing up not only a Workers Art Club but numbers of dramatic groups as well, independent or attached to the Workers International Relief, the Friends of the Soviet Union, or the Left Wing of the Labor Party. In Brisbane, Queensland, a group of Proletarian Players was formed.

So far, Sydney's Workers Art Club shows most promise. The mistakes and the difficulties inseparable from a building period, involving the adaption of utter novices to a new and difficult medium and the at least partial overcoming of "right" and "left" deviations, are being rapidly replaced by vigorous development with truer class direction. The great fault of the young worker dramatists (practically all dramatic programs have been created by club members themselves) has been crudity; the tendency to hang slabs of blatant political propaganda on the barest of dramatic threads. They have not yet learned to advantage themselves of bourgeois technique; nor do they correctly estimate

the importance of Workers Art. However, the Club, by virtue of its virility, is not only reacting constructively upon the many dramatic groups which have sprung up in the suburbs of Sydney but further in radiating an influence upon the other States and New Zealand as well. It recently motivated the formation of a Central Committee, composed of delegates from the different groups to function in a directive and advisory capacity.

The literary section of the Club has been the most backward and this despite that the pre-requisites for growth in that sphere were most favorable. Uneven attention by the directing organ and under-estimation of the section in comparison with the more spectacular drama have been responsible for this. One issue of a magazine occurred, inexcusably rough and crude technically, though containing some good material.

The art section, which set out with a great flourish of trumpets has as yet, owing to difficulties arising out of petty-bourgeois influence, confined its production with minor exceptions to poster and slogan work. In its forthcoming issue of a magazine of anti-war and working-class cartoons it will approach fulfilment of of the talented workers associated with it.

Of the other Art groups, most of which confine themselves to dramatic and concert work, the most important and one wielding a real influence, is the "Ragged Trousered Philanthropists" group. The name is derived, palpably, from Tressal's book of that name, a most successful production of which (unfortunately with its weaknesses included) in suburban and urban areas, was the initial presentation of the group. This was followed by Tretyakov's *Roar China* on a much higher level of technical and artistic merit and Sinclair's *Oil* and *The Jungle* will follow suit.

Generally speaking, the prime need of our worker artists, painters, writers, dramatists, is a much higher GENERAL cultural level, as distinct from a certain knowledge of the drama and economics. The artistic method has yet to be studied and applied, and the tendency, borrowed from the bourgeois art world, to simply imitate overseas productions, must be eradicated, but no doubt practice, with due willingness to learn, will ensure progress in these directions. Of supreme value is the information and direction contained in the articles of Lunacharsky, Kirpotin, Elistratova and Bukharin in *International Literature* and the matter in the American *New Masses* dealing with the John Reed Clubs. Most discernible throughout the young but valiant Workers Art Movement of Australia is the leaven of proletarian pluck and revolutionary enthusiasm, expressing itself in a self-imposed discipline and in an unmistakeable evincing of the mighty creative powers of the workers when released from bourgeois repression.

Jean Devanny

Sydney, Australia

(Author of *The Butcher's Shop* and other novels)

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

Alexey Novikov-Priboy

(Author of the novels Tsusima *and* Flight *and a number of volumes of short stories)*

I was born on the 12th of March, 1877, in Matveyevskoye, a village in the Spasky District of the province of Tambov. My father was one of the hereditary soldiers of Nicholas the First and served in the army 25 years. He declined promotion to officer's rank and was assigned a small pension in place of this. He returned to his native village with a Polish wife, who spoke very little Russian. The villagers were astonished. My father was big boned and very strong, a real son of the soil. He lived long and heartily and even time seemed to have no power to do its usual work of destruction. Death came to him when he was well over 80. My mother was much younger but not so healthy. She was unaccustomed to the heavy, unceasing toil of a peasant's life and it aged her before her time. She was dreamy, she loved the world of fantasy and her thoughts were ever in the skies.

Our village was backward, remote from civilization. The forest surrounded us like a wall. There was no school. It was my father who first taught me to read and write. The old alphabet was easy enough for me to learn, but putting the letters together and building words out of them was quite another business. Things went slowly. I took such a violent dislike to learning that it was afterwards impossible to keep me at it. Then they sent me to the deacon. He was a big fellow with untidy grey hair and always gloomy. In his appearance he reminded me of an archangel and this frightened me. Still I made no progress in my studies under his tuition.

"How obstinate you are, Alexey!" he would exclaim in a harsh voice and proceed to break a ruler over my head.

Then a young priest collected a group of about 20 boys and began to teach us. Our class room was in the little shack belonging to the watchman of the church. The priest was always picking at the brown beard that formed a nice frame to the lower part of his face. His little grey eyes were watchful. He would call out in a low voice:

"Now, you there, disobedient creature of the Holy Spirit, come out."

I knew that he meant me and bent lower over my desk. Then he would come up to me, take me by the chin and force my head back. Under the penetrating gaze that seemed to pierce my yes, I lost my wits completely. Not a single idea remained in my head: it seemed to have turned into an empty pot.

"You're lying! I've got to cast the devil out of you!"

I came home with red ears every day. It used to be a constant surprise to me that the priest's small, puffy, fat hands could cause so much pain.

After that I went to school in the next village. It was useless for the old maid who taught there to get angry and try to force me to learn by inflicting punishments. My antagonism grew. I began to avenge myself on her by doing all sorts of naughty tricks. At last, I ran home. My mother cried and my father shook his head sadly, saying:

"A silly kind of lad we've got, to be sure. He'll never get on in life!"

Spelling tormented me for three whole years. Every printed word was loathsome to me. I cursed the man who had invented the alphabet. I dreamed of finding a band of robbers and joining forces with them in destroying all the schools in the world. But where was I to find the robber? No matter for how long I wandered about in our woods, I never met a single one.

My parents, however, were by no means satisfied to let me remain ignorant and uneducated. They tried sending me to school in another village about 10 miles away. The teacher there was a modest, young woman with fair hair. She smiled sweetly at me, kissed me in a motherly way, was kind from the first. I felt the anger and hatred that had been accumulating in my breast so long, melt away. I was drawn to her immediately. I trusted her. In two winters I finished the church school of that parish as the best pupil. A violent thirst for knowledge had been aroused in me, but our means would not allow me to continue my education.

I was harnessed to the soil. Together with my eldest brother, who was constantly at loggerheads with the clergy, I read everything I could lay hands on: magazine supplements, articles about astronomy, tales of Jack the Ripper, but mostly religious books.

My mother, being a very religious woman was preparing me to be a monk. And perhaps a monastery would have been my fate if I had not met a sailor (described in *Fate).* He told me a great deal about the navy. Thanks to this meeting my life turned out quite differently from what I expected. My thoughts were always busy with the sea, with boats. When I was 22 I was called up for military service. Then I realized my dream and asked to be taken into the navy.

I served in the Baltic Fleet, and took up the business of educating myself with fervor. I was

attracted by every book that came into my hands. But it was unsystematic reading and the result was a muddle. It often happened that I got hold of books that I could not understand at all. Only after I had obtained Panov's *Catalogue* and Pavlenko's *Encyclopedic Dictionary* did my mental development proceed rapidly. These two books were for me two professors—from the one I learned what to read and the other explained all the difficult words. Later on I found N. A. Rubakin's *Self Education* and *In the World of Books*—still more useful. At one time I used to attend the classes held in Kronstadt on Sundays. I still remember the teachers there with gratitude.

It was through them that I first became acquainted with forbidden revolutionary literature and it was here that my political and social awakening began. It was from this school that the bright searchlight of knowledge was directed into the gloom of the tsarist navy. But it was not for long. The school was soon closed and some of the teachers arrested. Arrests began in the navy, too.

I was dreaming at that time of preparing for my matriculation examination and of getting into a university but I was arrested along with some others sailors and kept in a detention house.

After I had read the biographies of self educated writers like Koltsov, Surikov, Reshetnikov and Gorky I decided to become a writer myself. I had found out from their lives that one could be a writer without having graduated from a university and I set to work to scribble.

My first article, in which I called on the sailors to attend the Sunday classes, was at once accepted by the *Krondstadt Herald*. This gave wings to my fancy. I began to dream of a literary career. It was with this end in view that I kept a diary when I went with the Rojestvensky Fleet to Vladivostok. Our campaign ended in the Tsusima disaster and the loss of almost the whole fleet. In 1906 and 1907 I published two small books on the Tsusima episode but they were confiscated immediately.

From 1907 until 1913 I lived abroad as a political emigrant: I wandered about France England, Spain, Italy and North Africa. In England I had some experience of the sweat shop system, I sailed on merchant ships, and sometimes worked in offices.

I wrote very little—only in my leisure time. During the War and the first period of the Revolution I gave up literary work entirely.

Formerly my works appeared in Russian magazines like *The Living Word, Life for All, Northern Notes, The Contemporary, The Contemporary World* and other periodicals.

In 1914 my first attempt in the field of belles lettres, a book of *Sea Tales* was prepared for the press by the Writers' Publishing Company in Moscow. But the War broke out just then, and the censor would not permit a book like that to be published in war time. Not until 1917, after the Revolution, was the book finally launched into the world by the same publishing house.

Konstantin Alexandrovich Fedin

Author of Cities and Years, Brothers *and other novels)*

The Federation publishers have put so many questions to us writers that a full answer would take up very much space. And yet nearly all the questions are interesting, so rather than pass them by in silence I shall employ the well known "style" used in answering questionaires.

1.) Soviet imaginative literature is faced with vast perspectives. In the first place it will undoubtedly exercise a growing influence on the literature of both East and West. The outworn forms of bourgeois literature will receive their death blow at the hands of the new social themes treated in Soviet literature. Further, the quality of our literature will grow, as also its significance as a cultural weapon. The "specific gravity," of our literature in social life, in educating the new man will also increase. One can already see how the role of literature grows in importance and complexity from year to year, and how this process is forging ahead at a furious pace.

2.) Soviet literature, at the present stage, continues the struggle for mastery of thematics. Till now there has been a certain disparity between the revolutionary content of our literature and its form, which is often a mere imitation of Russian and Western classics. By the time we have mastered our themes and the best means of presenting them, a new form will have been worked out. In recent years there has been a peculiar kind of co-operative sharing of literature in the revolutionary reconstruction of our country. I have in mind the sketch. Much has already been done in this connection but still more remains to be done. It is noteworthy that there is also a clear tendency to develop great epic work.

