Workers of the world, unite!

INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

ORGAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL
UNION OF REVOLUTIONARY WRITERS

№ 1

1933

THE STATE PUBLISHING HOUSE
MOSCOW

Distributors in the USSR: Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR, Nikolskaya 7, Moscow. Distributors in Great Britain: Workers' Bookshop Ltd., 16, King Street, London, W. C. 2. Distributors in the U. S, A,: International Publishers, 381, Fourth Avenue, New York, U, S. A.

MAXIM GORKI

Drawn FRED ELLIS

To Writers Throughout the World!

It was like light in the darkness when at the close of last August the best men in world literature—Romain Rolland, Barbusse and Gorki—at a time of renewed war agitation convened the Anti-War Congress in Amsterdam.

It was the fulfilment of innermost hopes: not only the chosen delegates of the working class regardless of party and nationality, but also the best representatives and heirs of bourgeois culture, like Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, Heinrich Mann, Albert Einstein, André Gide, John Dos Passos, Karin Michaelis, Andersen Nexö, and many others, loudly and solemnly identified themselves with the ideas represented by those who issued the call. In the Amsterdam Manifesto they expressed their readiness to prevent a repetition of the ignominy of 1914 when the overwhelming majority of writers, partly by activity and partly through their silence, took part in the wanton destruction of millions of human lives and innumerable cultural and material values.

After the Amsterdam Congress the most progressive writers throughout the world joined the national and local Anti-War Committees and expressed their readiness for the common struggle and activity to further the supreme cause of emancipating the human race from the curse of imperialism. Accustomed to look facts in the face with creative honesty, they recognized that THE UNDECLARED WAR IS ALREADY ON AND THAT IT IS BEING CONTINUED.

Since Amsterdam, under the wing of the League of Nations, with active support of interested great powers and in the interest of a clique of war industry financial magnates and militarists, Japan carried on its predatory war in China and in Manchuria, while the Anglo-American war between Paraguay and Bolivia grew sharper. War, either open or latent, is raging in all the colonial countries throughout the world. There grows a mountain of dead, a new army of cripples. And while millions of unemployed and starving children march through the land clamouring for bread and work, the clash of interests between the imperialist powers assumes ever sharper forms and war preparations are pushed upon an unprecedented scale.

In front of all these conflicts and contradictions of the capitalist powers is the historic conflict between the two worlds: the world of capitalism and the world of emerging socialism. All these war preparations pursue one ultimate aim—to find the CAPITALIST way out of the crisis, the war against the Soviet Union!

Against the Soviet Union! The only country in which working people have taken their destiny into their own hands. Where, in heroic and self-sacrificing struggle, the new classless society and the new socialist culture are being created! The only country which points to the world the way in which to put an end to the imperialist system which breeds war.

In the chorus of the hyenas of war one hears the voices of the heroes of the so-called Socialist Workmen's International. Under the cover of pacifist phrases and social demagogy, the past, present, and future socialist war-ministers support the already raging war in the East, the bloody suppression of the colonial peoples struggling for freedom, and hinder the only righteous war—the war of the toiling masses against war, against capitalism.

Included in this chorus of war hyenas are the "pillars of society," the editors and journalists of the big venal press—the manufacturers of munitions in word and picture—who deliberately incite the peoples to mutual carnage and create the necessary "mood" for the plans of the financial magnates, industrial syndicates, and general staffs, so as to facilitate the outbreak of the new world war—unprecedented destruction of priceless cultural and material values created by past generations and a return to barbarism.

HERE WE APPEAL TO WRITERS OF THE WORLD, to novelists, poets, playwrights who have the same desires as we have, to use the weapon of their talent to defend the freedom and the progress of human society against bloody oppression!

We address our appeal to all truly progressive writers, to all worker-writers and worker-correspondents throughout the world: pledge yourselves for the united fight! Promote unity of the revolutionary literary front! Lift the weapon of the writer against the war, direct the force of your work against fascism and militarism. Unmask the pacifist trickery of diplomats, reformists and fascists, priests and newspaper scribes, show them up as they are: the allies of the munition manufacturers, generals and chauvinists of all countries! Tear off all the masks from capitalism and its helpers!

Help the working masses and their young comrades in realizing their own power, point out the fight of the proletariat against imperialism, war, and barbarism. Portray the heroic spirit of the working class, its zeal and sacrifice in the cause of freedom! Portray convincingly the ways and methods of the struggle against war! Depict the crimes of the war industry!

Point out the world-historic role of the Soviet Union and of its peace policy! Depict the Red Army and its significance to construction and peace!

Join in our socialist competition! Take part in our literary contest!

War against war!—in vigorous, aggressive, artistic word!

THE INTERNATIONAL UNION
OF REVOLUTIONARY WRITERS

Boris Pilnyak

O. K.

From A Book of American Impressions

On the Fourth of July, in the year 1776, on the day of the declaration of American independence, the birthday of the United States—in the city of Philadelphia, an American woman, Betsy Ross, presented the first American national banner to George Washington, the first American President.

That was about 150 years ago.

On November 7, 1931, on the anniversary of the Soviet Revolution, in the city of Detroit an American woman, Betsy Ross, a lineal descendant of the first Betsy Ross, presented a red communist banner to the Detroit organization of the American Communist Party.

In January 1931, for the first time in twenty years, I was compelled to give assurance that I was neither a bandit nor an anarchist and that I believed in God. It took place at the American consulate in Germany. I was asked to read paragraphs, written in ungrammatical Russian—literal translation from the English—containing the following clauses, subjunctive mood:

- if you believe in God -
-if you intend to engage in banditry -
-if you plan to assassinate government officials or representatives of friendly nations -

I asked permission to keep this table of commandments. The request was denied.

After I had finished reading the scroll, the consular lady, gazing penetratingly at me, inquired:

"If there are any points in this bill. . . . you must warn us immediately. . . . Have you read it carefully? - Now if there are any points pertaining to you . . . "

The consul who remained alone with me, repeated the same question:

"Have you read the bill?

"Yes," I replied.

"Are there any points which concern you?"

At a loss, one is apt to twaddle: I was about to make an historical excursus into American social life—that the American population consists of believers and bandits—and is it not true that these bandits, as well as the believers in God, openly express their intentions, as stated in the bills?. . . .

"But you are a Bolshevik!" said the consul.

I quietly pulled out my red passport. The consul and I looked at it attentively for a moment, in silence - leaving the dilemna of the red passport unsolved in words.

"Have you any dollars?" he finally inquired.

"Yes," I replied.

I decided that the visa was refused to me. However, I did get it - the assumption evidently being that I do believe in God and that I do not engage in banditry. Endowed with piety by the granting of the visa, I realized the meaning of hypocrisy.

The consul, handing the passport over to the consular lady for further formalities, dropped a significant, "O. K."

Had I known at the time the connotation of the word, I would have echoed it to the consul.

The expression has a historical origin. In the beginning of the 19th century, the presidents of the United States were predominantly generals, men more proficient with the sword than the pen.

One of these presidents was General Andrew Jackson. When bills were presented to him for signature, he visaed them with the letters, "O. K." - assuming in his presidential erudition that these represented the initial letters of the phrase "all correct." Thus the expression was legalized by tradition and became widely used throughout America, synonymous with the English "all right" and the Chinese "mamandi."

It is more than mere "all right." An American loses his fortune on the stock exchange - *O. K.* Another smashes his automobile in an accident - *O. K.* A bank is held up by bandits - *O. K.*

Presidents, now, in reverence to illiterate precedence, counter-sign all bills with an "O. K."

The Soviet citizen, author of this book on America, traveled "with publicity." He realized that though it was necessary for him to make the trip, it was more important that his country secure American combines, forge hammers, lathes. He, therefore left the Soviet border without taking any money along.

In Warsaw he received zloty which carried him over to Berlin. In Berlin he received some marks which took him to Paris. On the *Bremen,* the author, standing at the forecastle, looking into the vastness of the ocean, meditated:

—from Warsaw to Berlin, from Berlin to Paris, from Paris to New York—and there I'll manage somehow.

But the writer was an author and in the ship's newspaper appeared the list of passengers. On the date of its first issue, first an emaciated young woman, then a somnolent gentleman, an importer of Soviet furs, inquired - are you none other than so-and-so? The young woman quizzed me about my foxtrot abilities and the gentleman, as to my stand on "black-and-white" versus "scotch."

The same day several radiograms came in—"greetings," "welcome," "await you' and among them one reading:

"Room reserved at St. Moritz Hotel."

I asked the fur gentleman about the hotel. He informed me that it was one of the most fashionable in New York, a fifty storey building located on West 59th Street, opposite Central Park.

The only wireless that I sent from the boat was to my publisher: I don't NEED any St. Moritz, thank you!

In the evening I received another radiogram:

"Your stay at St. Moritz imperative stop accomodations free."

I wondered at the publisher's generosity but accepted the news with the exultation of one having a tooth extracted.

Aboard ship I made the acquaintance of an American sausage millionaire, a Mr. Kotofton. He was a real American and added much "tone" to the boat. He was returning from Europe with his daughter who wore a bandage on her eye and who spent most of her time on the deck reading American magazines. In true American fashion, he finally shook my hand. Our first words were interpreted by the fur gentleman, who stood in awe before the sausage-king. After exchanging a few phrases, the American said:

"Very well; let us speak in Russian. I'd like your advice. By the way, will you have a whiskey and soda—You see, I have two daughters, who are my sole interest in life. One of them remained in England. After all, England is the most respectable country in the world. The other is returning with me. I will introduce her to you. She is a Doctor of Philosophy. She developed a sty on her eye from strenuous reading and I

took her to Germany for treatment. As you know, German medicine is the most reputable. I was charged 500 dollars for each visit. My daughter writes theses that delight professors. It certainly costs loads of money to educate children. But I want to speak to you about my other daughter. She wants to become a writer. Art in America is limping. It is said that English literature is now stagnant. I am no authority in that field—but after all, English literature is the most distinguished. I was given a list of the most outstanding English writers living today. I centered my attention primarily on authoresses. That is more decorous. I visited some of these authoresses in London and requested that they give lessons to my daughter so that she may become a writer, too. Well, what do you think of the idea? There is so little genuine art in America!"

When we were left alone the fur gentleman informed me that Mr. Kotofton is still semiliterate, can hardly read Russian or English. All his business is transacted by secretaries.

At the evening entertainment, the smartest society aboard ship was seated at Mr. Kotofton's table, where he was treating all to cocktails.

- The philosophy of history!

The first thing that impressed me in America was the abundance of national flags.

The Statue of Liberty, with which all accounts of America usually begin, escaped me as our boat was nearing New York. I was too distracted by the Wall Street skyscrapers and the general commotion aboard ship. Nor did I see it ultimately. In order not to confuse the minds of future travelers to America, it is interesting to note that the interior of the head of this Liberty is roomy enough to hold an average size apartment and that under her skirt, below the upper pleats there was, for many years, a prison cell - a fact no less significant than the origin of O. K.

The ships news reporters arrived on boat together with the police officials. I was travelling "with publicity" and reporters soon grabbed me and led me to the nursery in the first class. The walls of the room were decorated with drawings of smiling children in the genre of Russian handicraft toys. Scattered on the miniature tables and chairs were various playthings.

Bottles of whiskey and pints of beer were now placed on these little tables. The kiddie-reporters seated themselves on the children's chairs, feet on table. They were a motley lot - shabbily clad, in worn-out shoes, each shoe weighing at least a ton. Hurriedly they fell to gulping the whiskey and beer, meanwhile quizzing me. In the two o'clock papers it was reported that so-and-so had arrived on such-and-such a boat, that he wore this type of tie and shoes and was stopping at that particular hotel. My hair, I discovered, is sandy.

Hotel St. Moritz repeated the splendor of the *Bremen*. My luggage arrived before me. Beside it I found cases of whiskey and gin. I already knew the price of American liquor on the dry exchange. There was not enough in my purse to pay for these cases. Waiters were setting the table for about 40 people. Strange men were uncorking the bottles of whiskey and gin. I was about to give an interview.

Journalists began to gather, men and women, this time more sedate and better dressed. They shook my hand and in introducing themselves gave the name of the newspaper they represented instead of their surnames. People totally unknown to me distributed "statements" to the newspapersmen—flattering reports about myself, my age, who my fathers were, what I am and "who" said "what" about me. I was no longer I—but material for publicity. My "guests" began to drink the cocktails and to question me. I spoke about the trend of history. Then questions were fired at me:

- how much does it cost to get married or divorced in the Soviet Union?
- How do you like American women?

When asked how much Stalin earns, I replied that he most probably receives the party maximum - about 150 dollars a month. The gentlemen of the press were astounded- why should he work so hard for so little money?

Someone inquired:

"Are there any people who earn more money than Mr. Stalin?"

I surprised the gentlemen by informing them that there are no millonaires in the Soviet Union (some Americans are still unaware of this fact). The only people who earn more than 50 dollars a month are skilled workers, engineers, professional men, writers and artists.

How about yourself? another demanded.

I replied that I earned about three times 150. The following morning, the *New York Times* printed:

"Pilnyak predicts the downfall of capitalism."

"The wealthiest person in the USSR is Pilnyak."

Other newspapers made a Rockefeller out of me. Many months later, in Moscow, a friend of mine, an American journalist, told me that he received an inquiry from his agency in New York, as to why Pilnyak is not Pilnyak but a Rockefeller?

I shall pass over the cameramen of that day who photographed me lengthwise, widthwise, shaking hands, grinning, resting my hand on a child's head (the American photographic symbol of kindness). When the newspapermen finally departed, leaving behind unfinished cakes, empty bottles and Virginia smoke, - I was on the verge of hysterics.

"Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's!" I have mentioned the St. Moritz Hotel several times (the national flag waves proudly over it). Continuing the American tradition, I am repaying with gratitude. The free room and liquor were presented to me not by but with the compliments of the St. Moritz. Its publicity men reasoned correctly that any press notice of me would include mention of the Hotel. A free room is less expensive than a paid advertisement. Moreover, indirect publicity is more subtle and effective. Thank you, dear St. Moritz!

A tailor offered me a free suit of clothes in exchange for a testimonial that his were the finest clothes manufactured.

Strangers came over, introduced themselves, departed. It soon became clear to me that I was being requested to step up to the microphone and say at least one Russian word—"hello" or "thank you". The evening's program was being transmitted over the radio and, as it later developed, my friends and I were taken to the theater, dined and wined in order to have me appear in the night-club's radio broadcast! Picture a Soviet writer fresh from the boat at a bare-naveled revelry making merry over the radio! I left the club in the midst of my meal, in impossible haste. Once home, it took pints of ice water to dispel my rancor and wrath.

Publicity, advertising, the devil take it!

The advertisements squall, pur, sing arias, terrify, blind your eyes, throw you off your feet, greet you at all intersections, alleys, lavatories, alcoves. They creep into your nose, eyes, ears, into your food, your blood, your heart, and into your pocket, pocket, pocket! - screeching:

—buy more automobiles, lighters, refrigerators. . .

—"if your car breaks down, we will repair it in 24 hours, make it more beautiful than new, install two additional projectors, another nickel mesh, a cloak, an ash-tray, a medicine chest."

—"a radio in your car will make our trip through the fields of Texas and the Arizona desert more enjoyable."

buy more clothes, shoes, dishes, furniture, neckwear, cigarettes, cough and eczema medicine.—

—eat more meat, ham, lobsters!—

—eat more bread, butter, sweets!—

—drink more coca-cola, coffee, tea!—

—more, more, more!—

—you have no right to deprive yourself of food, drink or an automobile!—

(all this at a time of an unprecedented crisis when 15 million people are unemployed).

I met a Wall Street man in New York. My reaction to him is inexpressible. This man is about 40, dry, simple, as unpretentious as a well-made penknife. He does not follow the contemporary American manner of dressing in all colors of the rainbow. He still adheres to the sartorial traditions of the past century—his suit symbolizing a locomotive stack. In his office, alongside the ticker, are private telephone wires connecting him directly with London and his League of Nations representative in Geneva. He himself owns no enterprises. His metier is to give advice to the fools among the American millionaires on how to reap the biggest profits from their millions. He handles no sums under seven figures. The gentleman is very astute and quite cynical, as one might expect of a man of his calling. He realizes that should his counsels fail, his brainless clients would still find enough brains to refuse his services. As my companion and I entered his office, he had just concluded a long distance call to Geneva. Toying with the paper knife in his right hand, he greeted us with the following words:

"It's a crisis, all right, and no mistake about it. I've been telling my clients the best thing they can do is to invest their money in your Bolsheviks. At any rate the money would be safe until Bolshevism comes to this country. The next best bet is to organize a syndicate for the overthrow of the Soviet Government, or better still, form a corporation whose aim would be to prove that the crisis was caused by Soviet dumping and bolshevist agitation and conspiracy. We can easily frame some conspirators. In any of these ventures I'd be ready to invest a couple of millions of my own money. I guarantee big returns in the first six months!—You remember the Florida boom in 1926? We must not forget that the recent prosperity was brought about by automobiles, which are America's curse today, and by prohibition . . . a business alliance against bolshevism—think of the publicity, ballyhoo and hokum!" . . .

In one of my novels, I once used an image - and here in New York, this image aroused new sensations—it seemed to symbolize New York and all of America to me.

In this novel I wrote:

. . ."out of ancient ruins, archeologists sometimes unearth primitive stone images of women - the archaelogists marvel at its beauty - but a tiny ant crawling across the face of the stone beauty would see only clods of mud, stone and dust: to appreciate beauty one must measure up to it. . . ."

And truly: a man, startled by the beauty of a woman, might stop in the street to admire her; an infusoria crawling down her cheek at that moment, would see hills of face powder - to the microscopic organism this cheek would be the red desert of Arizona and if by chance it crawled into the nostril, it would feel as if it had fallen into the crater of a live volcano.

From the tower of the Empire State Building one sees New York a beautiful, striking, indescribable city, the only one of its kind in the world, extraordinary in its architecture, overwhelming in its power.

To a European looking down at this city, it seems more of a dream than a reality a dream which cannot be compared with anything, except perhaps the fragment of a memory of a childhood phantasy about the Biblical city of Babylon—a city which none of us

has ever seen and which because of its fabulousness resembles New York. New York is an inhuman city, monstrous, overwhelming and beautiful. From the tower of the Empire State or the gargoyles of the Chrysler Building the ocean, the Hudson, the East River, the Palisades - are your brothers. The sixty-storey New York (and the average height of the New York buildings is only ten stories) is at your feet, lying hidden in the mist, smoke and drone of its streets. Alongside of you and on an equal footing stand the brother-skyscrapers, their commanding stateliness and brutal beauty.

A man standing in the tower of the Empire State is on a level with the inhuman beauty and unique grandeur of New York.

But when he walks along the streets of New York (or rides in an automobile, the subway or elevated) - New York is a frightful city, the most terrible city in the world, whether one looks at it from Park Avenue or the Bowery. A city deafening in beauty of electric signs. Streets that are filthy, barren, without grass or trees. A city transformed into a colossal kerosene stove—sooty and stifling. A mad, enraged city of concrete, iron, stone and steel, looming toward the sky. It is impossible to live here, just as it is impossible to ride over its streets in an automobile—streets which are filled with the greatest number of the world's best automobiles, riding almost on top of each other.

Individualism! - the people walking and riding on the streets of New York, enjoying the radio, the movies, the burlesques, Coney Island—are tiny ants crawling on the beauty of the stone image, unearthed from the very ancient, primitive ruins!

This city is branded with the shame of the Bowery, the only street in the world of *lumpen-proletarians,* tramps, dollar casualties - (there is a greater abundance of these Gorkian *lumpens* than even in China). In the stores of the Bowery shoes are sold, taken from the unclaimed dead in the morgues. There are night lodgings here where people sleep on old newspapers gathered in the streets. These lodgings have four shifts, each group vacating the premises at the end of six hours, to admit another group, waiting on the sidewalk. No eight hour labor law in America but a six hour sleep law on the Bowery!

The dollarless population of this street, shod in shoes of the dead, wends its way nightly to Forty-Second Street and Broadway - the heart of the theater section and electric sign madness—to stand in line for a free cup of soup and a sandwich served with the divine message of the Salvation Army. They stand on the breadline watching another Coney Island wave of people *en route* for the movies, America's chief source of entertainment!—The Bowery has its counterpart in Mott Street, where the homeless sleep in an "all night mission house," to the accompaniment of the pastor's sermon.

This city as all of America is branded with the shame of the Negro problem.

This city with its tenacious poverty, tenacious congestion, and tenacious will not to starve and to live decently—leads a fierce, filthy, though white-collared struggle for existence. Individualism! - the Odessa Privoz of old times pales into insignificance beside the pushcart alleys of the East Side, where the roar of the city is pierced with the shrieks of children who are raised on the concrete of the street, under the wheels of automobiles, and with the wails of the peddlers, who shout their wares in all languages:

- bananas
- fish
- oranges
- electric flat irons

I had some cocktails once on the roof of a thirty-storey building in the penthouse of a "poor" millionaire. We were seated on swing-divans in a garden shaded by palm trees and far below us shone the lights of the city. An American flag waved conspicuously on a mast over the roof. "Poor" millionaires in America are those whose

wealth does not come up to that of billionaires like the sausage king, steel king, meat king.

Pointing out the skyscrapers surrounding his own semi-skyscraper, my host identified about 50 buildings, naming the billionaires who owned them.

I walked over to the railing and looked down. Alongside of the poor millionaire's semi-skyscraper were a group of seven or eight storey buildings, their roofs black from soot. On the clothes' lines hung the poverty of torn sheets, shirts, underwear. On one roof, a couple seated on a mattress, spooning. On another, several workers sleeping on newspapers.

I interrupted my host's discourse on billionaires to inquire who owned the building adjacent to his.

The "poor" millionaire admitted that he did not know.

The cocktails and the sunset were very scintillating.

Everything became clear to me.

There are 40 to 50 men in New York, figuratively supported by skyscrapers and on a level with New York's grandeur, for whom that city is beautiful - they are billionaires, capitalists, controlling visible and invisible offices on Wall Street.

The cocktails and the sunset were very scintillatng - on the roof of the neighboring building were orange peels, thrown there, most likely, from the garden of the "poor" millionaire, for the legend of celestial manna as well as that of celestial oranges is inexplicable by the laws of physics. From the top of a skyscraper, New York is ominous and inhuman!—Oh America!—Ah, America!

My "poor" millionaire's Nitzchean-MacDonaldian mustache was graying. He was boldly attired in a lilac-colored suit and dark red shoes. His shirt, tie, pocket handkerchief and socks were all of the same color and design. The bearing and eyes of this "poor" millionaire were subdued and lyrical. American-Nitzchean individualism!

All these blessings are for those who are on the dollar bandwagon. The *Ah's* and *Oh's* of New York with its national flags and its standards of life - are only within reach of the cheque book, the more dollars - the more *ah's!* But those who have fallen off the dollar bandwagon - -

Therein lies the essence of American-Nitzchean individualism. The real American-Nitzchean—is the dollar. It is this Nitzchean who interprets individualism and lives in the legends that Abraham Lincoln, whose face is stamped on the dollar bills, was born in a wood-cutter's hut, that Hoover is the son of a farmer, that every American has the opportunity to loom into the spaciousness of individualism as the skyscrapers loom into the sky. Numerous historical biographies are written about these skyscraper legends of Lincoln, Hoover, and Empire-State Smith. Yet the biographies of dollar casualties are unwritten, even though they are the products of the very same American individualism and are a million-fold more natural than the huts of Lincoln, more common and numerous than the skyscrapers.

The American free and individualistic labor laws provide that if, at 12-15 in the afternoon a boss tells his worker that he is no longer wanted, the relationship between the employee and the employer ceases on the dot of 12-15, and the former receives his check on Saturday with pay calculated up to the fifteenth minute of the twelth hour of that day.

There is a free, individualistic law in America—the chattel mortgage—which provides that if a person buys an article on instalment, costing, let us say, one dollar, and he has paid 99 cents, still owing one cent, the article can be taken back without refunding the 99 cents.

The Misters Ford, Henry and Edsel—are by no means responsible for this law-they are puritans who do not even smoke -they only manufacture automobiles. Henry Ford, as is well known, does not engage in selling his cars.

Nor is he likely to know the story told to me by another friend of mine, Y, Ukrainian worker. We were sitting with this friend in his new "apartment" - under the open Detroit sky, on a bench in the park. My friend, perplexed, kept nodding his head with national-Ukrainian placidity. He began to speak.

All Ford employees are expected to own Ford cars since their employer argues that the Ford workers are comparatively well off; besides it is essential for them to know the car they help to produce. When Y began working at the Ford plant, he owned a Chevrolet, and his foreman told him that he ought to sell his Chevrolet and purchase a Ford. Henry does not engage in selling automobiles. The foreman gave my friend the name of a dealer who offered him a Ford on instalment, accepting his Chevrolet as initial payment. Another foreman told him that Ford employees are expected to live on certain streets in certain houses built especially for them. Henry Ford has nothing to do with either. Y with his family—wife and two children—moved into a three-room apartment in one of these Ford-like cottages which were run on an instalment basis, each tenant paying a definite sum each year, until the apartment finally belonged to him. That was in the fall of 1929.

In January, 1931, the Ford Motor Company put out a new model. That same month the foreman told my friend that it was possible that he would lose his job ("a crisis don't you know!") - however, he would try to keep him and it might help matters a lot if he bought the 1931 model Ford. My friend, scratching his head in Ukrainian fashion, decided to buy a new Ford and turned in his 1929 Ford as an initial payment.

I was in Detroit the latter part of June. Y had been fired some time in May. In the middle of June his 1931 model had been taken back in default of payment. At the end of June, I helped him move out of his cottage as he was unable to meet his next instalment.

Now, seated on a bench in the park, my friend, bewildered, kept nodding his head in Ukrainian fashion: he had three automobiles, now he has none—"owned" an apartment, now he is out on the street - all that was left to him were his wife and two children!. . .

My dear American individualists!—People walk in the Bowery, shod in shoes taken from the dead! -Dear American freedom! - Is there no logical as well as emotional bridge between the freedom of the clean-shaven, towering skyscraper and the calm underground work of the traitor-boars in Chicago?!

My dear Nitzchean dollar! - what difference is there in the essence of things between the millions owned by the head of the Chicago bandit trust, the King of racketeering, Al Capone, and the skyscraping of the Empire State?! - isn't Al - O.K.?

Ray Long arranged a dinner for me at the Metropolitan Club, in New York. I scanned the list of guests invited; behind the name of each stood many-tomes, works and impressive autobiographies: these were the leading literary names, known not only in America but the world over.

The walls and portieres of the Metropolitan Club shut out all the noise of the city. The candles and pig-skin chairs bespoke tranquillity and sobriety. There were about 40 of us—the famous and I, with my companions, all in formal dress. After the cocktail preliminaries, the guests seated themselves ceremoniously at the table, a waiter stationed behind each chair. The candles burned magnificently.

Ray Long delivered a speech, as solemn as the Metropolitan Club. The second to speak was I. My much-belabored speech took three day's preparation. I spoke about the fences that separate national cultures, about the USSR, the capitalistic world, the fact that the honor bestowed upon me did not belong to me personally, but to that beautiful literature, vigorous and young, which had been created by the dawn of Socialism and the thunders of the revolution—of youth I spoke with gratification and gusto, for relatively

speaking, the only young people at the dinner were my companions,—Louis Fischer, Mendelsohn, Joe Freeman and myself; the others were nearer to 50 and 60.

After me spoke Sinclair Lewis, the Nobel-laureate, tall, narrow-shouldered, gray eyed, red-complexioned. He sought me out with his eyes, centered his gaze upon me and said:

"I shall not speak about the Soviet Union or Mr. Pilnyak." He paused.

The pause was as magnificent as the Metropolitan Club.

Sinclair Lewis turned his gaze upon Theodore Dreiser.

"I cannot speak about the Soviet Union or Mr. Pilnyak," his eyes staring fiercely at Dreiser, "because someone, present here, stole 3,000 words from my wife....."

Another pause, no longer as magnificent as the Metropolitan Club.

Lewis's eyes wandered down the table... "and because someone else here wrote that the Nobel Prize should have been awarded to Dreiser and not to me." He grew silent again.

The Metropolitan Club in no way resembled the pause.

Sinclair Lewis fixed his stare upon another person. . . . "And because someone else wrote that I was a fool."

Pompously, self-righteously, he took his seat. The pause that followed was greater than any during the speech.

That evening sometime after dinner, in private, Theodore Dreiser slapped Sinclair Lewis's face - a slap which resounded all over the world, for on the following day it was headlined in all the papers, broadcast over the radio, wired to Europe and Japan and commented on in lectures and sermons. I did not witness the slapping, having left the affair, nonetheless, I was compelled to hide for days from reporters in order to avoid cheek-slapping publicity. To be candid, I did profit from this affair considerably: in the states of Texas and Arizona, where people were unfamiliar not only with my writings but even with the existence of the USSR, I would explain that I was so-and-so at whose dinner...—and everyone understood.

On the day prior to my departure for California, I had the unexpected opportunity to meet Mr. Z., an American multi-millionaire. I am consciously concealing his name by that initial, for it as well known as that of Rockefeller or Morgan. He is one of the 10 leading billionaires of America. When one takes into consideration the fact that financially America commands the entire capitalist world, this person, who is one of the 10 commanders of America, is really richer and more powerful than the King of England or the President of France. The man was old, dry and not very strong. I spoke to him about my trip to California, told him that I was leaving the following afternoon and that I might stop for a day in Chicago.

As is usually the case, the mention of Chicago led to a discussion of Al Capone, the Chicago underworld king. I insolently suggested that I would be happy to meet Al Capone. And Mr. Z., a person more powerful than the British king, replied affably:

"I can arrange it for you."

Mr. Z. pressed a button, in came an emaciated secretary, who seemed to understand Mr. Z. astrally, without words. A half hour later, the secretary reported that he had telephoned Chicago, that Mr. Capone would be busy on Monday (the day of my arrival in Chicago) with the mayoralty election in that city, and, therefore, unfortunately could not receive Mr. Pilnyak that day - however, should Mr. Pilnyak wish to make it some other time, Mr. Capone would always be at his service.

I did not see Al Capone—but the foregoing conversation is more significant than seeing him: - a bandit unable to receive me because he was occupied with the elections and a legitimate billionaire acting as an intermediary between me and the underworld! .....

I received a telegram to work in Hollywood for M. G. M., a 10 weeks' contract at so much per week.

A friend explained to me:

"What if you had written something for Fox or Paramount? It is better to pay you even though you produce nothing rather than let you write something for Fox."

I went to Hollywood.

Hollywood, for the most part, is inhabited by only two categories of people: men and women of rare beauty and freaks of various types. Future, present and former screen-stars. I saw them all.

In the studios where I was employed, I once saw a movie director, seated in his office, smoking a cigar and intently scrutinizing thousands of albums containing photographs of so-called "extras"—actors in reserve, registered at all the studios—men and women who have already filmed their "happiness" or were still in quest of "happiness." The director was jotting down the numbers of certain extras, so that on the morrow they could be called for final selection in the casting of the next production. If fortunate, they are hired for a week or two, these numbers who will receive five dollars a day. I saw all that.

I also saw the Hollywood celebrities, the stars who earn 5,000 dollars a week.

The editors of the *Moscow News,* an English publication in Moscow, received a letter from an American Hollywood screen-actress. She wrote that there was a crisis in the motion picture industry in America, that she is sympathetic with the Five-Year Plan and would like to work for the USSR. Enclosing a photograph of herself she stated her height, weight, color of hair, eyes, size of her ankles, bosom and various other dimensions.

All contracts stipulate the exact measurements and avoirdupois of the screen star. Any minute gain in weight is a ground for the termination of the agreement. The screen celebrities, it would seem, have to lead a life of virtue and piety. Thus it really is!- I knew an actress, a famous screen star, who employed a private physician to supervise her diet. She was fed, washed and massaged according to prescription. This actress was the mistress of a multi-millionaire.