3.) My views on the writer's role in a socialist society should be clear from the foregoing. It might not be without interest to make an admission. I had to decide for myself the purpose of literature only long after I realized I was a writer. In the beginning I had to write at all costs. This long preparation for literary work was taken up with exercises in the writer's craft. Thus I wrote my first story and also my first novel (1916-1917) as a prisoner of war, both of which were destroyed, brought me nothing except that they helped to form me as a writer. I was faced with the work of writing a story or a novel. Later in the "Serapion Brothers" we called this "getting nothing done." The purpose of the "something" did not count. It had to be well done and nothing more. Its "function" was to confer on its author the title

of "writer." I had been working some time as journalist and editor when the Serapion Brotherhood was formed. In 1919 I had given up writing in order to fight and I wrote in order that Kolchak might be beaten beyond the Volga and Yudenich near Petersburg. I celebrated my admission to the Serapion Brotherhood with a bitter fight with the late Leo Lantz, which well nigh led to our breaking off relations. Working on newspapers I had been accustomed to seeing words as the handmaiden of deeds. However, this "right" opposition of mine in the Brotherhood could not possibly be waged firmly. In my opinion then, journalism and imaginative literature should pursue different aims. In the former one could exclaim "Long live the Red Army." In a story such an exclamation would have the ring of parody. This view that publicistic and literary production are separated by a Chinese wall and hostile to each other was common to the whole membership. My "opposition" soon broke down. We were as one man in the view that a "work must be well done," and nothing more. And nothing more? But work well done may pursue different aims? Our contention that propagandist literature is bad literature proved instructively short lived. Vsevolod Ivanov's first stories which he took with him to the Brotherhood were marvellously done but nonetheless propagandist through and through. Lant soon declared pathetically that for literature it makes no difference what aim a piece of writing may pursue, be it liberal, revolutionary, anarchist or catholic, so long as it is a work of art. Propaganda was first recognized as permissable in literature and later as natural to it. One step remained to recognizing it as one with the purpose of literature.

The discussion of all these questions in the circle and outside of it ran parallel with attempts to create a peculiar philosophy maintaining that the history of literature is the history of one specific set of phenomena governed by laws of its own, distinct from the laws of social life. This theory of a "specific set" was sent flying by the theoretical attacks of Marxist criticism and because it contradicted the whole practice of modern literature. Literature has shown unmistakably its inseparable connection with our national life, proving itself to be a product of that life. The question of tendencies in literature has become naive. Another question has arisen, of strengthening literature's active role in the building of a new society. This question is now being solved by our Soviet writers.

The years of close friendship with the Serapion Brotherhood were for me a literary university. And not only for me. Similar admissions have several times been made (though not very willingly, perhaps,) by writers of the most varied literary tastes and trends. But there are other universities, other schools.

My work in the newspaper run by the political department of the seventh army (1919-20) was a school of militant journalism. This was my "bit" in the civil war. By the way, any Soviet newspaper during these years differed but little from the army newspapers.

Somewhere in the west there are museums of bad taste. I would found a museum of bad literary taste, did I not fear that it would fall into the hands of two or three old friends of mine who hold that the pursuit of literature itself betokens bad taste. Not the least among its exhibits would be the one figuring in the catalogue as "given by Fedin." I would send a file of the magazine I edited in 1919. The editors, backed by the Moscow Press, became infatuated with "born writers" who, while not particularly keen on studying, considered themselves the salt of future literature. This "experiment with genius" soon worried me. So far as I know not one of these "born writers" has since accomplished anything worthy of renown. But this bad literary school was a school nevertheless. A few of us who did not regard ourselves born writers rebounded from it to become later leading workers in the field of literature and journalism.

4.) In my former autobiographical notes I mentioned having spent 1916-18 in Germany. Here was a veritable school. A foreign country, with an old and highly developed culture that already showed signs of decay; events whose consequences are not outlived yet; hopes that shed light to this day; despair breaking out then, where flames still burn the race.... After ten years I again visited Europe, which felt the tremors of that great crisis whose certainty she still refused to admit. This was in 1928. Beside Germany, I visited Denmark and Holland. And more recently, in 1931 and 1932, the years of economic crash and deathly political battle, fate has again led me to Europe, this time besides Germany, to Switzerland.

Here one can see clearly the graph of the fever now consuming the whole capitalist world. It is natural that I am continually returning to "European" themes. More than half of my new novel, which I have been working over for a long time deals with the modern occident and its relations with the Soviet Union. I want to portray the contradiction that impels capitalism to establish friendly relations with us, while the successes of the Soviet Union are undermining the very roots of the capitalist system. The novel is called *The Ravishment of Europe.*

5.) Dates and names: I was born in Saratov in 1892. From 1911 to 1914 I studied in the Moscow Commercial Institute. There spring to mind the names of western writers, Dickens, Hugo, Stendhal; of Scandinavians: Strindburg, Bjornson, Hamsun; of our own Russians like Dostoyevsky, Saltykov-Schedrin and Leskov—names that call up lasting stretches of years, that exercise a spell to this very day. My conception of art stands poised amidst the claims of these figures, oftimes so irreconcilable among themselves.

CHRONICLE

Soviet Poetry Today

Soviet poetry is still somewhat behind Soviet prose in its development notwithstanding the ideological and artistic rebuilding of its ranks. Soviet poetry unlike Soviet prose, has not yet produced a *Broken Virgin Soil* or *Hydro-Central* but it is fruitful soil.

It is evident to any poet that a land, the enthusiasm of whose builders changes the face of entire districts in three years and connects the Baltic and White Seas in a year and a half must have a militant poetry. Works of world significance may still be few enough to be counted on one's fingers, but when brought to a focus this poetry flames, because it is warm and alive.

Thousands of themes stir the Soviet poet and bring him to activity. It is not the poet who seeks the theme—the theme seeks him; as if it asked: come and clothe me in flesh. That is why there is continually less casual poetry and more in the spirit of Socialist realism taken as dictum not to get away from earth.

The subjects of Socialist construction and new man with his changed attitude to labor, are, of course foremost; inevitably associated with this is the psychology of this new man.

Then come the themes of individual and class, the intelligentsia and the revolution, followed by international themes: reinterpretation of previous wars, revolutions and rebellions; and finally civil war themes from a fresh view point, making the past alive in the present.

This review does not aim to be exhaustive of even all the most characteristic Soviet poets. We only take what has appeared during the period of the past six months.

Civil War Motives

The libretto of an opera *Thoughts of Opanas* by Edward Bagritzky, and the first volume of poems by Alexander Prokofiev are devoted to the civil war.

Bagritzky calls his work a libretto on account of its purely external form. Actually it is a brilliantly organic poetic work of great power. Bagritzky belongs to those Soviet poets whose work is intimately tied up with the revolution. In this libretto Bagritzky brings in the characters of Opanas and Cohen. Opanas in the Duma represents Machno and chaos, while the Commissar Cohen represents the organizing will of the proletarian revolution.

In high appreciation of the libretto, A. Fadeyev, author of the novels *Debacle* and *Last of the Udegei,* writes:

"Cohen is the central figure in the new text. The author correctly evaluates the social significance of Opanas and Cohen. The verse is free, in full voice. This is a great achievement. When people have something to say, when they feel that Socialist ideas have entered their blood and bones, they are not afraid of simplicity and bring out on the palms of their hands all they have. Only the ugly and the naked feel the need of formal clothes." (*Krasnaya Nov,* June 1933)

A. Selivanovsky wrote: (*Literary Gazette,* March 1933): "In the poem Opanas was a tragic figure, in the rewritten libretto Opanas has lost the tragic oreole.... In the poem we first see Opanas after he has run away from the commissary regiment, in the new version we see him in the surroundings of the commissary regiment where all his petty self seeking and acquisitiveness come out. In the poem Opanas only executed the order to shoot Cohen, in the opera version Opanas is the one that betrays Cohen as a commissar to Machno."

This development of the character is a result of the dialectics of the development of the proletarian revolution now demolishing the kulak as a class, and waging battle against self-seekers and loafers in field and factory. The character of Cohen by virtue of this development has grown tremendously, because the life and death of those that showed an example of revolutionary steadfastness are particularly appreciated now.

The battle is also shown differently. In the poem it is a cheap print. Kotovsky there

. . . the valley views
With eyes in command.
The horse beneath him plays
With sugary white sand.

In the new version the central idea is the debacle of kulak anarchism. Kotovsky's horsemen are approaching.

The wheat fields hum
With the trouble abroad.
The milk pails will fill
With a milking of blood.
Denikin lashed you
With heavy knout.
The hetman booted
With noble boot.

There is Ukraina
No mercy for you
Your home is defiled
And your labor curst.

Edward Bagritzky

Alexander Besimensky

About the approaching red caviary:

Arise ye afflicted,
Arise, and be gay
The Red Army horses
Now distantly neigh.
Awaken Ukraine.
Hey, mother, arise now
And call all your sons!

The Leningrad poet, A. Prokofiev gives a somewhat different picture of the civil war. In his verses we have a revolutionary pride in the past of the civil war, although not sufficiently well reconsidered from the view point of today.

In his first volume of poems A. Prokofiev is more successful in portraying the dashing, hazardous features at the expense of the organized side of the war. Desperate bravery, great daring, valor youthful rashness, whistling with two fingers, going the limit—these are the features of his lyrical hero, whether he deals with village swains or the historical sailor Jelesniakov who spoke at the constituent assembly.

The war itself in the light of this romantic valor often turns to mere blood-letting with the essential element lacking: a complete absence of the class consciousness of the proletariat.

Nevertheless, in the emotional richness of his language he points with great power the elemental partisan warfare in the civil war. A. Selivanovsky sometime ago very aply said in the *Literary Gazette:*

"Elemental revolutionary strength of the attack on the Winter Palace, the fight with the white guards, the dissolution of the Constituent assembly—Prokofiev expresses excellently. His verse has tense rhythmic muscles. It is seething and limited. It lacks a reasoned foundation. The poetry of Prokofiev is that of a contemporary of, and participant in, the proletarian revolution."