Vladimir Ivanovich Nemirovich-Danchenko, famous director of the Moscow Art Theater was once invited to work in Hollywood in the way that Eisenstein and I were. He offered to direct a historical film based on the Pugatchev uprising—a rebellion of Russian peasants in the Volga against the Russian Empire, which was headed by the pretender Emeliyan Pugatchev. Nemirovich-Danchenko was asked to submit a synopsis. The synopsis was approved by the directors, who demanded just one slight revision. They did not like the ending -Pugatchev's outcome was too gruesome. Instead of this tragic end, they suggested having him meet Catherine the Great, upon which the two would fall in love with each other and—O.K.—get married. I do not know how true this episode is - I was told of it in Hollywood - but I can testify that it unquestionably characterizes Hollywood traditions.

I am a writer and my busines is writing.

The motion picture industry - with its miracles, bandits, Emeliyan Pugatchev's nuptials, artic and tropical regions, ancient erotics and contemporary puritanism, scores of apes and Russian white guard generals—all that is connoted in American parlance with the short word: "movie."

Hollywood - movie - is the third largest industry in the United States. The product of this industry is art. Art is created by brain. The commodity of this industry is brain. Art is created by talent. The commodity of this industry is talented brain. American industry is standardized to withstand competition. The textile industry produces yards of chintz. Ford turns out series of cars on his conveyors. The cinema is the third largest industry - -

Writers are needed, among other things, for the creation of themes and plots. When I arrived in Hollywood I was asked whether I wanted an office. Not quite clear about the matter, I said no. I was instructed that all my suggestions were to be submitted to the supervisor for O. K.

O. K., I echoed, still pondering as to what was meant by offices for writers.

Behind the high walls of the film lot, I saw a series of long one-storied houses resembling barracks. Inside these barracks are long corridors on each side of which are small rooms the size of solitary confinement cells in prison. Each cell contains a chair, a table, another chair, a typewriter, and a telephone, - nothing else. These are the writers' offices. In these prison cell-offices, from 9 in the morning until 5 in the evening, sit people who do nothing -their legs propped on the table or window sill or slung over the back of another chair. Sometimes several of these people get together and talk. Sometimes drink whiskey. These people with their legs in the air are - writers. Writers who can earn less than 250 dollars a week must sit in these offices. Writers earning up to 1,000 dollars a week make only occasional appearances. Writers earning over 1,000 dollars need not come at all - in fact the firm prefers that they do not come. These barracks, which are found in every large studio, house about 150 members of the writing fraternity.

The writers are collected from every part of America and many foreign countries. Somewhere, in a small, obscure town a young man or young woman has written a book which has attracted attention. The young writer receives a telegram inviting him to work in Hollywood stop so much per week stop period five years stop surrender copyright of all writings during term of contract stop.

That is all!

Unchartered are the paths of destinity, the firm reasons philosophically—the young writer shows talent, perhaps he will amount to something some day—it is better to buy him now than to pay him three times as much later - moreover, let him work for us rather than for our competitors.

Talents and names are appraised in dollars. For multi-dollared writers it is best not to go to Hollywood at all - as evidenced in the case of Theodore Dreiser. In the summer of 1931 a Hollywood firm purchased the screen rights of his *An American Tragedy*. The firm revised the novel according to their own interpretation - *à la* Pugatchev Uprising. Dreiser protested, demanding that the film be revised, enjoined from presentation or that his name be removed. Of course it would have been wiser if Dreiser hadn't bothered with Hollywood or the movies at all. It only turned out to be a big nuisance. Dreiser lost the trial anyway—for is it possible to sue the third largest industry?

The writers are not invited to the studios to write or create. They are at liberty to write or not to write. Those who receive less than 250 per, seldom see their names on the final revised version of their scenarios.

Special readers in the employ of each movie company - sub-divided into Anglo-Saxon, Germanic, Romance and Slavish groups - read all the new literature published all over the world - novels, plays, short stories. They read first the book reviews appearing in the periodical press and from there select the books. Summaries of the novels and plays plus annotation as to whether the plot is adaptible for screening are submitted to the chief reader. The chief reader makes his selections and hands them to the manager. The manager in turn submits the summaries chosen by him to the supervisor who has the power to say "O.K.!" and to set the wheels of the movie firm in motion. What appears on the screen bears only the remotest resemblance to the original novel or play—as in the cases of Dreiser and Nemirovich-Danchenko.

This is one way in which a film may be born.

There is also another way.

Every firm has its own writers and creators in addition to the ones in the solitary confinement cells.

These special "inventors" on the staff of the film company patch together various ideas—invent the scenes that are to appear on the screen—describe the milieu of the action, the country and the period in which it takes place—specify what the villain shall be like. The hero and heroine, of course, are always the same - everybody knows them—they are not to be older than 22. These "inventors"—are a tested approbated lot. Their ideas are conveyed directly to the supervisor, without bureaucratic red tape.

When the theme is "okayed" by the supervisor, it is dressed in the blood and meat of cinematography - a "story," "synopsis" and "treatment" are written. It is not yet a scenario, it is merely: ". . . . a young, handsome, blond man enters the room.

He is greeted by *Tanya. Nicolai* warns *Tanya* of the danger that is threatening *Morgan.*

The sound effects are not worked out yet. No settings are specified, no dialogue given.

When the "synopsis" is completed, the supervision sometimes calls for one of the writers from the barracks. Suppose a writer is familiar with the life of sailors at sea. He is invited to look over the synopsis and is secretly instructed to enrich it with details of sea life and color. Fear of competition surrounds the whole procedure with an almost naive puerile secrecy. The tentative drafts of the story are slugged with mysterious titles which are changed as frequently as the secret code of conspirators. The specialist called in for advice translates the story into the language of the cinema. Will his name appear on the screen? Not necessarily. His story and suggestions will be connected by the supervision, the scenic artists, the musical director, the regisseur, and the supervisor again. The corrected script will go to a highly-paid, well-advertised screen writer whose name has the weight of a trade mark. It is his name that will appear on the screen—the name of the "expert" who took some one else's knowledge of life at sea and poured it into the standard Hollywood mold.

> ". . . A young handsome blond man enters Director *Nicolai's* office. (Hushed swish of wheels in the plant, faint siren call. Close-up of Morgan. View of the plant through bay window).
> *Tanya* greets *Morgan.*
> *Morgan* smiles. *Tanya's* eyes register anxiety and affection. The noise in the plant subsides. Soft, Beethoven music. (A close-up of *Tanya* and *Morgan* against the background of the bay window and the plant).
> *Morgan* is elated.
> *Nicolai—*" etc.

The scenario will be improved and elaborated further by other nameless writers. Other experts will do the treatment, the dialogue—the latter is always done by special sub-title writers. Thus the final product is the work of many minds, while the screen carries the name of one writer who, in some cases, may have contributed nothing but the advertising value of his name. In 1930 a picture called *The Big House* was produced by M. G. M. and played almost every motion picture house in the world. The film dealt with life in an American prison. It was written by an ex-convict whose name did not appear. The scenario was adapted by my supervisor, Al Lewin, and featured the name of my co-author, Frances Marion—an American Lydia Charskaya.

Thus the writers in American motion picture industry either write the scenarios and do not receive the credit for it or sign scenarios written by others.

But writers, even when they work in monastic cells, are writers nevertheless and there is something fatal in their destiny. During a farewell party on my last night in Hollywood, a young talented writer R., a former seaman, told me:

"You're kidding, Pilnyak - Let *me* tell you about American rugged individualism!. . . All day I sit in my cell in the writers' barracks and write precisely the balderdash which I repudiate at night when I write my novels. . . Do you understand?. . . At home I have only a sheet of paper, a typewriter and a brain exhausted by the day's work - while the film industry has a tremendous organisation—machinery, millions of dollars and 30 million fans - my individualism butts its head in vain against this huge machine . . . You, Pilnyak, refuse to work for Hollywood . . . You are returning home. . . Hollywood pays me good money! . . . I shall come to the Soviet Union as soon as my contract expires! . . ."

What is interesting here, however, is not the technique of the film industry so much as other questions which it affects; art, the role of the writer, the art of American individualism—art is creative only when it produces new forms, new ideas, new emotions—when it awakens, not when it stupefies; art is art only when it is revolutionary; art is art only when it is convincing. Art is partially created by writers. In order to create, a writer must believe in his work, he must believe in its necessity, in its significance. This, of course, is much more important than money; recall how many products of genius have been created in garrets (real and psychical) and in hunger. Writers, like birds, must be free in their work; it is easier for a bird to fly when the wind beats against its breast. And the real boss of American talent measured in film feet—is mister capitalism,the Nietzchean dollar.

Upon my arrival in Hollywood, I reported to my supervisors, the Philistine Napoleons (or Napoleonic Philistines) and was told (literally) that I was invited in "the capacity of a bolshevik" to "Sovietize" a film. I was informed that I would have a secretary-interpreter at my disposal and was given the right to wire or radio to any part of the world for any information or books that I might need. In short, it was made clear to me that because I was receiving so much per week, I was among the select group of exploiters, the movie aristocrats.

They explained to me that the firm had decided to produce a pro-Soviet film, that, a pro-Soviet scenario had already been written by one of the staff "inventors." Frances Marion and I were to be the authors of the film, George Hill was to be the director, and Boris Inkster, a fellow Russian, a Soviet citizen, who had come with the Eisenstein group, was to be the assistant director. The supervisor was Al Lewin. Irving Thalberg, a member of the Board of Directors of M.G.M. (the husband of Norma Shearer) a Hollywood Napoleon who receives a million dollars a year—was to be in charge of the production. This list comprised the "conference" of the forthcoming production. Besides my authorship, I was to act in the capacity of advisor in the making of the picture.

The term "pro-Soviet" requires explanation. As is known, the United States, had no diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. in 1931. Those Americans who opposed recognition of the Soviet Union, were known as "anti-Soviet." Those who favoured resumption of diplomatic relations were referred to as "pro-Soviet." Similar divisions existed in the Russian colony in America: the majority of the Russian emigrants who arrived in America prior to the October Revolution were pro-Soviet; those who betrayed their fatherland, fleeing from the Revolution—were anti-Soviet. As for myself, I was merely Soviet.

Despite all, however, I did not succeed in becoming the famous Frances Marion's co-author nor an advisor on the film.

For several days we held conferences and consultations. About politics—careful!—never a word was mentioned.

The fundamental theme and plot of the picture was invented prior to my arrival, and Frances Marion had already completed the preliminary synopsis which I was supposed to alter so that it corresponded with truth.

". . . A handsome dark man entered the director's office. . . ."

The plot was worked out by Miss Frances Charskaya in accordance with American-Hollywood precepts. The hero—an American engineer, Morgan. The heroine—an enchanting Tanya. The villain—the G.P.U. The comic relief—Nicolai, a construction manager, a worker by origin, a hero of the Pyatiletka and a Communist. The action takes place in the U.S.S.R. Morgan is on his way to the Soviet Union to work there "in order to study the great principles of economic planning and ultimately apply them in his own country" (copied verbatim). Tanya ("a stunning brunette") is being deported from the United States because she is a communist and was the leader of a strike in America. Tanya and Morgan are separated by class hatred—but "their eyes meet and unknown to themselves, they are madly in love with each other" (copied verbatim). They are sailing on the same boat, different classes, of course. As they pass the Statue of Liberty, Tanya, on the lower deck, curses America while Morgan, on the top deck, hums the American anthem. Their eyes meet again. And so on. Immediately after crossing the Soviet border, miracles begin to happen. Morgan is shadowed by a spy (who, as it later develops, is the husband of Tanya's sister—the latter on the verge of death due to tuberculosis and her husband's infidelities. This spy and faithless husband falls in love with Tanya. He, of course, is a secret member of the Cheka. Besides this secret Chekist, there are countless undisguised Chekists, black-bearded, attired in felt boots, carrying bombs—their eyes as "wild as smouldering coals." The undisguised Checkists openly molest professors and separate them from their wives, who die there and then. Similar miracles take place in Moscow. Skyscrapers are being erected there "taller than those in New York" (copied verbatim). Morgan is working on the construction of a steel plant—"the largest in the world." The director of the construction is Nicolai (the role to be played by comedian so-and-so), a communist, a hero of the Five-Year Plan, a former American worker, once employed in the same American plant with Morgan (though Morgan is only 22 years of age). Tanya takes her dying sister to the country, a village near the construction works. The village consists of large cottages decorated with Ukrainian towels (though it is located in the Urals) and mountains of butter and eggs which are being consumed by prosperous peasants. One revolutionary morning tanks arrive in the village and completely annihilate the entire butter and egg hamlet, in order to "erect" a *kolkhoz* on its ruins. The beard of the village priest is amputated. Communist Tanya is very indignant. In the meantime, the secret Chekist spy and villain has fallen in love with Tanya. He tries to prove to her that bigamy is not a vice, that under real communism each man will have 20 wives and that Tanya, as a devout communist, should immediately give herself to him. Ere long, surmising that Tanya cares for Morgan, the villain decides to wreak vengeance on him. By now Tanya is heading a mutiny of the peasants started by her and the beardless priest. She and Morgan are menaced by the G.P.U., but neither of them are aware of it. They are warned by Nicolai, the red director and communist, who advises them to flee from the U.S.S.R. They heed his advice and set off, pursued by the G.P.U.—The spectators are supposed to hold their breath in excitement—will they be overtaken? will they escape safely? (exactly like in the Indian pictures). They, of course do succeed in getting away. When their ship passes the Statue of Liberty, the charming Tanya greets it joyfully and Morgan sings the American national anthem. At this point, Tanya, in true American fashion, places her hand in Morgan's, symbolizing the surrender of her heart, soul, body et cetera—the only thing that is lacking is the American flag!

When the synopsis was read to me and my opinion solicited, I candidly replied that it was pure nonsense. This statement, to my surprise, aroused no protestations. Nor did it seem to offend any one. Politics—careful!—we avoided—"pure art, don't you know!" Nevertheless, I delivered a lecture on the rudiments of politics which lasted for hours. Everyone seemed to agree with me very readily. I explained that if there

must be a villain, let us take counter-revolutionaries. I spoke to them about the sabotageurs, the wreckers, and about Ramsin's trial.

Thalberg asked me to repeat again what sabotage meant. He listened to me, then said:

"O.K. Let sabotage be the villain instead of the G.P.U."

I spoke about the *kolkhoz* movement. Thalberg listened attentively.

"Very well," he said, "we will cut out the peasants' uprising but you will have to think up something just as exciting to take its place!"

I further went on to explain that an American would not have to run away from the U.S.S.R.—if he did he would be a fool—and a fool cannot be a hero—besides, there never was a case of an American engineer fleeing from the Soviet Union.

"But we must have some sort of an escape or flight," Thalberg insisted. "It is necessary in order to create suspense. Think up some way to make a chase plausible: it has a special appeal for American spectators."

I replied that it was possible to show on the screen an orange grove blooming in Greenland, but then Greenland would no longer be Greenland, but Hollywood. Besides, I maintained, what was the point of paying me for advice on a Russian film, if my knowledge of conditions in my country was disregarded for the sake of the alleged expectations of American movie fans?

"Of course," Thalberg replied, "we want the picture to be pro-Soviet and for that reason we engaged you as our Bolshevik 'advisor.' Yet, it is absolutely essential to have some sort of 'chase' in it."

I must admit that I was anxious to work on that film, for I realized the influence of the cinema in America—and if the picture could be made at least 75 per cent truthful, it would be a tremendous gain. Upon my arrival in Hollywood I immediately outlined my program to the directors. It was very simple. I told them that I would be willing to collaborate on the production of the picture only if historical accuracy were preserved—the U.S.S.R. is building socialism, U.S.S.R. is being guided by the Communist Party—these are historical facts, and perspectives derived from these facts. "Go right ahead, it is perfectly O.K. with us," I was told. I soon appreciated, especially after reading the synopsis, that most things in Hollywood are motivated by stupidity rather than politics—moreover, it was quite an easy matter for me to rescue the G.P.U. from the villainous role assigned to it and to discard the equally stupid *kolkhoz* uprising.

Two sleepless Hollywood nights, Joe Freeman and I spent trying to think of some logical "flight" or "chase" to fit into the film—nothing could be done with Morgan. We decided to make Tanya "flee" and Morgan follow her because of his love for her. Tanya we expelled from the Communist Party. Then we proceeded with other combinations and new situations—that Tanya had never been in America before—that she was merely a former Russian *burzhuyka* working as an interpreter. Then we switched back again to the original idea that she had been to America. Nothing plausible could be made of it all. Nor could we do anything with Nicolai, as it was impossible to conceive of a situation where a Communist Party member would be an accomplice in a counter-revolutionary plot. It literally amounted to decorating Greenland with oranges-groves.

"Yes," they told me, "but don't you see, we are planning to produce a pro-Soviet film?"

"That is precisely the reason that I spent two sleepless nights," I replied.

A pro-Soviet film, it was explained to me, meant that the Bolsheviks may do anything they please, even build socialism. "We grant you all that. We are willing to accede the greatness of the Five-Year Plan and accept the accomplishments of the colossal industrial construction that is taking place in your country. We are for the recognition of the Soviet Government and the resumption of diplomatic relations, be-

cause we deem it profitable to trade with the Bolsheviks. But that which the Bolsheviks are doing is unacceptable to Americans. The film must show that even American communists cannot live under Bolshevism. Bolshevism may be O.K. for Russia but it will not do for America. All this must be shown in the film that we are producing."

I was reminded of all the privileges bestowed upon me: that I could go to any expense in subscribing for any books or service that I need, that no restrictions would be placed upon my writings as long as they were adaptible to the cinema and were purely artistic. "It is possible that you will not budge a half of one per cent in the interpretation of history?" they inquired in amazement.

"Yes," I replied, "I am not a traitor."

"How naive!" said Al Lewin, quite seriously. "For us Americans to fake history or do the government out of something is considered good business."

Sergei Eisenstein, who was invited to Hollywood by Paramount, offered to produce a picture based on the fate of California's first settler. The suggestion was rejected. He then offered to direct the screen version of Theodore Dreisers *An American Tragedy* which he had worked out with Dreiser. Eisenstein's contract, however, was curtailed, and so curtailed that he was compelled to leave the territory of the United States within 24 hours.

There are many cinema plots in America!

Translated from the Russian by I. D. W. Talmadge

M. Ilyin

The Story of a Great Plan

1. Work and People

Who is it that is making the world over again?

Human labor is creating labor afresh under our very eyes. Man is dividing continents by canals, digging new river beds, making tunnels through mountains, planting forests, creating new raw materials and new kinds of plants and animals.

Mankind has something to be proud of.

But is this really so? Are people really always proud of their handiwork? Take for instance a country like the United States. It was the United States that made the Panama Canal and divided America into North and South. The greatest factory in the world - the Gary Metal Works—is to be found in the United States. It is in the United States that automobiles are turned out by the thousand every day, just as pins are turned out by the paper and pencils by the gross. Let us visit any American plant. Look at the workers - there they are, the conquerors of nature. They work in silence, not exchanging so much as a word or a smile with their neighbors.

"We have scarcely any personal communication. People do what they have to do and go home—a factory is not a drawing room."

Thus Henry Ford American automobile magnate.

Are Ford's workers proud of turning out thousands of automobiles and tractors every day? After all, every automobile is speed created by human effort.

I have not spoken to any of Ford's workers, but I don't believe they're proud of their handiwork. How could they be? They are the servants not the masters, they are nothing but the docile exponents of another's will.

A Ford worker has no idea what is going on in the neighboring work-shop, and if he asks he is not told. He does not know the plans of the administration, why some lathes are substituted for others, why he is called upon to do this today, that tomorrow. He does not even know what is going on at the other end of the work-shop. He has no time to go and see. He's been given his work and this job demands his whole time and attention.

2. Working Hards and Working Heads

The expression "hands"' was invented by the bosses. For them a worker is nothing but a pair of hands. It is as if horses were called "feet". For the boss the principal thing in a worker is his hands, and his ten fingers, not his head or his brain. The industrialist does not need the worker's head, or scarcely needs it.

"Most of our workers have never been to technical school. They learn their work in a few hours or in a few days."

Henry Ford again.

A man with a brain and the power to think and reason, is forced to do a task that scarcely requires learning, that could be done by a weak-minded person or an idiot.

"As a result of investigations into the basic laws of assembling machinery, it has been found possible to reduce the demands made upon the mental capacity of the worker."

That sounds very scientific. In simpler language: "Under the new regulations for assembling machinery, stupid and slow-witted workers may be employed."

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* This chapter which appeared in the original version published in the Soviet Union, was omitted from the American edition of the book published under the title of *Soviet Russia's Primer.*

Further we read: "Whenever possible the worker performs one and the same task with one and the same movement. One of the least exacting functions in our works consists in a man picking up a piece of apparatus with a steel hook, dipping it into a barrel of oil and placing into a basket at his side. The movements are always identical. He always finds the apparatus in the same place, always the same number of rotations in the oil, and replaces the machinery in the same place. For this neither muscular strength nor intelligence is required. All he has to do is to make gentle backward and forward movements of his hands.

Do the workers like this system?

"We had one worker who had to make a single movement of his foot day after day. He was convinced that this movement made him one-sided, although medical investigations showed that this was not so. He was of course given other work, in which another group of muscles was employed."

We read in an American paper: "The most valuable person in a work-shop containing automatic machinery, is the man without imagination, the man whose development is under the average."

It might have been thought that automatic machines were invented not in order to make automatons of men, but in order that man should work less with his hands and more with his head. Every inventor believes that the machine he has invented will free mankind from yet another onerous and tedious process of labor. Onerous and tedious labor is to be transferred from man to the machine.

That's how it ought to be. But in America the opposite has come to pass. In a work-shop with automatic machinery man himself becomes an automaton. Instead of freeing mankind from onerous labor it makes the labor still more onerous.

3. The Dead Against the Living

Ultimately man becomes one of the machines in an American factory. Some machines are animate, some are inanimate. And very often the inanimate steals the work from the animate. Every new machine, every new invention throws thousands of workers on the streets. One man in a glass works can make three thousand bottles an hour. Formerly this used to employ 77 persons. This means that every bottle making machine puts 76 human beings out of work.

The dead are squeezing out the living. The dead are fighting the living.

"Machines are increasing and multiplying, there are more and more of them. We have nourished them ourselves, and now they are hemming us in like wild and dangerous beasts, and we are in their power."

After this, could a living machine, a living automaton, love his work? Would you undertake such work if it is offered you—the work of a docile tool, the work of an instrument in another's hand? I know what you will answer. Such work can only be hated.

4. Why Do They Go On Working Then?

Why then do these American workers go on working, if they hate their work and if it is work that nobody could help hating? Why don't they leave the factories?

Some of them do, and become tramps, thieves, bandits, burglars. It sometimes happens that these thieves and bandits, uniting in a powerful band, terrorize whole towns, great big towns like Chicago.

But there are not so many of these.

What about the rest?

The rest fear nothing in the world so much as losing the work they detest. To be without work means to be without lodging, without fuel, without food. To be without work means to spend the night on a bench in a square, or on the steps of the embankment, to

pace the town all day looking for a job and to get the same reply wherever you go: "No work".

Better the dullest, most intolerable work than unemployment.

There are people who do not fear unemployment. These are people with plenty of money. Such people can get on without working. They don't have to work. They are free from the penalty of hard labor . And so they are envied.

Ask bank clerks or a shop-walker what is his fondest dream. Nine out of ten will reply: "to get rich and live without working". In the schools they teach children that "idleness is a sin." But if the teacher himself comes into money, do you think he will go on working in the school? Not he! He will throw aside like so much rubbish his school-books and equipment and live at his leisure. Not long ago I read a novel by W. G. Locke on this very subject. The hero had not the slightest intention of going on teaching after he came into money.

Thousands of human beings work only in order to be able to live without working.

If one has money one can become the owner or owners of a factory, a railway, a business- concern, and make others work for one, without working oneself. And therefore it is that people fight each other so bitterly for money.

5. Each Against Each

In order to get as much money as possible the industrialist endeavours to pay those who work for him as little as possible. But there are many more workers than there are industrialists. Who is the principal consumer of goods? Those who work in factories and shops, on railways and farms. And the less money they get for their labor, the less goods they are able to buy.

And so it comes about that superfluous goods are accumulated, and there is nobody to buy them.

Those who have plenty of money try to think up all sorts of ways to make those who have less spend their money.

Articles headed "Eat more meat!" appear in the papers. These are the butchers trying to sell their meat. Another paper urges its readers: "Eat more bread!" Yet another says: "Drink more milk!"

People who cannot afford to buy a penny roll are advised to eat three.

"Buy bicycles!"

"Buy fountain pens!"

"Buy nickel bedsteads!"

The game grows more and more exciting. Its aim is to get at the consumer's purse. He only has one, and there are many candidates for it. If a man buys pencils he can't afford to buy a fountain pen. If he buys a fountain pen he won't need so many pencils. And so the makers of fountain pens become the sworn foes of those who make pencils.

It is not only fountain pens and pencils that fight; shoes fight boots, boots, bicycles, bicycles, automobiles, automobiles, railways.

"Walk more, build up your health!" shriek the boot-makers.

"Don't waste your time and health on walking, buy a bicycle!" urge the cycle-makers.

Defensive and offensive unions spring up. Oil fights coal, wood fights metal, agriculture fights industry, the country fights the town.

Everybody is against everybody else.

And the game becomes fiercer and more pointless every day.

6. The Clock And Its Mainspring

What is this fierce and foolish game, this war of all against all, called?

It is called: "Free competition".

By no means everybody thinks it is a stupid game. Those who win it don't think it is stupid. Ask them. They will prove to you that it would be impossible to live without free competition, without "personal interest". By "personal interest" they mean the greed for profits, for getting rich quickly. In their opinion that is all people work for, just to be able not to work. Without this bait, they say, nobody would work.

Would the director of a trust who did not himself get any profits, work as hard as one who did? Would anyone want to work on inventions if they did not enrich the inventor? Would people improve their businesses, and think and worry about them, if they had no "personal interest", if there were no gamble in the game? Everything would fall to pieces and come to a standstill. Free competition and the desire for profits are the main-spring. Take this spring out of the clock and it will stop.

That is what those who profit by free competition say.

Is it true?

In our country we have neither free competition nor war between industrial magnates, our work goes on according to a common plan. In our country socialism is being built up, an order to which there can be no profits, and under which money in the present sense will not be necessary.

We have taken out the old main-spring - the main-spring of private profit.

But is there no other spring? Can people be inspired by nothing but the hope of profit? Is there no other game but that of the business man and shop-keepers?

The Five-Year Plan imposes huge tasks upon the whole country. The spirit of emulation, interest in work, are essential if these tasks are to be fulfilled. Unless they are interested in work nothing will come of it.

For we have got to do in four years what other countries would need fifty years to do. A spirit of emulation such as has never before been known anywhere is required.

Coal is not enough, oil is not enough to fulfil the plan.As well as these another power is required, the most precious of all—the power of the human will, the unbending will to carry the work out to the end.

Do we possess this power? And if we do how are we to direct it, so that it is not wasted?

7. *The Worker As Automaton Or Master*

Many of our new factories are like the Ford Plant at Detroit. Ford has conveyors and we have conveyors, Ford has molding-machinery and we have molding-machinery, Ford has Blooming apparatus and we have Blooming apparatus. But in the Ford plant the worker does not know what is going on on the other side of the wall, in the next shop. In the Ford plant the worker dare not argue, he must submit. And in our factories the workers go and look at everything, they speak about everything, they investigate, They investigate and discuss instructions, they organize meetings.

What does all this mean?

It means that in the Ford plant, Ford is the master, and in our plants the worker is.

And the master cannot be indifferent to the way work goes on in his factory. The worker in a socialist factory also has his "personal interest"; he is interested not in profits and personal gain, but in building up a new and better life for himself and for other workers.

The worker is master, and the master reckons every penny himself, so that the industry shall have the lowest possible running costs, the biggest possible profits and turn out the best quality goods. And so one shop after another, one brigade after another is going over to the new form of work from the point of view of the owner. Every workers' section, every shop, brigade and work-shop has its own plan, its own calculations, its own funds and responsibility. The workers know that if by good work they save a thousand rubles in a month this money will not go into the boss's pocket. This thousand

rubles will go towards the improvement of the factory, or in premiums for the best shock-worker, or to the factory club, the factory library. To emerge from dirt and poverty, to shift onerous and monotonous work to the machine, to become a veritable master of nature—such are the interests of our workers.

It is difficult to turn the steering wheel of history, but with able handling it can be turned. And it is this desire to turn the course of history, to remake the world that provides the power we require—the power of the human will.

But to desire is not enough; we have got to know how to make use of this desire. The worker is not only the master of the factory—he is the worker of the whole country too. But what is he to do in order to become the master of the country in deeds and not merely in words? How is he, standing at his bench, in his corner of the work-shop, to keep the eye of a master on the whole factory, on all factories?

Perhaps you think this is a dream, or some impossible Utopia?

Visit the factories which have already fulfilled the Five-Year Plan in two-and-a-half years. Visit the Baku and Grozny oil fields, and ask the workers how they did it?

They will tell you of shock-brigades, of the plan to meet the Plan, of socialist competition, of technical study brigades. And as you talk to them you can judge whether a worker can be the real master in a factory, the master in the country.

8. *Competition Between Work-Shops And Factories*

Shock-brigade, technical study brigade, socialist competition, plan to meet the Plan—what do these words mean?

They are not to be found in dictionaries, they have not got there yet. Work is going on in our country on new lines. As well as constructing new factories we are constructing a new life within these factories. And new conditions require a new vocabulary.

Every one of our workers is a master. That is new. And since the worker is a master he cannot be merely the fulfiller of the orders of others, he wants to work with his eyes open. And so the workers call industrial conferences and discuss industrial questions. That's new too, that's not to be found anywhere else either.

The workers organize shock-brigades so as to get more work done, to rope in the backward and to help them, and show an example to others. That's new too. You won't find that in Ford's plant.

The worker is beginning to acquire a new attitude to work—the attitude of a master. If one shop comes to a standstill the workers in the neighboring shop don't say: "What's that to us?" For if the foundry doesn't produce the pig-iron, the mechanical section comes to a standstill and if the mechanical section doesn't give out its machine parts the assembly shop can't carry on, and then the whole plant comes to a standstill. And if one plant comes to a standstill many others do too. Take the Nizhni-Novgorod automobile works. It gets steel for springs from the Zlatoustov works, carionated steel from Mariupolsk and the "Sickle and Hammer" works, steel plates from Mariupolsk and Lissbensk, bolts and nuts from the "Red Etna," tires from the Rubber Trust Works, lamps from the "Red October" Works, artificial leather from the Kineshma works. If a single one of these factories lets it down, the Nizhni-Novgorod Works can't carry on. Every factory depends upon a dozen others, so that it is not enough to raise output, to improve the work of one's brigade, one's own work-shop. All brigades, all work-shops, all factories have got to work well.

And so brigade challenges brigade, work-shop, work-shop, factory, factory.

"Free competition," this is the mainspring of capitalist industry.

"Socialist competition," this is the mainspring of socialist industry.

Here also factory competes with factory, wood with metal, oil with coal. But the rules of the game are quite different. In other countries one factory tries to ruin another, oil tries to supercede coal, timber magnates rejoice in the failures of the metal magnates.

Things are quite different in a socialist country. When there is a failure in one factory, another sends its best workers to pilot them through their troubled waters. When coal is in a bad way, oil helps it out. The Stalingrad tractor works fell behind. Its workers and foremen were inexperienced. Every day expensive imported machinery was put out of action. One day the works produced fifty tractors, the next day not one. The conveyor remained motionless for hours. Then the workers in the "Red Putilov" works challenged the Stalingrad workers to competition. But this was not all they did. They sent experienced engineers and workers to the help of the Stalingrad workers. The whole country followed the course of the competition between the two factories. And now, as I am writing these words, the Stalingrad workers have already caught up with the Putilov workers and are forging steadily ahead.