Take the excerpt from his songs of Ladoga:

On Ladoga and Kama
And other rivers too
We tumbled rocks aplenty
For workers barricades.
Us laddies in the ranks
(Pine logs in the woods)
Lived in the Red Army
A reckless life indeed.

A high emotional tone, a northern dialect, expressive speech and folk feeling, are qualities of volume I of Prokofiev's poems "which summarizes the first period of the civil war and its 'little brothers,' the baptism in blood of inseparable militant friendships among people that protected the October revolution and its achievements in the North." (V. Ermilov in the *Literary Gazette,* April 1933)

Against Private Ownership and Individualism

Imbued with a realistic understanding of events and the unrelenting truth of Socialism, the Soviet poet can view bourgeois civilization from new heights and speak out distinctly against the acquisitive individualist that is the bane of Socialist construction.

In this respect another book of poetry by the same A. Bagritzky, *Last Night* is "a book of deep revolutionary spirit, where the crisis in petty bourgeois individualist psychology is

summed up," Selivanovsky (L. G. Dec. '32). The old symbolic writer M. Kuzmin *(Literary Gazette,* March 1933) in an article on Bagritzky considers this book, "a big step forward" and the poems themselves "most sincere, deep and surprisingly fresh."

A. Surkov (*Krassnaya Nov,* June, 1932) and E. Troschenko *(Literary Gazette,* December 1932) are no less emphatic about it.

A. Surkov finds that in *Last Night* Bagritzky "on the basis of the facts of the struggle raging today, uncovers the foundation of foundations of the old order—private property and its offspring—beastly individualism and egoism," while E. Troshchenko considers that the poem "puts the problem of participation in the new battles of the revolution."

The second part of the poem called "Suburban Man" raises the problem of revolutionary action and the fight with acquisitiveness; the third part "Death of a Pioneer" tells of the inevitable success of Socialism.

V. Lugovskoy's poem *Life,* notwithstanding its autobiographical nature, deals with the subject of private property, the kulak's acquisitiveness and the false culture of the bourgeoisie (the latter as exemplified by modern Greece, where the author stayed a while).

A. Selivanovsky *(Literary Gazette,* April, 1933) says the book is: "About everything that people are interested in: about Socialism and Capitalism, about love and labor, about the cosmos and domestic comfort, about war and civilization..."

He thinks very highly of it and considers it very successful in "establishing the connection between ideas and every day reality."

Lugovskoy in his *Life* has been most successful in the handling of types and has rendered particularly well the "quiet" kulak--miller preaching that "kings, nobles and merchants are unnecessary," insisting on "brotherhood without compulsion" and developing a most thorough philosophy of entirely abominable acquisitiveness.

His program consists of fencing himself in against the organizing will of the revolution and against the dictatorship of the proletariat. Here he is—large as life:

All evils of our life are due
To poverty and wealth.
And none
Believe the golden middle
A quiet spot in human life
So full of varied suffering.

And I am a good husbandman indeed.
A nail to be put in, the cattle fed,
Or a machine repaired around the place
I do it all in full accord with science,
Not for myself, but for a righteous life.
One should not by temptations all be swayed,
Make much of smaller opportunities.

V. Katanyan *(Vetchernaya Moskva,* April, 1933) considers Lugovskoy's blank verse "almost prose monotonously measured" and the poem "a cooly reflective memoir," in "flabby archaic form."

Nikolai Aseyev

Caricatures on both pages by the "Kukriniksi" —Three Soviet artists: Kuprianov, Krilov and Nikolai Sokolov

The great poet N. Aseyev, as well as S. Kirsanov also expressed themselves unfavorably on this book.

A. Fadeyev, however, had a very favorable review of the book in *Pravda* (June 1933). He says: "The polemic aspect of the book, which takes up the cudgels against formalistic canons, lies in that the poet, who has in the past shown considerable variety of verse forms, in no small measure borrowed from the acmeists, from Mayakovsky, the constructivists, writes this poem in blank verse that is 'old' verse, and everything else being equal, the least 'dressy' verse conceivable. And to the great surprise of many respectable critics the work proves to be the best one produced by this author thus far.

"This has come about because the problems propounded by Lugovskoy in this work are great problems of private property, individualism, the new culture of the Socialist society and the false civilization of decaying capitalism."

This aspect of the poem, of throwing the gauntlet to formalism is also noted by O. Beskin (*Literary Gazette,* May 1933) who remarks that *Life* is attacked by the formalists: "What is this philosophising—deeds are needed!... And this at a time when Socialist construction requires the utmost enrichment of

humanity, the widening of horizons, development of the ability to generalize, to conceive of events historically in order to understand their dynamics and have a correct vision of the future."

International Subjects

About V. Lugovskoy. Besides *Life* this prolific and stylistically diverse poet has also published a book of poems *Europe* on Western themes.

In this verse the influence of Mayakovsky is felt in the journalistic treatment of subject, in the very rhythm, intonation, and reliance on oratorical speech.

A. Selivanovsky *(Literary Gazette,* April 1933) is inclined to see in this book "the brasses of the orchestra, drowning the voice of life" and expresses his apprehension for the future destiny of the poet. This is, however, more due to the views of the critic who is partial to philosophic verse and has an antipathy to the journalistic genre.

L. Levin gives an entirely different estimate of *Europe (Krassnaya Nov* January, 1933) in an artcle "Poetry and Construction" where he values this book highly.

"Lugovskoy's *Europe,"* he writes, "Gives a a new point of view... Lugovskoy's problem was to objectively comprehend contemporary capitalist reality which calls for a revolutionary solution of the problem of the crisis. It must be admitted that the poet has succeeded in the task he set himself in many ways.

"What is particularly valuable in the book is its dynamic character. The encounter of the two squadrons in the Black Sea ("The International"), the farewell of the Russian and Italian workers ("Farewell in October"), the meeting of two worlds in the streets of Athens at night ("Silence") and finally the marathon race in modern Greece—these are the dynamic themes artistically rendered by Lugovskoy."

We quote from "The Marathon Race":

Messenger no longer—
Of Liberty and triumph,
Carrying bronze engraved sun on your shield.
A picayune rabbit
For dinner intended:
How the cook laughs. Your fate is sealed.
Galloping hard
Son of a currant and IOUs
Running your head off
All out of breath
So that the papers
Have merry news.

Another book on an international theme, is Ilya Selvinsky's verse drama *Pao-Pao.* He was the leader of the constructivist school. Selvinsky is a great poet and a hard worker with a flair for ratiocination, author of an epic poem *(Ulalajevtshina)* that marked an epoch in Soviet poetry. He favors "large canvases." He writes as if he were heaving boulders and the heavy unwieldy rhythm often makes the impression of a heavy landslide—take care or you'll be crushed!

Pao-Pao is a grotesque whose hero is an ape, an orang-outang, with a human brain transplanted into its skull. For three acts he behaves like an ape and only during the last act like a man. it is a typical "Review" in the best sense of the term: a Review of capitalist slavery and Socialist labor in the USSR.

M. Serebriansky *(Literary Gazette,* December 1933) values this work very highly. "The assertion of Socialist labor and the conviction that Socialism is not a hindrance to, but a condition for, the renaissance of social and individual creation lends *Pao-pao* a positive value that deserves the most serious attention," says the critic.

"The Review is of the capitalist crisis, the jungle habits of the bourgeois order, gold and blood, filth and deception, betrayal and persecution, venality and banditry, finally the degeneration of the dominant class."

Characteristically, according to the critic, when Pao-pao cannot get a certain Mitzi Schultz to love him, he simply buys her, exposing the venality of bourgeois family relations.

And in a grotesque scene, full of tears, lyricism and bitter irony, he carelessly throws Mitzi the words:

Yes, Mitzi, I would make with you
A pornographic compact.

A fundamental mistake of Selvinsky's is that he has Pao-pao, on coming to the USSR, find there besides free labor and high technique "a healthy animalism." The author thus reduces many of the social motives of the play to the biologic and lowers the significance of the entire work.

V. Kirpotin criticised *Pao-pao* very adversely at a plenum of the organizational committee of the Soviet Writers (*Literary Gazette,* December 1932) where he expressed himself that a contemporary subject is not enough to make a work socialistic. "The falseness of the image of Pao-pao is the product of the false conception of 'healthy animalism.' But the entire play is abstract. The entire criticism of capitalism is shown equally abstractly and schematically. There is no development, but an arbitrary leap from capitalist to soviet reality. He jumps—and there is no logic in the action."

Poets and History

History, especially the history of past revolution, is viewed from a new angle by Soviet literature, especially by Soviet poetry: the angle of the Socialist present. Hero and author in these works clasp hands as comrades holding the same views. Even bourgeois revolutions are analyzed anew and the class limitations uncovered.

Let us take S. Kirsanov's poem *Comrade Marx,* filling a gaping hole in fine literature

on this great revolutionist. The poem takes the Marx of 1847-48 when the *Communist Manifesto* was written.

L. Perchik (of the Marx, Engels, Lenin Institute) expresses an adverse, though not completely so, view of the poem *(Literary Gazette,* May 1933). He blames Kirsanov for being partial to streets, squares, and parades at the expense of factories.

"Marx," says the critic, "is not shown as the theoretical genius and daring thinker, the practical strategist with a keen appreciation of the needs and frame of mind of the masses and intimately connected with their daily struggles. The poem in many places descends to the level of an agitational piece. The chapter on Marx at the period when a revolution in Belgium is imminent is very weak. This is probably not so much Kirsanov's fault as that of the biographers of Marx at Kirsanov's disposal, but the picture of passive waiting for events is not true." Of the entire work, says Perchik, perhaps only the section on the *Communist Manifesto* is more or less apt. We quote from there:

Not only London
A manifesto needs!
Mountains of letters
Are heaped on the table
Tremors of a thousand
Letters fill the room,
A million
Sheets of nervous scrawl.
From underground all.
Nineteen five, the suburbs,
Maydays,
Meets,
October pending,
Marx must give
To all this time and thought
While in the storm of letters
The chamber whirls.

Another, though incorrect, viewpoint on the poem is expressed by V. Katanyan (*Vechernaya Moskva,* March 1933).

"Kirsanov gave a portrait of Marx on the historical background of this day, without, however making of it a cold statue, aloof in the ages, but connecting him intimately, in comradely fashion, with the struggle and construction of today. The poem has a sharp tang of contemporariness. In all his transformations of time, Kirsanov remembers that he lives in the country of Soviets and does not lose his Soviet psychology.

I was not called, was not invited,
I said myself, I am a Russian.
I had no visa
Passed no customs.
The spirit am I, an echo
Of Socialist land.
All that here in vision rises,
Spoke up Comrade Marx,—
Will become concretely real,
We shall conquer here.

The Peasant Correspondent, one of two publications issued by the revolutionary writers of Japan

And with slanting bayonets
We'll write on Moscow's streets:
"Work and power to the workers—
Such as you, now here."

Kirsanov has felt and understood Marx as a close contemporary and appreciated the significance of the sequence: Marx-Lenin-Stalin.... He succeeded in writing of a man that lived 85 years ago without getting away from the present and, going off into history, remained a contemporary."

A. Fadeyev writes in *Krassnaya Nov* (June 1933): "Kirsanov attempts to tackle pretty big subjects. He for instance tried to give a portrait of Karl Marx. I do not find that he succeeded and am still not converted to his poetry which I think abstract, unemotional and superficial. His tackling of such themes, however, is objectively, a move forward..."

The attempt of another poet Paul Antokolsky to give in *The Commune of '71* a picture of the Paris Commune as a prelude to proletarian revolutions has been generally approved, but the work itself did not come up to expectations. In his too close adherence to historical fact he produced a stilted version of the uprising of the Paris workers.

P. Antokolsky has not succeeded in sensing the relationship of the communards with the contemporary soviet worker, as Kirsanov, with all his faults, did with Marx, and instead went to daguerrotype and engravings of Paris. He drowned the subject in detail.

O. Beskin (*Literary Gazette,* March 1933) sees the failure of the book as the result of an incorrect method. "Three features," he says, "distinguish this method: (1) classic theatricals, (2) melodramatic decorativeness in which an archaic hankering for things 'as are' is felt, (3) self-sufficient stylization."

"There was a task that really required novelty, and instead—sham classicism and bombast! Behind his verse," Beskin ventures, "one can see the sources of his inspiration: engravings, illustrated magazines, old collectors-photographs, heroic souveniers, books..."

Only in the chapter "The Vendomme Column" does one find strong lines. These are not just verses but verse plus suggestion. Verse plus a point of view.

Advance there, you comrades, and shoot at
safes well filled,
At old dame's ancient relics, sanctuaries of
time gone by,
At windows with displays of snipe and wild
fowl killed,
Fat fowl—yes that's the same old emissary
of Versailles.

His clothes changed and unrecognized he's
not suspected long.
He bides in filthy brothels and into outhouses
slips.
You'll find him by the smell—he'll strike your
nostrils strong,
You'll find him with your ears—he's on all
people's lips!

In a Caucasian Bourka

Boris Pasternak's *Second Birth,* concerns itself with socialism and construction and even breathes "the air of the five year plan."

K. Zelinsky in the book *16th Year,* finds that "Socialism embracing as it does all that is taking place in our country—is present in *Second Birth* and the feeling that you cannot avoid this theme is sensed between the lines." But the book is nevertheless not a weapon in the struggle, because it is to a great measure steeped in idealist philosophy. It is intentionally kept aloof from concretely historical circumstances.

Pasternak's brilliant mastery, his exceptionally musical verse ,his system of metaphors at once unexpected and vivid, his mobile dancing syntax, keen eye which notices from afar every detail and the ability to use it, all this makes the work of this poet unusually attractive.

His images are concrete, but as A. Selivanovsky has aptly said on the occasion of the conference on poetry at the organizational committee of the Soviet Writers, in Pasternak's images "there is a lack of integral perception of reality." Due to this lack of integral perception, construction in the USSR is not reflected in Pasternak's poetry.

"*Second Birth* is full of the Caucasus. But he does not speak of Georgia, or Svanetia, or Osetia, he speaks of the Caucasus generally, of the Caucasus of literary tradition. It is as if the poet had come in a traditional Caucasian *bourka* and the beauty of his land which he keeps on extrolling becomes a peculiar obstacle for the poet on the way to Socialism.

"There is much feeling in the book and real emotion, but all this feeling and emotion is part of a perfected introspection. Social themes have a hard time breaking through this wall."

A. Selivanovsky (*Krassnaya Nov,* January 1933) in speaking of *Second Birth* says, "here the Socialism is not the one we are building, which we are living... Pasternak has only begun to talk about Socialism, but his is a chamber Socialism... Socialism and the five year plan, however he tries, are to this poet abstractions, just as the revolution was to him in its day."

The Test of Labor

Socialist construction is most powerfully presented by those Soviet poets who came to this construction not with literary tradition, but with a practical relation to the world. We have already spoken of Bagritzky and Lugovskoy who fight against anti-Soviet acquisitional psychology with their poetry. To these names must be added those of Nikolai Aseyev and Alexander Besimensky, and to some extent, Selvinsky and C. Kamensky, who in their poetry open up, so to say, Socialist construction.

In their poetry one can see how the country is changing, how the desert is brought to life, how new, formerly unheard of products appear; how the "idiocy of village life" is outlived and man's psychology changed; and how this new man stands the test of labor, "the baptism of work," the "test of construction."

N. Aseyev (before the period we are taking) had published *Oxman's Death* and a quantity of verse. At the conference on poetry previously mentioned A. Selivanovsky expressed the conviction that "Aseyev is now rising to a new and higher stage. Much of his recent, lyric work is distinguished by great maturity and artistic craftsmanship." (May, 1933)

N. Aseyev has the gift of song. He is primarily a lyric poet, but his emotional lyricism concerns itself not with personal, but with social themes. His song *Budenny's March* is sung by the entire Red Army and no column in any demonstration on May Ist or November 7th fails to sing it. Other songs of his are prized by the Komsomols, Pioneers, and the kindergartens. Aseyev has dedicated all his gift of song to the service of Socialist construction and the five year plan.

Among his latest songs *Pentagon* and *Song of the Kolkhoz-Udarnik Congress* stand out particularly. The latter song, in spite of its being an "occasion" piece is nevertheless just as brilliant and is not lacking in strength of poetic expression.

The kolkhoz-peasant of Aseyev's songs and verses is by far no "hundred percenter" for the social cause—the acquisitive tendencies have not been done away with yet, there is only a beginning of it—what is important, the process of transformation is going on and is of a mass character, and this is clearly evident in his verses.

Because even if all prejudice is not outlived yet and

...acquisitiveness sticks
To every beard.

the majority already understand:

...how good it is to till
All the land.
Good to run things when we all
Together stand:

Aseyev's *Oxman's Death* is Soviet Caucasus; the Caucasus building Socialism.

Instead of the traditional "forest debris" and "hamlets, mountain crushed" of Pasternak, Aseyev has in this poem the contemporary, live, multi-clanned but nationally at peace Caucasus and its folk that are "no longer wrath consumed, Osetian tolerates Mingrelian."

Sympathies and antipathies are divided in entirely different fashion. The recent "clansmen," the princes, brought in White-guard troops that slaughtered entire villages, while the "stranger" in cap and hat is planning the Socialist industry of the region and behaves like a brother.

The wonder of one of the elders of the village is the subject of a song of Aseyev's:

Roam and ramble—
roam and ramble—
thoughts like—
fierce mosquitoes bore...
How come that
kin makes us tremble
as bad strangers
did of yore?!

We in fur caps—
they wear hats—
speech like—
reedy rustle.
Why then do they
not depress
at ease both heart and
muscle?

Where the truth? and
untruth where?
there's a smoke
in pipe to poke!
Like an owl
in nest abidden
somewhere lies
the yoke.

Roam and ramble—
roam and ramble—
thoughts like—
fierce mosquitoes bore...
Perhaps—
'tis true
that kin turned foe?
and that the stranger's
so no more?

A. Besimensky, in *Comrade Harvest* is dryer and more rationalistic that Aseyev, but his great strength is the ability to see the heroics of "petty" things and the power to raise these "petty" things to a high political level. His genre could be called the poetry of political speeches, but this does not mean that Besimensky's poetry is limited to this. He is rightly considered to have reached the pinnacle of his genius in his *Night of Tragedy.* This poem on the building of the Dnieper dam s a direct participation of the poet in labor.

Comrade Harvest is an "occasion" piece, but well written. This poem confirms the truth of the thought expressed by the *Literary Gazette* (January 1933) that in Soviet literature "the central conflict is the one which inevitably arises in any branch of construction between people working well and people working indifferently."

It is just such a conflict which is the central theme of this remarkable poem. The most brilliant chapter is the one entitled "Four Days" which gives an exceptional feeling of militant tenseness and a sense of a *front.* The heat of preparation for sowing and the period of sowing—that is what gives in this poem the feeling that "the front has broken into" poetry.

Comrade Harvest is especially good because the author cannot be told apart from those taking an active part in the events he describes and he sees ahead as well as the best of them.

Travels in Kamchatka by Ilya Selvinsky has not yet been reviewed, but the work can be briefly described as notes of a traveler raised to the level of verse. It is a rhymed essay. In prose something like it has been done by K. Paustovsky, only this prose work has both passion and dynamics, while the verse is lacking in dynamics.

The author went to Kamchatka under the current impression that it is a Klondike, that people run there for a "long ruble" (gold), that they are all adventurers and money-grabbers, and upon investigation found out that this place is also a part of Socialism.

I don't remember how it's phrased—
Inspiration or to enthuse—
I see their eagerness, amazed,
To do things at the words "let loose!"
And through these birsute faces strong
And through these Saghalin eyes I see
The fires of Moscow burning, along
With revolutionary glee.

The arrivals proved to be not Businessmen, money-grubbers, but men of tense labor, potential udarniks.

He understands that the private home,
The private plow, the private barn
Time has felled as fells the wheat
A heavy hail and storm.

It is only necessary to stir these people up Bolshevist fashion.