"To destroy those who fall out of step!" is the principal rule of the game called free competition.

"To help those who fall out of step!" is the principal rule of the game called socialist competition.

The American worker is the slave of the machine. The Soviet worker is the master of the machine. And he is master of the whole country, not only of the machine. When he is given a plan of work, he cannot accept it blindly. He examines it and if he finds anything wrong with it, thinks it could be made bigger and better, he draws up a counter-plan and sends it to the place where plans are drawn up. But technical knowledge is required if industry is to be improved and plans drawn up. And so factories become technical schools and black-boards may be seen among the lathes. The worker is the master of the machine and he wants to understand it.

Nobody could help being interested in such work. Instead of being a heavy burden, work becomes "an affair of honor, of glory, an affair of brilliance and heroism." For the Soviet worker sees in front of him the vast machine of the country, as well as his own little lathe. He knows that he is the master of this immensity. He feels like a giant, he's proud of his work and his achievements.

Every day the papers give the names of worker-heroes. Here is Hineiko, the best shock-worker in the Stalin factory-college. "On August 1st, 1930," writes *Pravda,* "the plates on the rotator of a 24,000 kw. turbine were under the direction of Hineiko. While putting the plates in place on the shaft Hineiko noticed some dust on the cylinder which might have lowered its efficiency. He tried to brush it off with a rapid movement of his hand, but was too late, and his fingers were squeezed between two plates. To save Hineiko's hand the cylinder shaft would have had to be spoiled. Hineiko would not allow this to be done. In order to remove the plate carefully, without spoiling the shaft, he proposed that the shaft should be heated. Hineiko's hand, crushed to the bone, all the time lay between the two plates,and the pain grew still greater when the shaft was heated. This cost Hineiko two fingers, but the rotator was saved and the turbine was ready in time.

Then there was Timofeyev, foreman of the same factory. During a very important stage in the making of a turbine—the testing—Timofeyev remained at his post for days on end. During the testing of a 24,000 kw. turbine, Timofeyev's face and hands were scalded by steam let out through a careless turn of the regulator. The doctor bandaged him and told him to go home. Timofeyev absolutely refused to do this till the testing was over.

Again there was Gromov, carpenter and brigade-leader, one of those who helped to build up the Bereznikov Chemical Combine.

Gromov and his brigade undertook to roof the compressor section, at a height of 25 meters, in the winter, with a temperature of 46 degrees below zero, when all other brigades had given it up as hopeless. The work was done in time.

It is by people like this that the world is being made over again.

Translated from the Russian by Ivy Litvinova

Romain Rolland

Misadventures of an Individualist in Paris

Fragment from an Unpublished Work

In order to prove that his individualism was capable of acting—that it was not branded with sterility—Marcel looked for groups with which to associate himself. Among the causes whose standards floated on the breeze (he could very well have dispensed with the standards, he distrusted banners; but people need "rags") there were three which should then and there have stirred Marcel's activity,—the cause of the independence of the Spirit, that of Peace, and that of Europe. They had been hounded and persecuted during the war. They had been, like the Republic of Forain, *"belle sous l'Empire."* But what remained of their bloom? Marcel, suspicious but curious, went to see. He found them in bad company. The fair ones, formerly friendless, were now numerously attended. Marcel forced himself to overcome the repugnance which he felt at the contact, the nearness, of these suitors of Penelope, adventurers young and old who had installed themselves in the bedchamber of the lady, if not in the bed, which enticed them less than the table. In the front row were the old professional politicians, whose spineless compliance always succeeded in gliding into the idealistic groups and impregnating them with their odor of doubtful fish. Rising from the ground on all sides were those mole-hills of International-ism of thought,—the Pen-Clubs and the Congresses of the Ink-pot, the Intellectual Co-operatives; and overtopping these hillocks, the "Permanent Committee of Arts and Letters of the League of Nations." There was no question of reaching these heights among the ranks of the Illustrious Ones. Even if the summit had not been (as it was) well guarded, it was sound asleep; the higher you rose, the less you did. The "Permanents" did nothing at all: they merely sat: their seats were so comfortable! But Marcel himself, had too long rested his rear end on his chair. He needed to justify his existence. He was consumed with the desire for action. It was below, in the plains, that he had the best chances of meeting the "doers." Some of these he did meet, who, in close ranks, bestirred themselves, noisily, in their journals and international banquets. But always on matters of their professional interests,—for the protection of their copyrights, their editions, their translations, their sales propaganda. We must not blame them. Their desire to be bought and read is quite legitimate: one must live! But our Marcel, less indulgent, did not see the necessity of that. He had no interest in idealism that "paid." Let who will think of the booty when the battle is over! But at this moment it was still raging. It is the dangers one should seek, not the profits. It did not take him long to see that this exclusive preoccupation acted like a brake on the actions of his associates. It forced them to so much circumspection that they accepted the world whole,—all of it, including the bludgeon on the backs of others and the surrender of liberties,—provided that the people, whose eyes were keen and professionally trained, were stricken with sudden blindness when it was a matter of seeing the social crimes of which the authors were the hosts with whom one dined, or rather, with whom one hoped to dine,—the French masters of power, the dispensers of "dough" and honors, the dictators provided with a good table. A very small number of writers—always the same ones—were sufficiently wanting in appetite to protest. But their protest—feeble and monotonous, to which Marcel joined his, awoke no echo; they repeated themselves each week, along with the crimes they signal-ized. One ended by no longer noticing them. Or the good public, bored, would say: "Again?"—and would cancel their subscriptions to the papers where the weather was always so bad.

Marcel himself was overcome by the boredom which emanated from these stormy protests unsupported with deeds. They even ended by being a subterfuge for the conscience, a side door through which you stole to avoid dangers of acting, or the painful confession of impotence. When he had signed a dozen of them, he lost heart and his impatient hand crushed his pen on the "M" of his signature. And he wrote, instead of his name, a foul word in five letters,—for manuring the field made sterile with protests.

He was not needed to cultivate the mushrooms of pacifism, which suddenly, in one night had sprung up out of the earth. Miraculous crop! Only yesterday, peace had been under the ban. To speak of it was treason. And today it had become the mode. And some of the doves of the Ark had travelled far! Some who, ten years before, had been crows of the battlefield croaking for the heads of pacifists who were a bit primature, unlicensed. If you voiced your astonishment at that, they would doubtless have replied that there is a time for everything; yesterday the war; today, the peace. Marcel, himself utterly without opportunism, could discern it in others a mile off, and he surveyed it with a wry smile, the sudden blustering of these strange "guardians of the peace." Whence came their orders? He did not have to search long. The peace which the State, the Church, the University, the Public Powers officially encouraged was a right thinking peace, the same that anointed the lips of the reverend gentlemen whom the great employers of labor had placed in their churches, built—like a porter's lodge—at the gate of their factories, opposite the bar and the brothel, to sanctify their exploitation, and to inculcate among the exploited, along with syphilis and alcoholism, christian resignation. The peace of the profits of peace—of the war of yesterday, of the war of tomorrow—all one and the same thing. The poor are not of the fraternity. They receive nothing: they are deceived. For profits, they get preachments: The God of the rich is ever ready to let fall on the hungry his manna of peace, idealism and love. Old Saviors of the Palais-Bourbon caught fish while they preached their garbled Sermons of the Mount: they enjoined the fish and the fishermen to love one another, the despoiled to be cheerful in the sacrifice of their goods in the noble cause of Peace. As to the preaching a similar sacrifice to those who fattened on the spoils, that was out of the question. These old Saviors had made the war. But enough of that. What's done is done. We can do better than that. Peace on earth to men of good will (the will is good when it leads to success!); and blessed be the established order of things.

It only remained to convince the vanquished of that. Still more rhetoric was needed. The idealism of the victor no longer sufficed. Each of the vanquished had his own idealism, and each in a different key: they did not harmonize. To resolve the dissonance it was necessary to play upon other strings: fear and common interests. In the nick of time, Pan-Europe had to come to restore harmony among the big fish; for it is they who set the tone. They are the masters of the stream; they saw the advantages of uniting to defend themselves against whatever threatens their prerogatives. The gigantic shadow of the Kremlin spreading over the plain of Europe was to them a bogey, which was artfully exploited by those past masters in the Pan-European game, the young and subtle aristocrat with the cold glance of a samurai, and the unfrocked Socialist, the old mystic of the Quai D'Orsay. They made haste to gather under their shepherd's crook, in the same pen, the flocks of the victors and of the vanquished, to save their wool from the common competitor, The Union of Proletarian States, seated in the saddle, one leg in Europe, the other in Asia, like a new Golden Horde threatening to straddle the world. Perhaps the world—or at any rate, those whose backs were already bent under the burden of a privileged class, would have asked nothing better than to change riders, or even to leap into the saddle behind the Golden Horde, if they had known that it was coming to help them regain what was their own. But that is what they must not know. They did not know it. One saw to that. The millions of wool bearers, of honest folk, well trained by a kept press, gathered timidly around their wool shearers and turned unfriendly faces towards those who would deliver them. When one knows how to play on the two strings of fear

and stupidity, the hearts of sheep can be changed into the hearts of lions. The engineers of Pan-Europe had no trouble in draining the shallow and stagnant waters of empty idealism, and they labored to assemble them for a Crusade of God and Dividends against the expropriatory materialism of Moscow. Princes of the Church, and barons of the forge, ministers, rabbis, and Fascists,—Christ, Krupp, and Creusot, all seemed to agree. And a Bernard the Hermit was not wanting. One of Marcel's former friends, the stout Adolph Chevalier, had become, among the followers of Briand at the League of Nations, one of the canopy-bearers of Pan-Europe. Of course, he was also an apostle of National Defense, of the *Nation Arme,* from the cradle to the grave, male and female, the whole herd together. His slightly vulgar countenance with the pout of a Robespierre and the expression of an old maid, with his carefully "artistic" shock of hair was continually looking out of the pages of the respectable press.

Translated from the French by Joke Rantz

Agnes Smedley

The Five Years

A Story of China

They were five friends. This means much in China—more than in any other land. Personal friendship between men has always been a bond second in strength only to loyalty to the family. These five friends were like the five fingers on one hand. For five years they had lived together and studied together in the Peking National University. Together they had entered the Chinese Communist Party, among the first in its ranks. As Communists they would have denied that in their friendship there was one element of the old personal loyalty of feudal China. They would have insisted that their friendship was based upon a common fight for a common goal—the emancipation of the Chinese workers and peasants and the establishment of a Communist society. Such was the basis of their friendship, they would have argued. Yet they came from the soil of China, and with their mother's milk they had drawn into their blood much that belongs to ancient China. As from earliest childhood they had listened to the wind through the trees, accepting it as natural, so from earliest childhood had they listened to the folk tales and folk songs of life and death loyalty between friends. This ancient personal loyalty remains as a remnant of the feudal past in the heart of many a Chinese Communist. When such friendship exists between men in the revolutionary movement, no bond can be stronger. Such was the friendship of the five friends.

Of the five, one was Wang I-ping son of a well-to-do peasant of Hopei Province in the north. He was a tall, haggard fellow with hair that stood straight up on his head and defied all combs, brushes,oils, or hats. The long gown he wore as a member of the student world and respectable class, flew like a battle flag when he walked. His arms were too long and his hands and feet too big for a member of the intelligentsia that has decorated Chinese society for centuries. His family tried in vain to make him look like a gentleman. Only years later when he sickened and slowly died he began to look like what foreigners sometimes call "a high class Chinaman."

His family failed to make of him a gentleman and it failed to make of him an obedient son who would become a professor or official and replenish their empty money jars. Since he had entered the University there had been one of the ever-recurring famines in the north, taxation had soared heavenward, the miscellaneous sur-taxes had become more than the taxes, officials had fleeced the people with still greater rapacity, and the military dictators that followed one another in succession, imposed on the land ever-new requisitions. Thus the land of Wang I-ping's family had rapidly shrunk from one hundred *mau,* cultivated by a dozen tenants, to fifty, cultivated by his father and two uncles. To add to their worries, Wang had refused to marry the rich girl chosen for him as wife,and he refused to devote himself to money-making. Then, to make the confusion of the family complete, he informed them that he intended to spend his life in the revolutionary movement. His words, such as "China," "the nation," "the masses" and above all free love by which he meant his right to choose his own wife, fell into their little world like bombs from an unknown enemy. Never had they heard of such insanity.

But Wang I-ping had studied history, and Chinese history is dynamite, especially for those who had lived through the years preceding 1926. For there had been massacres of Chinese workers and students by foreigners, there had been general strikes that had crippled the foreigners, there had been bombardments of defenceless Chinese cities, and a never-ending succession of humiliations of the Chinese people. Through these events had penetrated the message of liberation of the Russian Revolution and the challenge of a

new, free Communist society rising out of the ashes of oppression and despotism. Wang had studied history, and he had studied Marxism. And now he determined to apply his knowledge to the fabric of Chinese society.

The second friend was Kao Sin-tien, also a graduate of the University, like Wang a student of history, a northern man, and a Communist. The son of a landlord, it was clear from his appearance that he came from the gentry class. He was as tall as Wang, his hair obeyed oil and brush, his skin was fair and smooth, his long gowns fitted him both practically and theoretically, and he wore horn-rimmed spectacles like an American. While his friends never appeared with headgear, Kao always wore a foreign hat—straw in summer, felt in winter. Wang was given to silence, was hard and dry in manner, but tears came easily to Kao. When news would flash though China of new humiliations or new massacres, he would tremble in passionate fury and tears would stream from his eyes. In student protest demonstrations in Pekin, he was often so moved by passionate fury that he trembled and could not speak. But once, when the police had fired upon a demonstration, he was one of those who tried to demolish a brick wall to get weapons for fighting.

Kao had never known want in his life, but down to the day of his graduation he shared eagerly with his friends all that he had. He had their encouragement in his struggles with his family against marriage to a girl he had never seen. The struggle had entailed frequent journeys to his home, and had he not been an only son it would not have gone so easily with him. Finally, to settle the question, he married a girl student of his own choice in Peking and wrote his family that she was soon to bear a child. This was true. The girl was tall and beautiful, a delicate flower swaying on slender stem. She was one to whom love was life. Because Kao willed it, she became his wife without sanction of either his family or her own. Heavy with his child, she had been forced to leave school, but hours each day she spent bending over her books, Kao and his four friends her teachers. She was an intelligent girl, but when she turned her glowing face to her husband it became clear that it was he who was the revolution to her.

Shortly before the final semester came to an end, Kao sent his wife to his family. There she gave birth to a son. When a few weeks later he came to face his critics and still scandalized family, he said to them: "Here is a son to take my place. I am leaving you and your daughter-in-law is going with me. You have plenty of money and plenty of time to rear children. We have not."

The grandson was welcome in the family but this unheard of attitude and conduct of a son threw the family into confusion and rage. Still there was nothing else for them to do but accept. The frail, pallid girl had pressed her child to her trembling, but when she heard her husband's words and gazed into his black passionate eyes, she lay the child firmly in the arms of her mother-in-law and followed him.

The third of the five friends was Hu Chen-chun, a man six feet in height, a giant of a fellow, but shy and awkward. His face was open and honest and he was slow to speech and action. He was the son of a very poor peasant family of Shantung the last member of whom had died in a famine when he was a tiny child. Someone had left him on the steps of a missionary's home, and he had been brought up in a missionary orphanage. Two years after the first revolution against the Manchus, he had become a member of the Kuomintang and had taken part in the movement against a monarchist revival. When a youth of nineteen he had become a soldier. Five years later he had won a scholarship in a literary competition and was able to go to Peking to study. Now, at the age of thirty, he graduated from the Peking National University. Here he had studied political economy and sociology and had become a Communist. Not all the insidious arguments of the superstitions of Christianity could stand against the light of knowledge that he gained through a study of Marxian social science.

Hu was a man who inspired deep affection and respect in the hearts of his friends. To Kao he seemed to be the living embodiment of the honest, hard-toiling peasants of

the North. He was shy of women and had never married. At times Kao's wife teased him affectionately. "Why don't you look about and find a sweetheart?" she asked. "Let me introduce one of my friends to you?" Blushing like a girl, he would reply: "I? What shall I do with a girl? I would crush her if I touched her arm - a rough fellow like me! What girl wishes to know that she may be left a widow any minute?"