A Poet of Living Speech

The publication of the latest two books by V. Kamensky, *Poems of Transcaucasia* and *Poem of the Kama* coincided with the 25th anniversary of his literary debut. The verses on the transformed Urals were therefore passed by in the noise of jubilee articles. The poet enthused by the work of his countrymen has sung of the five year plan for the Kama river district and its glorious future.

Incredulous Taiga
But along I bowl.
I ride my horse
And cigarettes roll.
I've passed the half century
But say—I'm young—
I drink up distance
As I jog along.
Only yesterday, it dins:
But life that's really worth while
Only now begins.

Talking about this poet A. V. Lunachatsky notes, in *Izvestia* (March 1933) that "Kamensky wrote mostly with an accordion in his hands and humming a song to himself while hunting, rowing or fishing. He is enraptured either by the sun, the distance, human labor or human gayety, an like a many stringed instrument he begins to quiver and pour out improvisations."

N. Aseyev has also called attention to the "oral" "recitational" basis of Kamensky's songs in his article about him "Poet of Living Speech" (*Vetchernaya Moskva,* March 1933).

P. N.

New Soviet Films

The USSR reminds one of the bivouac of a rapidly advancing army. It is a well known fact that bivouacs can never be especially comfortable places. Rapid advances have a way of being every bit as hard as a retreat. However, there is a pretty essential difference between the two, and you will see the difference at once if you will only take a glance at Europe today. It consists, among other things, in the way people take these hardships. And if you are a new arrival in the USSR from the bourgeois countries, you will often find this peculiar way of taking hardships quite astounding.

Here, for example, in the USSR it is quite an ordinary occurence for the workers of any factory to submit proposals for raising production or for rationalizing the process of work, and these proposals exceed the indices of production envisaged in the plan. These "counter-plans" of the workers denote increased demands which the workers make upon their own forces.

You will look in vain for a parallel to this sort of thing in capitalist countries. Nevertheless such counter-plans put forward by the workers are a phenomenon of considerable importance in Soviet life and consequently also in the work of the Soviet cinema (though this would not follow quite so directly in any other country).

1

Counter-Plan is the name of one of this season's most popular films. This Leningrad film by Ermler and Yutkevich with its formal artistic angle of vision does not seem to present anything especially new. It is a simple film, but its simplicity is superb, technically consummate and classic. Its special significance lies in the peculiar method of handling the theme, in its atmosphere and its approach to life, but also in the great success it has had, inasmuch as all these things are in accord with the mood of the masses.

What is it precisely that is specific and remarkable about this film? True, *Counter-Plan* touches on some vital questions of socialist construction and, naturally, on live issues in the Land of Soviets, but it touches on them as it were from one side only, where these questions, these issues implicate one individual human being, catch hold of him, stir him and change him. *Counter-Plan* is a psychological Kammerspiel and its great success probably denotes the beginning of a new tendency in Soviet cinematography. At the present time it is not only the great abstract masses that one wants to see. One must also portray individual personality and social environment reflected in that personality.

Not man in the mass, but the mass in man.

However, individual psychology also means giving up that pedantic, moralizing, rhetorical manner which was customary in Soviet films for quite a long time. It is no longer held that the hero must be every inch a hero. The old worker in *Counter-Plan* is addicted to drink and despite the heroic manner in which he carries out the counter-plan, he is unable to vanquish his weakness for vodka completely. After all, heroes cannot be heroic for twenty-four hours in the day. Young Communists even fall in love from time to time and in this film, like the glimmer of summer lightning, we have the weird romantic beauty of Leningrad's "white nights."

What *Counter-Plan* essentially does is to discuss, in the form of light conversation, the

Left to right: (second person) Gilbert Rocke, Jan Wittenber and M. Topchevsky, artists of the Chicago John Reed Club at an anti-war open air exhibit held at the gates of the Chicago World's Fair

psychology is scrupulously reproduced in the most difficult and serious problem of Soviet life, and this is the most remarkable and significant thing about the film, since a contradiction, that has proved insoluble in Europe, is here solved. Light conversation does not necessarily mean distraction from real life. This film is profoundly and organically imbued with the most important problems and tasks of life, but this seriousness is not to be regarded as a gas mask or a steel helmet. Life and labor constitute two different and fundamental phenomena of life. In socialist society, however, they blend into one organic whole and from this whole there spring new perceptions of life, since such differences between these two phenomena have already ceased to be necessary. And from this new perception of life there springs a new style in art.

2

Ivan, the new Dovchenko film, was the second big event of the cinema season. This picture is neither light nor simple. Its theme is likewise the socialist growth of the new type of man in the USSR. And Dovchenko handles this theme with emotional grandeur and on a sweeping scale.

The film has its blemishes. It is too scrappy. Yet it none the less contains passages of great original graphic power where psychological changes are translated into the medium of tangible pictures. Ivan, a young peasant lad, fresh from the village, looks out of an office window by night and sees the first constructions of Dnieprostroy. We see these constructions with his eyes, and we get an apocalyptic vision of some mysterious monster, hissing, steaming, vomiting flame, piercing the night with glittering eyes, vast and incomprehensible.

However, Ivan goes to work. The sun rises. And lo and behold, those same machines, when he comes in contact with them, become clear and comprehensible. And in proportion as Ivan comes to grasp the meaning and significance of the work, the picture of Dnieprostroy upon the screen changes accordingly before our eyes and his. It becomes friendly, gleaming, mighty, convincing, beautiful. A thing of inspired beauty! The movement of the gigantic machines is here conceived, as in pantomime, with a sort of overwhelming emotional grandeur which is the expression of the conqueror who is still battling but who is already sure of himself and rejoicing in his strength.

The technique of Dovchenko's method of creating an image consists in the fact that in the centre of the machine, as it were, there is a human being always visible. A human being directing and guiding! The guiding motions of his hand are magnified to the scale of the monstrous lifting cranes. Whistling locomotives and steam winches, hurtling over the abyss, obey the gesture of man. Machines are graphically transformed into magnified iron limbs of man, subjected to his control.

Then comes an unhappy accident. A worker is killed by one of the machines. His mother rushes over the scene in desperate grief. How the face of Dnieprostroy changes once more. How utterly different appear those same machines! Raging dreadful monsters seize upon the woman who in her subjective pain can no longer feel the objective significance of this work. The woman comes to the doors. One door is not yet closed, and the woman rushes through a second door, a fifth, a tenth! Ten doors savagely, excitedly swing to. The rhythm of emotion without any words and without any

rhythm of these pictures. And now we see the woman standing before the manager, whom she wants to tell about her private grief. At that moment he happens to be telephoning. She is obliged to wait a little. And she hears how the manager speaks of the tasks and the results of this vast construction job. Then he politely turns to welcome the woman and asks her what she wants. "Nothing," answers the woman and goes out. Once again, calmly and firmly this time, she goes through the iron forest of great clear cut, earnest looking machines. Dnieprostroy sounds its whistle—a hymn of movement and music.

3

Okraina. This film springs so organically from one single action that many different conceptions are required in order to be able in any way to grasp it. The picture is so warm and intimate, so savage and cruel, so entertaining and so bitter, it has such epic charm, it is so directly organic and paradoxical, so natural, as only happens in rare and happy cases in the realms of art.

Many people in Germany remember the film of the producer Barnet, *The Girl With the Box.* It was what is called a "nice" film. The chief actors, Anna Sten and Koval Samborsky, remained in Germany as a result of their success and came to nothing. Barnet stayed in the Soviet Union and has become a great producer.

Essentially, *Okraina,* too, is a very simple film. It contains no new cinema effects, no special originalities in the way of artistic setting. The picture easily and naturally grows out of the strong and assured work of a mature craftsman.

Rigid professors of esthetics find errors in this film. It is not strongly unified. It is not based on exact calculation—Barnet takes shots without any strictly defined plan (just as Chaplin often does). It would seem that it dwells unjustifiably long on individual episodes. This perplexing carelessness of Barnet's overturns all esthetic rules and traditions of emotions.

Okraina is a film out of the epoch of the World War. It opens in a small Russian country town. Then—the trenches. One might suppose that a Russian producer would not only take the war less tragically but would depict it less inexorably than was done in the Remarque film or by Pabst in his *On the Western Front.* Barnet, however, while employing far more modest technical resources, does this with much greater psychological depth. And all the same you laugh. Your heart is frozen with horror, but you have to laugh. The hairs on your head stand on end but still you laugh. The most terrible, harrowing scenes are rendered at the same time madly funny. And withal there is so much warmth, so much tenderness and at the same time so much cruelty.

No, Barnet is no bitter satirist. There is no irony at all in him. What is serious is shown in a serious light. Only the serious part is not separed, not divorced from the funny which inevitably attends it.

The picture opens with a labor demonstration. Mounted Cossacks suddenly attack it. People falling under sabre blows, people under horses' hoofs. And, simultaneously with these terrifying scenes, a little episode is shown. A girl with her dog seated on a bench in the boulevard. Behind it—the Cossacks. The girl and the dog take to their heels. Wounded workers fall beneath the oncoming horses. The dog rushes into the scrimmage in excitement. The young man rescues the dog from the Cossacks, and, while people are lying on the streets, he triumphantly brings the girl back her dog and achieves his aim.

This is entirely devoid of deep meaning. It just happened like that and it seems necessary and convincing. Barnet has no respect for the traditions of emotions or the elegant modes of perception when once the mood seizes him.

A young German lad, a prisoner of war, is working with an honest old shoemaker. The defenceless lad is one day attacked by some drunken toughs from the Black Hundred gangs. The terrible scene is handled with sadistic expressiveness. Five men are lying on top of the poor lad and beating him. A young girl who is in love with him throws herself sobbing upon this raving heap of men with her bare little fists. The shoemaker appears. Like a hero, he knocks out the villians one by one, finally, in the heat of battle, sending the young tumbling to the floor as well. Tempo and style of an American burlesque. Content—political tragedy. Only among all this you can see the bloodstained face of the young German, who has lost consciousness, half beaten to death. And though the girl's pose is ridiculous, yet her tearful eyes are full of touching pain.

The trenches. The crash of bursting shells (a good bit of sound recording). The trenches are covered with earth. Earth over everybing. "Kolya! Kolya!" he cries in despair and Among them our hero. But all of a sudden he falls back with closed eyes as though dead. His brother ,a boy of eighteen, leans over him, sobbing. "Kolya! Kolya!" he cries in despair and kisses and shakes him. All in vain! Suddenly the dead brother sits up and bursts out laughing with all his might. He was only making fun so as to fool the boy. It was all a joke! And the soldiers' faces, tousled, bloodstained, black with earth, suddenly light up in smiles. They laugh at the boy, who has gone into hysterics and is gaping like a lunatic, in panic terror, first at one laughing face, then at the other. This scene conveys a sense of that simplicity of genius which defies all definition.

Another scene. A young lad feigns toothache, like a schoolboy, so as to avoid having

to go into an attack with the battalion. An officer seizes him by the belt and drags him through a hail of enemy bullets and shells. The earth trembles but the officer has only one thought: there must be discipline. He drags and shoves the comically whimpering boy right up to the enemy's trenches where he meets with a "hero's death." There is hell all around, and suddenly we have this scene of savage farce. Its effect is so convincing as to make us believe that the event portrayed really did occur. Then the scene in the war prisoners' camp! And the scenes in that little country town! An exuberance of strong and abundant talent.

Where lies the secret of Barnet's humor and of Barnet's seriousness? It lies in the fact that they have ceased altogether to be two separate categories, two different perceptions of life! Shakespeare in his day successfully mingled seriousness with humor. But they always remained two different things. In some writers "the laughter rings out through the tears."

Here, however, two different angles of vision simply do not exist at all. One and the same scene at one and the same time is both tragic and comic. It is not stylized so as to run all in one key, as was customarily done heretofore. These scenes are not pitched in any particular emotional key. This film has overcome that "dualism" by which people were obliged to view life now from the tragic, now from the comic side and which gave rise to two different angles of vision, two different species of art. Just as in *Counter-Plan,* seriousness and full blooded humor are not divorced into two parts. The entire film is pervaded with a spirit of healthy creative optimism. Here, a dialectical unity has been achieved between seriousness and humor.

Is this film a comic? At the end the hero dies in a highly dramatic scene. But everything else continues to live. The revolution conquers.

Essentially, we have here to do with the same phenomenon as I noted above in my description of the film, *Counter-Plan.* And this is not an individual phenomenon but a social one, and, of course, one of the most significant. Here, apparently, a new perception of life is coming into being and one which possesses such strength and stamina that, in order to feel the joy of life, it does not have to turn away from reality and the serious questions of reality. It remains gay even in the face of death and misery because things as a whole are moving forward.

Bela Balas

IURW Brigade in Western Siberia

An international brigade of revolutionary writers organized jointly by the IURW and Kuznetstroy, made a 32 days study of Western Siberia beginning October 13th. In the group were Walt Carmon, American writer, Helios Gomez, Spanish artist, Sigvard Lund, Danish journalist and Katherine Susannah Prichard, Australian novelist and playwright.

The brigade spent 18 days in Stalinsk, studying the Kuznetsk steel plant named after Stalin; the new socialist city growing up around it; the schools and neighboring kolkhozes. Various meetings were held with the workers and writers of Stalinsk. The brigade wrote a number of articles for *Bolshevik Steel,* the daily of the Stalinsk workers. On the last day in Stalink, *Bolshevik Steel* also issued a full page of articles and drawings by the members of the brigade under the heading of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers. Three thousand additional copies of the paper were issued on this day.

During the 18 days in Stalinsk the brigade was given every opportunity to study all phases of life in this new socialist Siberian city. Members of the brigade talked to workers, visited them at their homes, attended production, udarnik and party meetings.

Comrade Hitarov, party secretary of Stalinsk, Comrade Kraskin assistant head of the Kuznetsk steel plant; and Comrades Vlasov and Smirnov, editor and assistant of *Bolshevik Steel* were particularly helpful in making all arrangements for the brigade.

The group left Stalinsk tremendously impressed with the new Soviet steel giant around which a socialist city of 180,000 workers has grown up within four years.

One day only was spent in Prokopyevsk. The brigade visited workers clubs, the new theatre and new homes. Two trips were made into the mines: one into the new coking coal mine, the second largest in the world and completely mechanized, the other into the new Voroshilov mine, one of the best in the Soviet Union. Meetings were held with udarniks, journalists, writers and worker-correspondents of the mines. The brigade also attended an enthusiastic conference of the Prokopyevsk Pioneers.

As among the steel workers of Stalinsk, the brigade also found among the miners of Prokopyevsk the same tremendous enthusiasm for socialist construction and healthy, vigorous life which only socialism makes possible. Statements were written here by the brigade for the young pioneers and for *Zaboy,* the daily of Prokopyevsk.

Comrade Lund, the Danish writer, wishing to get more first hand experience for his book on the Soviet Union, returned from here to Stalinsk to spend a few weeks working as ordinary construction worker, and later as steel worker with the leading brigade in the blast furnace.

The rest of the writers brigade proceeded to Novosibirsk where they spent three days. They toured the new planned city; the new theater, the largest in the Soviet Union; the airports, including a trip in a plane over the city; and the "New Life" kolkhoz, one of the best in this district. Meetings were held with

Three members of the IURW Kuznetskstroy revolutionary writers' brigade which visited Siberta. Left to right—Helios Gomez, revolutionary artist of Spain, Katharine Susannah Prichard, Australian writer, and Walt Carmon, of America. The group also included Sigvard Lund, Danish writer. The photograph is inscribed with the names of the revolutionary writers of Western Siberia.

party leaders, editors, journalists and writers of Novosibirsk.

Party secretary Comrade Schwartz, cultural director Comrade Mrachkovsky, and the well known Siberian writer and editor of *Siberian Lights,* Comrade Vivian Itin, gave every assistance to the brigade to enable it to make most of the few days spent here.

Articles were written and drawings made by the brigade for *Soviet Siberia,* the Novosibirsk daily, and for *Siberian Lights* leading Siberian literary magazine.

Articles by Comrades Prichard and Carmon were also sent from Stalinsk to the *Moscow Daily News,* and a full page of material on "Stalinsk—the Pittsburgh of Far Siberia", with photographs, appeared in the *Moscow Daily News* of October 18.

All members of the brigade are also preparing material for the press of their own countries.

The full experiences of the Brigade will be summarized in a book of impressions and drawings to be issued by the Western Siberian State Publishing House under the title of *What We Saw in Siberia.*

At all times, every opportunity was given to brigade members individually and as a group, to see what they wished, talk with whom they wanted, study what interested them most. After seing all this, it is the unanimous and enthusiastic opinion of the brigade that Western Siberia today, with its new steel plants, new coal mines, socialist cities and kolkhozes—and the new Soviet man and woman born of them—presents a splendid and positive proof of the victory of Socialism and the correctness of the leadership of the Communist Party which guides every step of the way.

The international brigade, arranged by the IURW and Kuznetskstroy are grateful for the opportunities given them on this trip. They have seen with their own eyes the great steps made towards a classless society.

Walt Carmon

Revolutionary Literature Grows

USA

New Masses *Becomes Weekly*

In the September 1933 issue, the American *New Masses* publishes an editorial announcement of the greatest interest to the revolutionary cultural movement.

"With this issue" the announcement reads, "the *New Masses* ceases publication as a monthly magazine. Its next appearance will be as a weekly.

"In a sense, this decision has been forced upon us. Events are moving too swiftly for a monthly. In the couse of four weeks situations arise, develop, and are succeeded by new and more pressing problems. History is being writtn with breath-taking rapidity. A swifter tempo

of reporting, interpretation and comment is no longer merely desirable, it is vitally necessary.

"The *New Masses* will meet the demand for an uncompromising revolutionary interpretation of the news. It will cover the entire American scene—economics, politics, literature and the arts.

"We are organizing our forces to begin publishing the *New Masses* as a weekly not later than the first of the year. We are grouping around the magazine, and enlisting the enthusiastic support of the best writers, critics, journalists and artists in the United States.

The statement concludes on the matter of a broader policy:

"The weekly *New Masses* will positively NOT be edited for a limited audience of intellectuals. It will reach out for the broadest possible circulation among all stratas of workers and professionals."

The change to the weekly *New Masses* is sure to make it from the very beginning not only one of the most important publications on the American scene, but also one of the most vital in the International cultural movement.

New Book in Photographs

With the help of the Chicago Workers Film and Photo League, Herman O. Duncan has edited and published *Chicago On Parade* a photographic answer to the propaganda of the Chicago World's Fair.

The booklet is made up of 55 photos of working class life in the Crisis: black and white workers living in hovels, searching garbage cans for food, sleeping in parks, demonstrating against these conditions. There are also photos of the bank runs and striking teachers.

The booklet also includes drawings by M. Topchevsky, Carl Rose and M. Douglas. These and the photos are accompanied by the pious quotations taken from the speeches of the notorious banker Dawes, the episcopal bishop of Chicago, the mayor of the city, and the governor of the State.

The editor advises that "All the photographs presented were taken in Chicago during the last three years. None of these has been published previously in the United States. Eight or ten of these have been published in England, France, Germany or Russia."

Story in Pictures

The American International Labor Defense has just published *Prisoner 31921*—The Story of the Mooney Case Told in Pictures, by Anton Refregier. The introduction is by Theodore Dreiser.

Anton Refregier, young revolutionary artist, member of the New York John Reed Club, has contributed steadily to the *New Masses, Daily Worker, Young Pioneer* and other revolutionary publications.

The cover of the last issue of the monthly New Masses *of New York, which becomes a weekly at the beginning of 1934*

Prisoner 31921 is a story told in 28 drawings, giving the most important incidents of the frame-up of Tom Mooney and his imprisonment which continues after 17 years.

Following Dreiser's introduction, a preface gives a brief account of Tom Mooney's revolutionary activities up to the moment of his arrest a few days following the Preparedness Day bomb explosion in San Francisco on July 22, 1916.

A brief running account of a few lines follows each picture, concluding with an appeal to join the Mooney Councils of Action which have sprung up in many American cities following the Free Tom Mooney Conference held in Chicago from April 10 to May 2, 1933.

The drawings are simple and moving. They tell the story of the Mooney Case as Dreiser says in the introduction: "with graphic simplicity."