Together with his two friends, Kao and Wang, Hu was leaving for Canton, the revolutionary center in the south, and was under orders of his Party to join the northern military expedition.

Chung Hwa-shan, the fourth friend, was from Kiangsi Province in the south. He was the third son of a peasant and was a thin, ugly man of medium height, intelligent, nervous, critical. Under great difficulties his two elder brothers, one a small trader and one working on the land, had earned enough money for his studies. It had been his difficulties about money that had finally resulted in Kao forcing through a plan whereby the five friends pooled their money and shared it equally.

Chung had been married at the age of sixteen to an old-fashioned woman with bound feet, who regarded him as her lord and master. She, with their children, lived with his family in northwestern Kiangsi. A Communist like his friends, Chung would rather have joined them in going to Canton, but he knew that his duty to the revolution lay in Kiangsi. He was now returning home to find work as a teacher or as an official. There, in a province held by feudal militarists, he was to be one of those who would prepare the ground for the victory of the revolutionary army on its northward march. It was native ground to him. His dialect was that of the people, he knew every mountain range, and he knew the problems and needs of the masses of peasants and hand-workers. Of his old-fashioned wife he spoke little except to say that she was a good woman, ignorant it is true, but one who would remain loyal to him in his work. It would have been more interesting to have a modern woman comrade by his side, but he was a man who cared little for romantic love. And, after all, such women as his wife, were typical of the material from which the revolution would have to be made. He would take her with him in the struggle.

The last of the five friends was a man named Chang Mien-san, son of a poor scholar of Shanghai. In appearance he was a typical student. He dressed in long blue cotton gowns, soft heelless cotton shoes,glasses and a foreign hat. But he was more than a student. In Shanghai, the great industrial city and the heart of Far Eastern colonial reaction, he had been an organizer and teacher in night schools for factory workers; and he had been one of the organizers of labor unions. The struggle of hundreds of thousands of factory workers against the brutal slavery of their existence had drawn him into its vortex. From national consciousness he had been driven deeper into class consciousness. Every national humiliation of China at the hands of the foreign powers had fallen first on the backs of the workers, and every national or labor struggle had taught him direct lessons that his four comrades had learned chiefly from a distance. From nebulous talk of Socialism he had gone over to organized Communism. He was one of the first members of the Chinese Communist Party. In Peking he had learned the Russian language, and he was an indefatigable reader of every book he could find on Marxism. His corner of the room which he shared in common with Chung and Wang, was a mass of books and magazines in English, Russian and Chinese.

Chang was now returning to Shanghai as a Party and labor organizer. As Chung was to help prepare the ground in Kiangsi for the oncoming revolutionary army in the next year, so Chang was to be one of the many in Shanghai working toward the same end. And as Chung was to return to the camp of the enemy so was Chang returning to the camp of a double enemy- -the Chinese militarist puppet rulers of Shanghai, and the foreign imperialists whose gunboats protected themselves, their puppets, and held the hundreds of thousands of factory workers of Shanghai in brutalizing subjection.

The five friends graduated from the University at the same time and travelled to Shanghai on the same steamer. There they said farewell, their ten hands clasped together into a knotted fist, with the frail white hands of Kao's wife shyly placed upon them. They stood in silence and Kao's eyes glistened with tears of unexpressed emotion. Hu, the Shantung peasant, said: "What will have happened to China and to us after five years? We stand on the threshold of the revolution. Let us try to meet in five years—in June, five years from now. Then we will see what our destinies have been." To this they all promised.

Five years passed. This is what happened to the five friends:

The three who went to Canton, Wang I-ping, the son of the middle peasant of the north, Kao Sin-tien, the landlord's son, and Hu Chen-chun, the peasant from Shantung, all joined the revolutionary army in the same month of their arrival and marched with it to the Wuhan cities on the Yangtze, where for a time the national revolutionary government—such as it was called—was established. Wang I-ping became a member of the Peasant's Department of the Kuomintang in which the Communists and Kuomintang members for a time worked together. Kao Sin-tien, with his wife as his shadow, remained in the Political Department of one of the army divisions. A part of his work was to arrange weekly conferences of officers and soldiers, to discuss all the problems of the troops and all the problems of the revolution. In these meetings, ordinary privates had the same rights and privileges as the officers, and never a meeting passed without the class conflict emerging. The soldiers demanded that the revolutionary phrases under which the army marched should become a reality: they demanded public accounting of all funds; they asked why officers do not pay them their wages, why they speculated with their money, why the "squeezed" on the purchase of clothing and food supplies. The feudal militarists had always claimed this as a right, but the revolutionary army pretended to be fighting for new principles.

The officers had to reply in public to these questions or accusations. Swallowing their fury, they were repeatedly forced to surrender. The Political Department was to them a hateful thing. Communism! they declared among themselves. Communism in the army, Communism among the peasants, among the workers! The voice of Reaction was heard repeatedly.

Kao once said of his work at that time: "The Political Department was the father and mother of the common soldier. Never before in Chinese history had the soldier had human rights. He was a pariah, a tool of his officers, fertilizer for the fields. The revolution promised him human rights, and this is the reason he fought so bravely. Into our ears he poured all his troubles, complaints, sorrows. For the first time in our history, he fought for something else than money. Only when the counter-revolution began was he forced back into his old feudal mercenary role. Those who rebelled or complained were shot. The army was "purified!" Every soldier with a new idea of his rights as a human being was ferreted out and killed!"

Hu Chen-chun, the Shangtung peasant, remained in the army until it reached the Wuhan cities. Then he was sent by his Party into the northern provinces to organize the peasant in anticipation of the further northward march of the revolutionary forces. Of all the peasant organizers produced by the Chinese Communist Party, he was one of the foremost, and of those of the North, he stood in the front rank. When the counter-revolution began, he returned to Wuhan for instructions, but he was sent back to the North, now to organize on straight revolutionary lines. No longer should the Kuomingtang gain the support of the masses under Communist slogans. So Hu went into the North, and for a long period of time lost all trace of his friends.

It was with difficulty that the five friends maintained their personal contacts. Wang I-ping received but one letter from Chung Hwa-shan in northwestern Kiangsi. In this letter Chung wrote that he was alive and well and was doing his duty. After the counter-revolution began and peasants were massacred by the tens of thousands in the southern

provinces, Chung's name appeared twice in Kuomintang press reports: he was called a "Red bandit" leader. Then all trace of him disappeared. It seemed impossible that he had escaped death. He knew the addresses of the families of Wang and Kao, but no line had ever been sent them. Wang and Kao kept only the most formal contact with their families, but never had a line come from Chung.

From Chang Mien-san in Shanghai Wang had also heard once. It was a cautious, non-commital letter. This was enough for Wang to know what his friend was doing. After the counter-revolution began and Wang and Kao fled to Shanghai, they searched and found Chang. In his small house, furnished with the barest of human essentials, they took refuge. This little austere house henceforth became their center in China; from it they left for distant parts, to it they returned. Chang had married. His wife, a girl whose black eyes saw and understood everything, sat always in this house, admitting guests or speeding them on their way.

Chang related to his friends the details of the slaughter of workers of Shanghai that began in April, 1927. As the revolutionary army had approached the city, the workers had arisen, and with but few arms had fought and driven the old militarists from the city. When the southern army reached Shanghai, they found the city in the hands of the revolutionary workers, who welcomed them. Hating and fearing the workers, just as they hated and feared the peasants, and just as they hated the new ideas in the army, the officers demanded that the workers disarm and return to their old serfdom in the factories. The bankers of Shanghai, the leaders of the original gangs of the underworld, and the foreigners all supported the officers in this demand, all demanded that the workers be forced back into "their place." But the workers had gained new rights and they made new demands as to the conditions under which they would henceforth work.

The Reaction was turned loose upon them. This Reaction was the combined force of the criminal gangsters, the foreign police and detectives, and that part of the army that would obey their officers. Near to five thousand workers, badly armed, were slaughtered. Their trade unions were smashed. Struggling desperately, they, their wives, their little children, were stripped of the few rights they had gained. Back into their holes they were driven.

Chang had stood in the ranks of the workers. Now all revolutionary work was secret. He had never faltered; he was not faltering now.

Wang and Kao left Shanghai for Canton. Months later, after the crushing of the Canton Commune, they were back again in Chang's little house. But now Wang was gaunt and his face pallid. He walked slowly and laboriously. A wound in his shoulder healed slowly, and he coughed a dull, rotten cough. As his illness grew, he appeared less and less in public, but remained in his room writing hour upon hour. But as the weeks dragged one into the other, he worked less and less. Often he would lie outstretched on his hard board bed, his eyes dry and glistening. He thought of high dry mountains, but never did he speak. There were thousands like him in China, and tens of thousands in prison, slowly dying. His Party was without the money to send its members to the mountains. His life ebbed slowly.

In the fourth year from the time the five friends parted in Peking, Chang Mien-san was chosen by his Party to go to Hankow. First one whole Party executive committee of Hankow, and then the second, had been captured and exterminated. All members had been tortured and then beheaded in the public streets. The streets of Hankow resounded with the strains of the International and with slogans as men and women marched to their death. Only when their tongues were out did they go to their death in silence. Then, with blood dripping from their mouths, they were driven by bayonets and rifles through the streets, thrown to their knees, and their heads chopped off.

Into this city of terror Chang Mien-san was sent to help build up a new executive committee, to repair the revolutionary front. But before one week had passed, he was cap-

tured. A man with whom he had formerly worked in the Kuomintang, betrayed him. He was taken to military headquarters and offered money and power. Refusing, he was tied and his body lashed into a raw bleeding wound by thin bamboos. The bamboos whistled and screamed as they lashed through the air, and he sank beneath them, unconscious. Revived, he was asked again if he had "had enough," if he would betray his comrades. Refusing, detectives threw him to the earth, pinned him down with their knees, and forced a liquid of urine and feces through his nose. They filled his body with it. Refusing still to betray, he was dragged to the streets, driven forward by bayonets and rifle butts, thrown onto his knees and beheaded in the public streets. His head rolled into the dust, far from his body. The soldiers picked it up, balanced it on his prostrate body over the sex organs, and then laughed at their good joke. The corpse lay in the streets for days, along with other corpses—a warning to workers of the fate they might expect. The foreign press complained. Not at the killings. They complained because foreign ladies, on their way to the Race Course, often had to pass these bodies, and were shocked. The foreigners demanded that the executions take place further away, or that the bodies be removed after beheading. Foreigners whose cry was: "Kill the Communists!" afterwards said: "What barbarians these Chinese are—they kill their countrymen like savages!"

When Wang and Kao in the little house learned of the fate of their friend, they could not speak. Kao had long since passed beyond tears. Through the nights Chang's wife sat, staring before her. Wang, slowly dying, lay for days on his bed, without speaking, his face the pallor of death. At night soft shoes walked about the house, restlessly. Nobody slept. The house seemed to be listening, watching, sorrowing without end.

Before the fourth year had passed, a press dispatch from Tientsin bore the name of Hu Chen-chun as among the captured Communists in that city. He had been recognised and betrayed by a left-wing Kuomintang man who had known him in the Peking National University. There was no need to deny who or what he was. And he did not. Before the military tribunal he spoke, declaring that he was a Communist, and until he was killed he would remain one. He was a peasant, he had worked and would always work for their liberation from debased slavery as long as life was left in him. In the midst of his impassioned speech in defence of his convictions, he was seized and dragged from the courtroom. He was locked in a small iron cage in which he could neither lie down nor sit up. For three months he sat, crouched like an animal, rotting in his own filth, fed through the bars. The flesh fell from him, his hair grew and fell about him, his eyes became the eyes of a tortured animal. His Kuomintang captors determined to see how long he would be true to his convictions.

When Wang and Kao learned of Hu's arrest they began work for his rescue. Wang arose from his bed. His brush on the table lay idle. Through all that intricate labyrinth of feudal relation in China, the two friends began to work to save their friend and comrade. Night and day they sought out men who were personal friends of militarists or officials in the north. They explained, argued, requested, hour upon end. Trembling from exhaustion, Wang would travel from one city to the other, asking this or that man to intercede. All the possessions the friends possessed went into the pawnshop, and they borrowed where they could. For one thousand dollars they could bribe the jailer in Tientsin—but they did not have the thousand dollars. Their Party did not have the money. Tens of thousands of men like Hu were in prison.

The fifth year was drawing to its close when news came of Hu's fate. In the courtyard of the Tientsin prison was a post—a strangling post. To this Hu had been lashed and strangled to death.

Kao and his wife feared to tell Wang. This might hasten his end. Yet if they did not tell him, he would daily drag himself from his bed and make new efforts to save the friend he so dearly loved. So Kao told him. Wang listened, then tried to lift himself

from his bed. Before he could stand upright the blood began pouring from his mouth, and he sank to the floor, unconscious.

In the middle of the night he revived for a few minutes. The faces of his friends were blurred and flickered before his eyes like a flame in the wind. Kao's voice came to him across a void: "Rest, I-ping. The doctor says it is not so serious. In a few months you will recover."

Slowly, falteringly, the voice of Wang replied: "They . . . did not fear . . . . torture. Why should we. . . fear. . . . death." After a silence he spoke again: "You. . . . are the only one left. . . . you must. . . . do the work of. . . . five."

Kao held the bony hands firmly. The long, white bony fingers pressed his hand repeatedly as if signalling, then lay quiet, unmoving. The friends bent close—no breath came from Wang's lips. They listened at his chest—no flicker came from his heart. He died, quietly and secretly, as if to keep this, his last act, from the detectives that prowl the streets, watching, listening.

The fifth year ended. The sixth rolled on. Kao and his wife lived with Chang's wife in the silent little house. They came and went quietly and unobtrusively, their eyes scanning the streets in all directions as they emerged or entered. Reports had reached Shanghai of the founding of the Chinese Soviet Government in Southern Kiangsi. That was on November seventh. Over six hundred worker and peasant delegates had attended the first Soviet Congress. One night the three friends in the little house bent their black heads over a Party report of the first Congress. Eagerly and silently they read, sometimes gasping, exclaiming, then reading further. Then suddenly Kao's wife cried aloud: "Hwa-shan!" Her finger pointed to a name in the report. There it stood! "Chung Hwa-shan, delegate from a Soviet district in northwestern Kiangsi." The three looked at the name as if at the face of a man long-forgotten. There was no rejoicing—the name recalled to them the three comrades who were no more.

Thus the five years had passed. The sixth was nearing its close. The future shrouded the unknown fates of the two friends who remained.

The Road

A Story of Revolutionary Days

The front collapsed in 1917. I left it in November. At home mother made me a bundle of linen and rusks. I reached Kiev the day before Muraviev started bombing the town. I was bound for Petersburg. We spent 12 days in the cellar of Heim the Barber's hotel on the Bessarabka. I got a permit to leave the city from the Commandant of Soviet Kiev.

There is nothing drearier in the whole world than the railway station in Kiev. Temporary wooden structures have disfigured the approach to the town for many years. Lice crackled on the wet boards. Deserters, gypsies and *meshochniks** jostled about pell-mell. Old Galician women pissed as they stood on the platform. A low hanging sky furrowed with clouds was bursting with rain and gloom.

Three days passed before the first train left. At first it stopped every verst but afterwards it speeded up: the wheels clicked more merrily and sang a song of power. This made everybody happy in our cattle-truck. Fast travelling made us happy in 1918. During the night the train shuddered and came to a stop. The doors of the cattle truck parted and the green gleam of snow opened up before us. The car was entered by a station telegrapher, in a fur coat tightened by a belt, and soft Caucasian boots. The telegrapher stretched out his arm and rapped on the open palm with one finger.

"Fork out your papers. . . . . "

Near the door a quiet old woman lay huddled up on some bales. She was travelling to Luban, to her son,a railwayman. Next to me Judas Weinberg, a teacher and his wife sat dozing. The teacher had got married a few days before and was bringing his young bride to Petersburg. They whispered to each other about the Dalton Plan until they fell asleep. Even in sleep they were holding hands.