Prisoner 31921 by Anton Refregier, is the third "story in pictures" by an artist of the New York John Reed Club. It follows *The Paris Commune* by William Siegel, published by International Pamphlets and *No Jobs Today* by Phil Bard, issued by the Young Communist League, both of which proved extremely popular.

When the Sirens Blow

The Rebel Poets of America have just issued their fifth volume of verse, *When the Sirens Blow,* by Leonard Spier. The cover design is

Cover designed by F. Monus for the new first book of poems by the American worker-poet Leonard Spier

by F. Monus and the introduction by Jack Conroy, editor of *The Anvil,* who says:

"The aroma of sweat and the heroism of toil are often very repugnant to the erudite gentlemen who pose as arbiters of literary worth. These gentlemen may not like the poems published therein, but many others will find that Spier has something vital to say and that he has contrived to say it eloquently and clearly. . . Spier has an ear for music which many proletarian poets lack; there is little here to the cacophony that is sometimes erroneously regarded as an inseparable attribute of revolutionary verse. Here is verse very close to the life which Spier lives and which millions of others live. . . which is leading the way to a new culture—and a new world."

There are 26 poems in the volume by the author and three translations from the Hungarian, one a poem by Andor Gabor and two splendid poems by Antal Hidas.

The poems by Leonard Spier cover a variety of subject matter: a war poem for Working Women (the title poem) speed-up, striking miners, East Side of New York, etc. The class conscious poet does not overlook other countries and writes also on China, India and the USSR.

Most of these poems have appeared in the *Daily Worker, Left, Working Woman, Young Worker, Rebel Poet,* etc, and abroad in *Le Journal des Poets (*Brussels) and in *International Literature.*

The work of this poet is sincere, simple and often very beautiful. It is a genuine expression of a worker-writer from whom much can be expected in the future.

When the Sirens Blow follows four other first volumes of verse by American worker-writers issued by the Rebel Poets: *Red Renaissance* and *Thinking of Russia* by H. H. Lewis; *Dark Metropolis* by Jacob Hauser; and *The Unknown Soldier Speaks* by George Jarrboe. . . . all a contribution to the growth of revolutionary literature in America.

FRANCE

Sections of the AEAR have been organized in Lille, Nantes, Marseille, Aix, Metz, Strasbourg and other provincial cities of France.

The Marseille section organized a gala literary festival which was the talk of the entire bourgeois press. The same section carries on activity over the entire south of France.

In Belleville, a literary meeting had been called by the AEAR where two plays (authors members of the AEAR) were performed. Louis Aragon read his poems. Benjamin Cremieux a reactionary critic, commenting on this event, tried to discredit the attempts of a revolutionary theatre in France as being tiresome and primitive. Cremieux asserts that even the agitational importance of this theatre is entirely insignificant.

Another bourgeois paper, *Paris-Midi,* gives an entirely different estimate of the Literary Evening:

"Finally we were offered somthing new, genuine and very much alive! Something strong! And even dangerous!"

"In order to understand how dangerous one had to watch the audience, how passionately and absorbingly they watched the plays. The performance and settings were fine, the contents interesting. Even the usual ending was absent: just before the curtain fell it was announced from the stage that the workers themselves have to do away with that social order the carricature of which they have just watched on the stage."

As to Aragon, *Paris-Midi* writes: "He is a great writer. Aragon read a number of poems which he composed during his stay in USSR. I should like to quote some of the poems or even a part of them. If the inflamatory parts of his poems should be removed there would remain images quite harmless.

"But should the explosive parts, together with the burning wicks remain, their value would be still higher. It is understood that all this is said within the bounds of literature.

"Louis Aragon made us come back to a period of ten to fifteen years ago and to feel that

poignant taste of stormy youth of which we are still so proud!"

AEAR is publishing a collective volume, *Workers' Literature* written by workers, members of the AEAR. The book will appear with a foreword by Eugene Dabit. AEAR also intends to publish Louis Aragon's poem *Communists Are Right* and also a book *Factory Facts,* the life in the factories and the struggle of the workers, as told by themselves.

The second number of the magazine *Commune* has been issued. The number contains a selection of articles on the White Sea-Baltic Canal, which begins with an article by Gorky; a fragment from the novel *Magnet* by Ramon *Sender;* a stenographic report of Mayakovsky's appeal to the workers of Krasnaya Presnya District; a story by Rene Blech; and sketches by Agnes Smedley, Marcel Smith and Pierre Unik; and a number of reviews and polemic articles by Aragon, V. Pozner, Nizan, and others.

The magazine *Commune* has created a great interest among wide circles of readers. Even the bourgeois magazines like *Marianne* and *Nouvelle Revue Française* and others have reprinted material from it. Booksellers state that *Commune* is selling well. A great demand for *Commune* came from the provincial sections of the AEAR.

In Paris a group of Friends of the Soviet Union was organized with professor's scientists, literati, artists and others as members. The object of the group is to study the USSR. The group is divided into committees: scientific, legislative, economic (in the latter Joseph Dubois, author of the book *New Humanity* takes active part), literary, dramatic, artistic, etc.

At the initiative of the literary committee, headed by Charles Vildrac, a meeting of French writers was arranged with Vsevolod Ivanov, the Soviet writer.

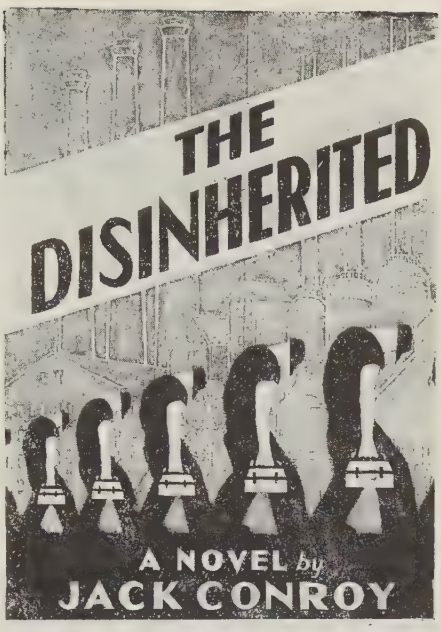
SPAIN

A volume of revolutionary poems by Rafael Alberti, *Slogans,* published before May 1, 1933, is still very popular. The volume has found its way even to the peasant masses where collective reading during rest from field work takes place frequently.

Caesar Arconada, author of *Bleeding Spain,* is now writing a novel on the revolutionary movement among the agrarian wage workers of Estramadura.

Ramon Sender, returning from his trip to the Soviet Union, is writing a book about it. Sender has also just completed a volume of sketches under the title *A Stork in a Village Municipality.*

Raphael Alberti, Ramon Sender, Caesar M. Arconada, Caesar Falcon, Arderius and others are writing plays for the proletarian theatre. Some film workers (Antonio Alivares) have raised in the columns of the magazine *Our Cinema,* the question of using Cesar Arconadas' novel *Bleeding Spain* for a revolutionary film.



Jacket of a new American first novel by the editor of The Anvil

In August and September of 1933 Ramon Sender continued the publication of his articles "Madrid-Moscow" about his travels over the Soviet Union in *La Libertad.* On the same subject, a number of articles by Raphael Alberti, under the title "A Poet's Notes on the USSR," have been published in August, 1933 in *Luz.*

Upon their return from the International Olympiad of Revolutionary Theatres, the delegates of the Nosotros Group Proletarian Theatre carried on successful activity in organizing a Revolutionary Theatre movement in Spain. Over 60 independent agit-prop groups performed during anti-fascist and anti-war meetings. At the present time the Nosotros group is performing *Asia* and *The Miracle* by Vaillant-Couturier, and also a play by Andreyev.

The third number of the Spanish revolutionary magazine *Octubre* (August-September, 1933) came off the press. Unlike the two previous copies, the third number contains less Spanish and more international material. Considerable space has been given for revolutionary activity in America: an article on events in Cuba (Portrait of a Dictator), American Negro Songs of Protest by Lawrence Gellert, poems by Langston Hughes, a sketch on labor conditions in the plantations of Brazil, Peru, Venezuela and

Nicaragua, and a review by Caesar Arconada on Eisenstein's Mexican film.

LATVIA

The Latvian government has installed a censorship of all literary publications.

Revolutionary literature is subject to unbelievable attacks and practically driven underground. The revolutionary writers Lupands, Baldis, Burtans and Alters are in prison. Publishers are offered a reward from the Secret Service Department for information on revolutionary literature. The revolutionary magazine *Tribune* was suppressed. The editor was several times dragged to court. The first number of the *Tribune* (organ of a group of revolutionary writers of Latvia), with an article on Karl Marx's anniversary, a story by Zares about bourgeois army life, Henry Barbusse's appeal against war and a few comments on socialist construction in the USSR, was confiscated a few days after its appearance. However, due to the extreme interest of worker-readers, the magazine had practically sold out in two days.

The petty bourgeois magazine *North Ost* sympathetically inclined to the Soviet Union, published in Russian, was long under the fire of police attacks. The editor as well as coworkers were arrested several times. Finally the magazine was banned.

The journal *Signal* (organ of Social-Democratic writers) of a rebel type, has also been confiscated and the leader of the group, Rudsits, arrested.

The Epoch publishers have issued a collective volume of sketches about the Kharkov Tractor Plant by Latvian revolutionary writers.

Two books appeared by Peter Zars: *Workers' Life,* sketches of workers in a big plant where the author himself had been employed at one time, and *Mshiny,* sketches of the Latvian peasants. In spite of the hostile attacks of the bourgeois press, the books met with success.

DENMARK

Martin Andersen Nexo in the USSR

The Danish revolutionary writer, Martin Andersen Nexo, visited the Soviet Union at the invitation of the IURW and the Organizational Committee of the Union of Soviet Writers.

After a short stay in Leningrad and a trip over the White Sea-Baltic canal, Martin Andersen Nexo arrived in Moscow. Here he visited a number of factories, shops, theatres and art exhibits. Nexo showed great interest in the working methods of the Soviet writers and journalists and also in the influence of Socialist Construction on their creative work.

Nexo spoke at a party "cleaning" of Soviet writers. "Not one writer," he said, "could give more than he himself has learned and lived through; therefore, those writers who participated in revolutionary struggles are considered best. And that is exactly why writers of the Soviet Union could give so much to writers of Western Europe."