The telegrapher read their document signed by Lunacharsky, took out from under his fur coat a mauser with a dirty, narrow muzzle and shot the teacher in the face. A huge round-shouldered moujik in a fur hat with hanging flaps stood stamping his feet behind the telegrapher. The chief nodded to the moujik, who placed his lantern on the floor, unbuttoned the dead man's clothes, cut off his genitals with a knife and started stuffing them into his wife's mouth.

"You turned up your nose at *treif***," said the telegrapher. "Have some kosher."

The woman's soft neck bulged out. She said nothing. The train stood motionless in the steppe. Billowy snow sparkled an arctic glare. Jews were flung from the cars onto the road. The moujik led me behind a frosted pile of wood and started searching me. The dimming moon shone on us. A violet wall of forest gave off smoke. Stiff fingers frozen like sticks crept over by body. The telegrapher shouted from the train:

"Jew or Russian?"

"Some Russian!" muttered the moujik, rummaging me. "Could make a rabbi of him."

He drew his puckered-up, care-worn face near mine, ripped from my drawers the four ten rouble gold coins my mother had sewn in for the journey, removed my boots and overcoat, and after turning me face about, struck me across the neck, saying in Jewish:

*"Ankloif, Heim."****

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* Meshochniks—from meshok, a bag—pedlars who sold goods on the sly during the period of Military Communism.

** Treif—non-kosher.

*** Ankloif Heim—run off, Heim!

I set off, thrusting my bare feet in the snow. A target lit up on my back, the bull's eye passing through my spine. The moujik did not fire.

Amidst columns of pine, in the concealed undergrowth a light danced in a crown of blood-red smoke. I ran towards the lodge. The woodman moaned when I burst in. He was wrapped up in strips of cloth cut from overcoats, and sat in a velvet, cane armchair, rolling tobacco on his knees. The woodman, elongated by smoke, groaned and stood up. He bowed down to my waist.

"Go away, my good man. . . . ."

"Go away, my good citizen. . . . . "

He led me out to the footpath and gave me a piece of cloth to wind round my feet. I dragged myself into a small town late next morning. As it happened there was no doctor in the hospital to amputate my frozen feet. A *feldsher** was in charge of the ward. Every morning he flew up to the hospital on a small black colt which he tied to a tether, and came in beaming, a bright glitter in his eyes.

"Frederick Engels," *feldsher* bent down to the head of my bed, his coals of pupils lighting up, "Frederick Engels teaches the likes of you that nations ought not to exist, but we, on the contrary, say that the nation is obliged to exist."

Tearing the bandages from my feet, he would straighten himself and gnash his teeth, saying in a low voice:

"Where are they taking you. . . . .why is she ever on the move, that nation of yours? Why such disturbance and ructions?"

One night the Soviet took us away on a truck—patients who could harmonize with the *feldsher,* and old Jewish women in wigs, the mothers of local commissars.

My feet healed up. I set out on a sordid journey through Zhlabin, Orsha and Vitebsk. We traveled in a freight car. Fedyukha, a chance companion, who had followed the great path of a deserter, was raconteur, jester and buffon. We slept beneath the short but mighty, upturned muzzle of a howitzer, and made one another warm in our animal's lair of a canvas pit lined with hay. Later Lokhna Fedyukha stole my bag and disappeared. The town Soviet had given me the bag which contained two sets of soldier's underwear, a few rusks and some money.

After two days we drew near to Petersburg—we travelled without eating. I had my last dose of shooting at the Tsarkoe Selo Station. A military patrol greeted the train by firing in the air. *Meshochniks* were led out onto the platform and their clothes torn from them. At nine o'clock that evening the railway station, a howling den, flung me onto the Zagorodny Prospect. Across the street, on a wall, near a boarded-up pharmacy a thermometer registered 24 degrees below. The wind roared down the tube-like Gorokhovo Street; a gas lamp was swinging over the canal. This cold, basaltic Venice of the north stood motionless. When I turned down Gorokhovo Street, it looked like a frozen field stuck with rocks.

The Cheka was housed in Gorokhovo Street, 2, the former headquarters of the city governor. Two machine guns, two iron dogs, were posted in the vestibule, their muzzles high in the air. I showed the commandant a letter from Vania Kalugin, my non-commissioned officer in the Shuisky regiment. Kalugin had become an examining judge in the Cheka and had written asking me to come.

"Step along to Anichkov** the Commandant told me. "That's where he is now."

"I'll never reach it," I smiled in answer. Nevsky Prospect flowed into the distance like the Milky Way. The carcasses of horses marked it like milestones. The raised legs of the horses supported a sky fallen low. Their bellies showed white, and glittered. An old man resembling a guardsman went past pulling a toy sled. Exerting himself, he ham-

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* Feldsher—surgeon's assistant.

** A former royal palace in Petersburg.

mered into the ice with leather feet. He had a Tyrolese hat planted on the top of his head, and his beard, tied up in a string, was thrust into his scarf.

"I'll never reach it," I said to the old man. He stopped. His furrowed, leonine face was full of calm. He thought about himself and pulled the sled further.

"That means it's no longer necessary for me to conquer Petersburg," I thought to myself and tried to recall the name of the man trampled to death under the hoofs of Arabian horses at the very end of his journey. It was Jiehuda Helevy.

At the corner of Sadovaya Street stood two Chinese in bowlers with hunks of bread under their arms. They marked small portions on the bread with their chilly fingernails and showed them to approaching prostitutes. Women passed them by in a silent parade.

At Anichkov Bridge I seated myself on the pedestal of one of Klodt's* horses. My elbow screwed round behind my head; I stretched myself out on the polished slab but the granite struck me and burnt me, tossing and driving me on to the palace.

The door of the reddish wing was open. A blue lamp was shining above the footman asleep in an armchair. His lips were hanging on a wrinkled face, deathlike and inky. A tunic minus belt bathed in light hung over a pair of court trousers embroidered with gold lace. A shaggy ink arrow pointed the way to the commandant. I climbed the staircase and passed several empty, low rooms. Women, painted in dark and gloomy colors, were dancing in rings on the ceilings and walls. Metal lattices stretched across the windows, broken bolts hung on the frames. At a table at the end of the enfilade, sat Kalugin in an aureole of rustic straw-colored hair, illuminated as on the stage. Facing him on the table was a heap of children's toys, multi-colored rags, and torn picture books.

"So there you are," said Kalugin, raising his head. "You're needed here."

With my hand I moved to one side the toys scattered on the table, lay down on the shining board and. . . . woke up—some seconds or hours later—on a low sofa. Rays of light from the chandelier were playing over me in a glassy waterfall. My rags, cut from me, lay in a pool on the floor.

"Now for a bath," said Kalugin, who was standing near the sofa. He lifted me off and carried me to an old-fashioned bath with low sides. There was no running water. Kalugin poured water over me out of a pail. My things—a dressing gown with hasps, a shirt and a pair of socks of heavy silk—lay upon straw-colored satin cushions on wicker chairs without backs. The drawers came up to my head; the dressing-gown had been made for a giant—I trampled the sleeves under foot.

"What! Are you making a joke of Alexander Alexandrovich," said Kalugin, swinging out my sleeves. "The lad weighed about nine poods."

We managed somehow to tie up Alexander the Third's dressing gown and returned to the room we had left. It was Marie Fedorovna's** library, a scented box where gilded bookcases with crimson streaks pressed close to the walls.

I told Kalugin who had been killed in the Shuisky regiment, who had been elected commissar, and who had left for the Kuban. We then had tea: in the cut glass of the tumblers stars swam in a blur. After drinking them down, we took a few bites of black, mouldy horse sausage. Only the curtains—thick folds of feathery silk—separated us from the world.

A sunset in the ceiling was shining in broken rays: a stifling heat issued from the radiator.

"Let the worst come to the worst," said Kalugin, after we were through with the horseflesh. He went out somewhere and returned with two boxes—a present from Sultan Abdul Hamid to the Russian sovereign. One was made of zinc, the other was a box of

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* Baron Von Klodt—a well known sculptor.

** Alexander the Third's wife.

cigars tied with ribbons and paper insignia. "*A sa mejeste, l'Empereur the toutes les russies*—from your well-wishing cousin," was engraved on the zinc lid.

Marie Federovna's library was filled with the scent she had been accustomed to a quarter of a century before. Cigarettes twenty centimeters and as thick as a finger were wrapped up in rose-colored paper; I don't know whether anyone else in the world smoked such cigarettes besides the All-Russian autocrat, but I chose a cigar. Kalugin stared at me and smiled.

"Hang it all," he said, "maybe they're not counted. The servants have told me that Alexander the Third was an inveterate smoker. He was fond of tobacco, kvas and champagne. Look at the cheap earthenware ashtrays on the table there. His trousers, I am told, were always full of patches."

And sure enough, the dressing-gown I had been robed in was covered with grease and had often been mended.

We spent the rest of the night sorting Nicholas the Second's playthings, his drums and engines, his christening clothes and copybooks with their childish scribble. Snapshots of grand dukes who had died in infancy, locks of their hair, the diaries of Princess Dagmara, letters from her sister the queen of England, all breathing perfume and dust, crumbled away under our fingers. When the princess left for Russia, her girl friends—daughters of burgomasters and State Councillors—bidden her farewell in slanting laborious lines on the fly leaves of the New Testament and Lamartine. Queen Louisa, her mother, ruled over a small kingdom but took care that her children got on well in the world—she married one of her daughters to Edward the VIIth, Emperor of India and King of England; another she married into the Romanoff family; her son George became king of the Greeks. Princess Dagmara became Marie in Russia. The canals of Copenhagen and King Christian's chocolate sidewhiskers were now far awy. This little woman cunning as a fox, flung about in a palisade of handsome officers, giving birth to the last of the rulers, but her birth flowed into the vengeful implacable soil of a strange land.

Not till dawn could we tear ourselves away from this ancient and disastrous chronicle. Abdul Hamid's cigar was finished. In the morning Kalugin brought me along to the Cheka on Gorokhova Street 2. He had a talk with Yuritsky. I stood behind the hangings which fell to the floor in waves of cloth. Snatches of their conversation floated out to me.

"He's all right, he's one of ours. His father is a shopkeeper but the lad broke with him. He knows languages. . . ."

The Commissar for Internal Affairs of the Northern Provincial Commune wobbled out of his office. Behind his pince-nez tumbled out two flabby and swollen eyelids, burnt by insomnia.

I got a job as translator in the Foreign Department. I received a soldier's uniform and coupons for my meals. In a corner set apart for me in the hall of Peterburg's former City Governor headquarters I set to work translating the depositions of diplomats, incendiaries and spies.

Before a day had passed I had everything—clothes, food, work and comrades, true in friendship and death, the kind of comrades that can be found in no other country in the world besides ours.

Thus, thirteen years ago began my glorious life, brimful of thought and of joy.

Translated from the Russian by Padraic Breslin

Norman Macleod

Fishermen of San Pedro

On Terminal Island, San Pedro, California, we walked around Fish Harbour, the schooners masted against the sky the tuna boats unrigged the seines idle and every bait boat deserted with red flags flying.

In the background out at sea the Maryland, Tennessee and others: the monstrous naval projectiles of American Imperialism in the Pacific.

THE ONLY KNOWN SPECIES IS TUNA:

Body oblong, robust, with very slender caudal peduncles; head conic; mouth wide, with one series of small, conic teeth in the jaws and bands of minute villiform or sand-like teeth on the vomer and palatines; scales present, those of the pectoral region forming an obscure corselet.

NOBODY KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT TUNA FISH, said an unemployed Portugese fisherman.

Walking along the wharves, saw the cannery company buildings facing the waterfront; Van Camp, French Sardine Company, others and the fishermen thronging the docks, Italians, Portugese, Slavs, Japanese, Dalmatians.

In 1928 the fishermen got good prices (175 dollars a ton and on the open market as high as 200 dollars, 225 dollars.) Times were good and the crews made money exploded their wealth in whorehouses, dives, at the gambling hells or put it away in the sock. Saved up thousands of dollars. Times were good and couldn't have been better.

NOBODY KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT TUNA FISH said an unemployed Portugese fisherman.

The tuna fish pelagic and found in warm seas of the Pacific as far north as Monterey Bay, but in 1928 the albacore (the highest grade tuna) migrated to the shores of Japan: nobody knows anything about tuna fish.

Boats had to be larger, up to 125 tonnage, able to make a cruise of 6000 miles. The fishermen could no longer use miniature fishing smacks: bait boats were needed (the men, some of them, had saved up thousands of dollars. The capitalist canners said, Nick or Masao, Nick you are a good fellow how would you like to own a boat be your own captain sail on the high seas make money and bring back loaded your own cargoes of fish it is fine to be independent your own master think it over, Masaki, buy your own boat. Put in ten or twelve thousand dollars and we will loan you at interest seventy thousand and you can own the boat and pay off the mortgages in installments.

And Nick or Masao went back to his home on Terminal Island, sold his house and borrowed money, bought a bait boat from the company and set out to sea with a hand-picked crew of fishermen who had blown their savings on booze, carousing or sickness.

Van Camp gave the fishermen contracts: 120 dollars for yellow fin, 110 dollars for blue fin, and 90 dollars for skipjack. And then came the capitalist world crisis the lean years the depression the belly fastened to the vertebrae the epidermis plastered to the bone (on Fish Wharf a youngster said to me, came from Ohio times aint so bad I only been out of work three months being lucky Jesus but I aint hungry Christ I'd even join gobs if the sucking recruiters would have me maybe I'll get a break: say, so long youngster.)

And Van Camp forced the fishermen to break their own contract in favor of the company, take 100 dollars for yellow fin and out of that but two thirds pay, the rest to be held deferred until the first of January, 1932. Said if you don't break the contract and take 100 dollars, we'll foreclose the mortgages and take your boats away from you (they could foreclose at will payment could be called at a moment's notice) and refused to sort the tuna and gave the fishermen 67 dollars flat for skipjack (it all was skipjack because they didn't have time to sort it) and held back one third because they feared cutrate competition.

On January 1, 1932 the Van Camp company refused to pay 400,000 dollars owing to 5,000 fishermen. So the boat owner's associations (they owned 10,000 dollars in boats worth 80,000 dollars), the Southern California Japanese Fishermen's Association, the San Diego American Fishermen's Association, the Cooperative Fishermen's Association, went on strike. Even the crews were refused payment by the canners. They had no money they couldn't pay the rent on company houses and the company served notice upon them of impending eviction. The crews, organized into the Progressive Fishermen of San Pedro, went on strike.

Van Camp foreclosed the mortgage on the *White Star,* forcibly took possession of the boat and kicked out the captain, K. Casearo, from the pilot house (Nick, you are a good fellow why not own a boat and be your own master?) and shipped a crew of scabs and a professional strikebreak skipper.

On Fish Wharf we asked a fisherman from Australia, he was a red a comrade worker a revolutionist, what do you think of the strike? Hell, with those scissorbills nothing is possible. He said, when they lose their lousey ten thousand dollars in the boats which they'll never get anyway) then they will become aware of their class interests. A capitalist strike! The dumb bastards. Throw over the boats and let the companies run them. Who ever heard of a seaman going on board with a compass?

But the crews were workers striking for wages to stave off starvation, to feed their hungry children at home, to get the pay they had earned with the cold sweat of their bodies on bitter seas. They picketed the docks and the prosecuting attorney (looked like a gangster jaw hard set cigar and henchmen) walked through the line and away with the Sheriff's office. Laughed (did you hear him?) Hell, they have no guts. And a brick barrage of solid courage shut off the dock from the scabs and the *San Rafael,* a strikebreaking boat, could not make out to sea.

NOBODY KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT TUNA FISH said an unemployed Portugese fisherman.

Nobody knows anything about the depression, the capitalists say. And the Better America Federation of Los Angeles said, the problem of solving the difficulties of the depression has put wrinkles upon the brows of statesmen.

Nobody knows how to run capitalism in times of world economic crisis, the companies say. But the "boat owners" are losing their ships, they are realizing their proletarian alignments, and the crews have erected scarlet flags of revolution on the striking ships.