At a comradely meeting with Soviet and foreign writers in Moscow, Martin Andersen Nexo spoke of his previous visits to the Soviet Union.

"There is no greater happiness than to see with one's own eyes the victorious results of socialist construction. I have been to the Soviet Union at the time of Civil War, at the NEP period, at the period of the first Five Year Plan and now again in the second. All you who live here permanently, do not fully appreciate your great achievements. Your reality excells the most hopeful dreams."

The Soviet writers, Vishnevsky, Katayev and others told Nexo of their methods of work.

Before leaving the Soviet Union, Martin Andersen Nexo wrote to the *Literary Gazette:*

"The most interesting hours which I spent in the Soviet Union are those which I spent in the company of my colleagues. In Denmark and in other places of Western Europe, with rare exceptions, I felt lonely among my colleagues. While here, it seemed to me all the time that I was among brothers. Soviet writers imagined that they could learn something from me. But I consider that there is much for me to learn from my colleagues and friends in the Soviet Union. If I kept my proletarian heart intact, I owe it to the existence of the Soviet Union."

Soviet Art Abroad

ENGLAND

Part III of M. Gorky's *Klim Samgin (Bystander)* is out, in English translation by the Appleton publishing house in London under the title *Other Fires.*

USA

John Wexley, the well known American playwright, author of the new play *They Shall Not Die!,* translated into English Gorky's play *Meshchane (Philistines).*

AUSTRALIA

A considerable interest in Soviet literature and art is noted lately in Australia. Of contemporary Soviet writers—Gorky, Fadeyev, Gladkov and Tretyakov are most popular.

The music section of the Melbourne Workers' Art Club is devoted mainly to popularizing Soviet music among workers' audiences.

FRANCE

The *Nouvelle Revue Française* publishing company issued E. Ehrenburg's novel *The Second Day of Creation.* A fragment of this novel is given in the September issue of *Vu* with the following foreword:

"It is an epic of a new generation of youth in the USSR which carries upon its shoulders the heavy burden of material and spiritual construction, marked by the historical years of the Five Year Plan. This work is the product of

pure artistic inspiration and is also an absorbing proof of intensive activity inasmuch as the book is based on personal experience and rare documents."

The art magazine *Les Echos d'Art* has an article by André Boll who was present at the International Theatre Olympiad in Moscow, being sent by the Department of Public Education:

"Slavonic nations, particularly Russians, have always been fond of spectacles, but never before, in no other country and at no other epoch has art been flourishing before, as it does at the present time in the USSR.

"A new tendency in dramatic art had been revealed for the Paris world at the exhibit of decorative art in 1925. Ever since, the Soviet artists began to show their sets on various Paris stages. Those spectacles aroused not only a quite natural curiosity but also hot discussions. Finally, in his brilliant book on dramatic decoration, Léon Moussinac gave virtual proofs of rare contributions to art by Russian innovators.

"And yet, it is difficult to imagine how manifold and variegated their tendencies really are. One has to live for a while in Moscow in order to conceive all that wealth."

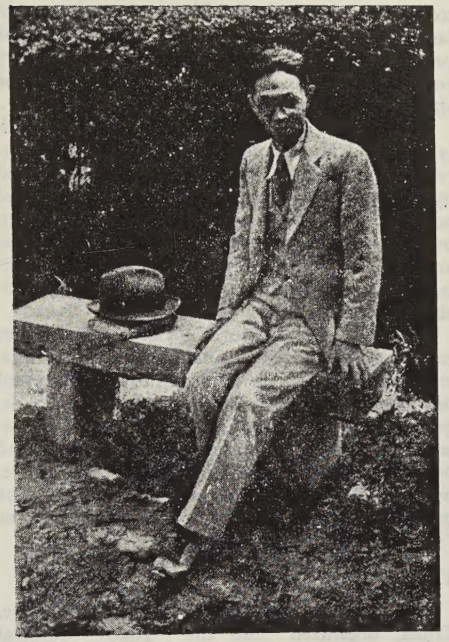
Further André Boll gives a detailed account on the glory of realism in the Moscow Art Theatre, on the role of the decorations in the Bolshoi Opera House and in the National theatres, which so artistically revive the national folklore with their peculiar customs and images."

CHINA

Two more members of the China League of Left Writers have been added to the long list of victims of the White Terror. Chang Yao-hua and Liu Shih-yi, young Chinese writers, have been killed by the Kuomintang because of their attempts to participate in the Anti-War Congress, held in Shanghai in September.

The Anti-War Congress was to have been held in Shanghai in August. On August 18th the delegation of leading European representatives, arrived in Shanghai. These included Lord Marley, of England, of the British Labor Party, M. Paul Vaillant-Couturier, of the French Communist Party, Dr. Jean Marteux, Belgian Workers' Party, Gerald Hamilton, of the British Anti-War Committee, and M. Poupy, French Socialist Party.

On August 17th, the day before the arrival of the delegation in Shanghai, the British, French, and Chinese police carried out wholesale raids and arrests on all Chinese connected with the Congress. At 9 A.M. ,Chinese police descended on the home of Chang Yao-hua, editor of the *Chen Lou* magazine, contributing editor of the *Eastern Miscellany, Shun Pao Monthly,* and *Hsien Magazine,* and author of many pamphlets on international politics and political economy. He was taken from his home, 56 Shih Dai Li, Scott Road. No warrant for his arrest was



Mao Tun, whose new novel Twilight *has recently appeared in the Chinese*

presented. He was immediately shipped to Nanking and there brutally shot to death by the Kuomintang.

The one and only charge against Chang was that his name was listed among the members of the Preparatory Committee for the Anti-War Congress.

At Chang's home, on the same day, two friends who came to see him were arrested, and nothing more ever heard of them.

During the whole day of August 17, police raided many Chinese homes, and in the days that followed there were more arrests. Altogether about 150 were arrested. Many of these were shot. Among the arrested were many girls.

Among the arrested was Liu Shih-yi, a young writer of stories, poems, brochures, and articles, and a very active member of the China League of Left Writers. He had prepared a small newspaper, entitled *Anti-War,* in support of the Anti-War movement. Just where and how he was arrested is not known, but on the day he disappeared two secret police agents of the Blue Jackets, (the Chinese Kuomintang Fascist terrorist group) called at his home. Not finding him at home, they went away. Liu was never heard of since. It is certain he was captured before his home, where the Blue Jackets waited.

Of the many arrested in connection with the Congress, most were arrested by the British and French police in the territory under their jurisdiction. In violation of their own laws, these foreign imperialist forces turned the victims over

to the Chinese police without even the semblance of a hearing. On August 28th, 25 of the prisoners were shipped to Nanking. A few very young girls were released. They told of the shooting of a number of their comrades.

The Anti-War delegation protested repeatedly to the Chinese authorities against these arrests. The Chinese police replied with typical hypocricy, saying that they were not arrested because of their Anti-War Congress activities, but because of previous crimes. In a public article, Dr. Marteau replied that "I do not accept so hypocritical an excuse for such abominable crimes!"

In other Chinese cities, the Chinese authorities carried on the terror against anti-war sympathizers. In Peiping alone 19 students were arrested on August 5th while holding a meeting to organize support for the Congress. A police provacateur posing as a student delegate, arose and began shooting in the direction of the police, but carefully over their heads. In this way he provided the excuse for a criminal charge of "violence" and "rioting".

Youth Protest

Chinese youth of Amoy, Fukien Province, China, organized into the "Amoy Cultural Youth," have issued a protest signed by 14 of their members, against the kidnapping and murder of the noted Chinese woman writer, Ting Ling, and the young writer Pan Chu-nien. Also against the murder of the writer Ying Shu-jen (Ting Chiu), all members of the China League of Left Writers. Ting Ling and Pan Chu-nien were kidnapped by Kuomintang Blue Jackets on May 13th 1933, from the British-controlled International Settlement in Shanghai, and later murdered. Ying Shu-jen was murdered on the spot. Ting Ling's murder aroused protest from Chinese writers of many schools of thought, and a public protest, signed by some fifty liberal bourgeois writers, was published in the press of the country, condemning this atrocity. (The story of Ting Ling together with a statement of the China League of Left Writers appeared in *International Literature* No. 3, 1933)

IN THIS ISSUE

Alex Keil—secretary of the Union of Revolutionary Artists of Germany is member of the Executive Board of the International Union of Revolutionary Artists (IURA).

Boris Tarasenko—young Red Army man, contributes to this issue from his first autobiographical novel.

Vladimir Tolstoy—Soviet aviator, now commander of a squadron, contributes to this issue from his first published book of short stories.

N. Markevich—is a Soviet journalist, contributor to *Izvestia, Komsomlskaya Pravda* and other leading Soviet publications.

Norman Macleod—young American revolutionary writer, a contributor to the *New Masses* and many other American publications, appears in this issue with an excerpt from his first, forthcoming autobiographical novel.

Peter Conrad—is the pen name of a well known German revolutionary writer.

A. P. Roley—young British writer, is author of *Revolt* which appeared last year, and of a new anti-war novel to appear this spring.

A. Novikov-Priboy—well known Soviet writer, contributes an autobiographical sketch of himself in this issue.

Maxim Gorky—world famous revolutionary writer and playwright, is now chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Union of Soviet Writers.

Gafur Gulam—young Uzbek poet, is brought to the attention of our readers through the efforts of the American poet Langston Hughes, who visited Uzbekistan in 1933.

Sergei Tretyakov—Soviet novelist and playwright, is author of the novel *Den Shi-hua* to appear in an American edition this spring.

Langston Hughes—American poet and novelist, has recently been chosen Executive Board member of the weekly *New Masses* and president of the League of Struggle for Negro Rights.

The International Union of Revolutionary Writers and the editors and staff of *International Literature* express their sorrow over the death of ANATOL VASILIEVICH LUNACHARSKY who died in France as this issue goes to press. LUNACHARSKY, Peoples Commissar of Education, Academician, Author and editor of many volumes about the literature of many countries, recently appointed Ambassador to Spain, was an outstanding figure, leader and guide in the new Soviet cultural activities.

Editor-in-chief SERGEI DINAMOV

C O N T E N T S

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Editorial Assistant WALT CARMON