We'll show you how to run the republic, the strikers say. We will establish Soviets on your waterfronts and our comrades will run the interior.

The secretary of the fishermen's union, the Progressive Fishermen of San Pedro, stood on the corner of Sixth and Palo Verde in the business district and spread out the fingers of his hand fanwise and said, *LIKE THAT WE ARE NOTHING,* and clenched his fist into brass knuckles of strength and said, *LIKE THAT WE ARE POWER!*

Bela Illes

The rifle

From the Memoirs of a Hungarian Revolutionist

Walter Schmidt was almost six years old when I first met him. You can hardly imagine what a sour face his mother made when I guessed the boy's age as somewhere around four. She almost cried.

My poor guesswork arose from the fact that, like a damned fool, I had forgotten the world war. Or perhaps I should say I had forgotten the circumstances that—just as one year's war service for an officer counts as two year's ordinary service—in the growth of working class children two years equal one normal year at most. And even a normal year may be likened to the lean year of the bible. And whoever realizes this homely truth will also appreciate the fact that friend Walter's legs were pretty bandy.

"He'll grow out of that all right," said Frau Schmidt confidently. "And the dark patches under his eyes will soon go with better feeding."

It is true that the period of this better feeding had not yet arrived but there was every hope that it would come some time. You see, a fortnight ago Frau Schmidt had bought a young chicken and every day she took it for a walk on the Lerchenfelder-strasse. In descending and ascending the three flights which led to her dwelling, Frau Schmidt carried Hansl under her arm, for otherwise the exertion would have hindered the fattening process. Hansl was the name of this fowl which, in the form of chicken soup, chicken rissoles and other dishes, was to be the foundation of Walter's improved nourishment, when once it had grown big and fat; although so far the wicked Hansl had shown no inclination in this direction.

All this I had discovered in a period of three days, and it was fortunate that this was all the time it took; for on the fourth day a fever took me off my feet and held me down in the narrow iron bed which stood in the windowless damp room next to the kitchen of the Schmidt family. My bad lung was once more making itself felt. At that time I was selling newspapers on the streets and from time to time, forgetting the severe cold, I used to yell the contents of my wares, in the hope of yelling myself into a winter overcoat. The result of these efforts was that, after each fit of coughing which followed, there would be an unusually warm sensation in my mouth; and when I wiped my lips with my hand a red stain would come upon its back.

Walter's father, Peter Schmidt, was a metal worker, a machinist. At this period—I am writing of November, 1919—the factory where he had been working had to curtail production, so that he fell out of work; and this not so long after his return home from an Italian camp for prisoners of war. From morning till night he went around looking for work. And, of course, in vain. Frau Schmidt was a little luckier. She spent only half the day looking for work; the other half she was engaged in repairing clothing. It was left to Walter to look after me.

Even by day a kerosene lamp lit my room. In the lamplight Walter's thin little face seemed even paler. His long scanty fair hair shone a little in this poor light.

"May I change your cold compress now?"

The handkerchief, dipped in fresh cold water and laid upon my forehead, gave me a little new strength. Only my eyes burned and I breathed with difficulty, but otherwise—after each fresh compress I was convinced I would soon be again upon my feet.

"Give me a glass of water, Walter—good clear water!"

"You musn't drink cold water. Mama said you musn't."

"Then give me some tepid water."

"Yes, I'll give you some of that."

With much effort I managed to raise my head and Walter held the glass to my mouth. The lukewarm water seemed ice-cold to me. Its coldness ran through my hot body—another proof that I would soon be well. In a couple of weeks—in a couple of days even—I would recover. I would make myself recover—a bolshevik does not give in to a wretched hemorrhage. . . . I shall soon be strong again. . . . I shall be very strong. . . . Soviet Hungary. . . . Red Army. . . . I shall be very strong. . . . Lenin. . . . If only once more. . . . Bela Kun. . . . If we could only get power once more! Wait, bourgeois, wait! Red Army boys, forward, forward!

I believe I must have thought out loud and that my thoughts were not particularly soothing. For when my glance fell upon Walter I saw that his face was white as the ceiling and that heavy tears ran down his old childish face.

"What's the matter, Walter? Why are you crying?"

"I'm afraid."

"Afraid of what?"

"Afraid of blood—and of that gun."

"What gun?"

"The one about which you've been speaking."

"I? Did I speak about a gun?"

Walter just nodded his head.

We remained for a while without speaking until a new compress upon my head gave me new strength and hope.

It was difficult to realize it, but that cursed hemorrhage seemed stronger than I and the fever would not let me out of its clutch. After a week in my sick-bed, a Hungarian doctor came to see me—a poor emigrant communist like myself—and he was by no means pleased with my quarters. He ran around until he had secured me a bed in the Viennese municipal hospital. I lay sick there for six weeks but then the fever disappeared and I was allowed to leave; and received my light grey summer suit back from the hospital store. My comrades, the poor brave hungry devils, collected some money for a winter overcoat for me. That was rather foolish, I thought to myself. It would have been better had they bought the coat themselves and brought it to me instead of the money. Once I was upon the street, however, I realized that my judgment had been superficial. The comrades had plenty of good will but only a little money and with the sum they had collected one could not buy even the shabbiest and cheapest overcoat. So I had to give up the idea. But at any rate I could now buy a number of little necessities of which I had long been in want.

While making my purchases I remembered little Walter and bought a toy gun for him. While climbing the stairs I already regretted this; it would have been more sensible to have bought him half a pound of ham or some other sort of nourishing food.

I found the Schmidt family in the kitchen. All three were busy around Hansl's sick-bed. The noble bird had eaten something which had hurt its stomach; or perhaps it had caught cold—that also would not be impossible. . . . But at any rate Hansl drooped and wearied with sunken head, in a cardboard box; and the Schmidt family gazed desperately upon his silent struggle with death. Over Schmidt's cleanshaven face, whose features appeared to be cut out of wood, played a dim smile, intended, I think, to conceal his emotion. He shook me warmly by the hand and his wife almost embraced me in her joy that I had risen from my sick bed; and in her excitement she even forgot the ungrateful Hansl for a moment. But Walter could not tear his gaze from the rifle which hung on my arm; and when I gave it to him he said not a word. When he threw it across his shoulder his pale face became almost purple and he threw out his narrow chest.

"I'm a hussar!" he cried proudly, not realizing what a storm would break over my head as a result of his playing.

"I'm a hussar of Bela Kun's!" he went on to say, thus revealing that not only the rifle, but also his love for it, came from me.

"Take that gun off, Walter!" ordered his father. "We've suffered enough under militarism, I don't want to see any more guns! I want to live in peace! I won't have a gun in my house! I want to make a decent man out of you."

That is what Schmidt said sternly to his thin, undergrown son; but really the lesson was directed at me.

"But, comrade Schmidt," I said, completely misunderstanding the situation, "surely you don't want to make a sentimental woman out of your son. You're a socialist, a revolutionist—you know that we cannot give up arms so long as our enemy is armed. And as for this toy. . ."

As I spoke, Schmidt slowly turned round to face me. Powerful and broad-shouldered, although a little stooped, he was a head taller than I. Silver streaks gleamed in his dark hair. He turned so slowly, ponderously, that one could note that he was about to break into a fury.

"Stupid demagogy! Enough!" he shouted suddenly. "You cannot cast out Satan with Satan! And you cannot oppose violence with violence!"

"But one can only do it with violence. . . ."

"You can use any means except violence! You fought in the Hungarian revolution yourself. You should know from experience what violence leads to."

"On the contrary it's precisely the lesson of the Hungarian revolution which shows. . . shows. . . ."

Schmidt did not wait for the end of my sentence: he was not interested in the lessons of the Hungarian revolution. With his big right hand, calloused by work and the handling of a rifle, he tore the unfortunate toy from Walter's shoulder and flung it on the floor.

Frau Schmidt stood there with wide open, affrighted eyes. She opened her mouth but could not speak. Beside her stood little Walter, his head bent, his body shaking with repressed weeping. I went into my room.

There was a letter for me there, a letter from my mother. I read it and then sat thoughtfully for some time on my bed. I did not even notice that Frau Schmidt had come into my room.

"Comrade."

I jumped up as though I had been caught in some evil deed.

"What's the matter, comrade?" she asked. "Please don't take this silly business too much to heart. Believe me, Schmidt is really a good man and is very fond of you, and he admires you—but he can't help his hot temper. When one thinks how he suffered in the war and as a prisoner! He was wounded three times and was in hospital for months—he nearly became a cripple for life. . . . Is there any bad news in the letter you've just received?"

"It's from my mother."

"Is there bad news in it?"

I looked at the letter again as though I did not know whether it held good news or bad.

"Listen to what my mother writes, I'll just read you one sentence. 'When I go out, I open my coat. I would die if the cold did not also hurt me, ever since I have learned that you have to go through the winter without an overcoat!"

"Ah, mothers. . . .' Frau Schmidt sighed deeply and turned her face away. "Isn't it natural that mothers should be afraid of guns? When one only thinks. . . ."

"But you have to think this thing out to the end, Frau Schmidt! It isn't enough just to strike the weapons out of our hands. . . ."

"Life is horrible, ugly, cruel!" the woman cried.

"But I came here to tell you," she continued in quite a different tone. "You mustn't take this thing too seriously. I'll buy Walter something else. Yes, today I'll buy him some other toy. And as for that gun, give it to me as a present."

"Give it to you? You're joking!"

"No, no, I have no desire to joke."

"But what do you want it for—this toy gun?"

"What for? Well—really I don't know. But if I get it I shall certainly store it away."

And so the toy gun came into Frau Schmidt's possession and she hid it away as carefully as if it were a valuable treasure or a most dangerous weapon.

Hansl died.

The years went by rapidly—so fast that one could hardly distinguish one from the other, had they not left such clear tracks behind. But the footsteps of those years have gone deep into the earth. I don't know whether it was always so, but this I do know: in our time the furious years leave tracks which neither the waters of the ocean can wash away nor the sand of the desert conceal.

In Galicia I hearkened to the cannon of our Russian comrades. In Czecho-Slovakia the gendarmes wore steel helmets when they went out against the striking workers. In Germany. . . . When I arrived in Moscow I had long since forgotten Walter, Hansl and the toy rifle. But I was to be reminded of them.

The newspapers published a great deal about Walter's death, and in fact the lad had not departed from life by a very conventional route. Nearby the Lerchenfelderstrasse, the Vienna Law Courts burned furiously, and the police of the democracy were hunting down unarmed workers. From the roof, little Walter, with two of his friends, looked out upon the fire, the blood and the blood-drunk police. And in his poor hand, deformed by rickets, his father's teachings about the sacredness of democracy collided desperately with fact. I do not know what must have passed in Walter's tormented mind, but a patriotic Vienna newspaper seriously maintained that the boy suddenly sprang to the edge of the flat roof and in a shrill voice gave a cheer for the revolution. It is rather difficult to believe that the cry of this feeble child could have been heard from the height of four storeys through the clamor of the street; but it is certain that two policemen immediately fired at Walter. And one thing we must concede to the police: they understand their business—both bullets hit their mark. One pierced Walter's head through his left eye and emerged through the top of his skull, and the other bored through his breast.

I met Peter Schmidt once again, in Moscow. He had come here as a member of a workers' delegation. His hair was already grey; his features more rugged than eight years earlier. But now he stood no longer stoopingly and so appeared taller than when I had known him before.

We shook hands heartily.

"Do you still remember the toy rifle? he asked.

"Poor little Walter," I answered.

"I laid the rifle with him in his coffin. Just imagine, the wife had hidden it for eight years, and it would still have been in the house now if. . . . But we buried it with Walter." And he smiled sadly, embarassedly.

He shook my hand again and for a whole minute gazed silently at the great mausoleum. The chimes in the Kremlin tower played the *Internationale.*

"It's midday," I murmured.

"Yes," said Schmidt. "Midday. Twelve o'clock. Yes. . . . But isn't it remarkable that I should come here to the land of the future while my son remains in the old imperial city? It's strange, isn't it, that, instead of my son taking my place, I take his in the ranks? Well, it's lucky that I'm strong enough and can keep in step with any youngster wherever it may lead. . . . And do you still remember my wife, comrade?"

"Of course I remember her. How is she? What is she doing?"

"She cried her eyes out for the boy. She cried so much, she got to look quite old. You would hardly recognize her. But you can be sure she won't stay at home when our time comes! No, you wouldn't be able to keep her home if you chained her!"

Translated from the German by Charles Ashleigh

M. Irchan

The Protocol

A Story of Poland

No newspaper reported the incident. No newspaper will ever write about it. "Silence" is the order of the day. The prestige of the Polish army cannot be undermined by madmen. But the autumn winds have blown a faint whisper over Western Ukraine, from village to village, from barracks to barracks.

Vergun of the Ninth Polish Battalion stationed his machine-gun on the roof of the village library. Behind Vergun stood sergeant Zubik and private Jaskulski and facing him was the whole village decked in holiday attire but silent, grim and angry.

It was a week day but the peasants were dressed up like on Sunday. The men were bare headed with bruises and scars on their faces; and some had bandaged heads and arms.

The worst had passed, but tears still lingered in the women's eyes which were red and swollen. The punitive expedition was taking it easy after its long day's work. No joke after all laying into this "scum" with whips and rifle butts! It had taken a hundred strokes with a ramrod to quieten the more recalcitrant and it had been hard work razing the school and library and cooperative to the ground. And still the "lousy brutes" had refused to pay their taxes. The captain had been forced to get the machine-guns turned on them and have a few cottages burned just to tame them, you know!

"You can only teach a stubborn horse by starving him," the captain had argued. And so he ordered all the grain and flour to be emptied out on the square in front of the town hall.

The peasants looking like sleep walkers brought out their savings and there, under the eyes of the captain poured it all out in one heap. Threatened with rifle blows they trampled the grain and flour under their feet until it was well mixed with earth. Yes, you can teach a stubborn horse by starving him.

Then came the captain's next order.

A protocol must be written. The law demands a protocol. All the villagers must assemble on the square in holiday dress to sign the protocol and say good-bye to the officers and soldiers.

And the order was carried out. Tired and wounded, the villagers hurried on to the square as though falling in on parade. The prisoners remained bound next to the officers' horses. They were in their old clothes and their wounds were still bleeding.

A deathlike silence grips the square. A sea of pale faces contorted with pain and made ugly by bruises and scars. A hundred eyes are turned on the steps where the officers are gathered, gaudily uniformed and arrogant. These eyes express bitter hatred and boundless rage. Lips are pressed tight.

The women's eyes are red and swollen. Their tears have dried up, but excruciating pain has made the whites of their eyes bloodshot.

And the young girls. The horrors of last night have frozen in their eyes. There is deep injury and despair but no shame. Everyone of them has been violated during the night, the whole village knows that as they know too how they have been beaten with rifle butts. They all know that men and women have been beaten on their bare bodies till they bled.

And the children. Their eyes are everywhere, a silent, swollen throng. So many of them, small, black, grey, blue. Children's eyes always with the glint of life in them, but unnaturally serious now, hardened and set. From under white brows they gaze

up at the machine-gunner on the roof. There smoulders in them the rage of millions which will some day burst into flame. No school could turn this young generation so quickly into fearless revolutionaries as one expedition of Pilsudski's fascist dictatorship.

There is a deathlike silence on the square although hundreds of people are waiting in holiday dress.

Private Vergun sees all this although his eyes are bloodshot, but not from rifle blows. Fever grips him and he wonders whether all this is real or only a dream. He has seen so much, heard so much during the last few days, how is it that he has not gone deaf. How is it that he has not gone blind. His job is quite a simple one, to lie there with his machine-gun and await orders. But he has heard so much, seen so much.

If only he need not look at the village, if only he had nothing to look at, nothing to listen to. Oh! when will it all end? And was the same thing really going on everywhere, in all the villages? Could it be that all armies were like this, as bloodthirsty and merciless? He had seen how at the command of the officers and N.C.O.'s, his comrades seized the village girls just like so many cabbages in the market. And yet these same men way back in Poland, must have sisters and mothers of their own. . . . Sisters and mothers and wives and sweethearts who write to them and send them verses on pink notepaper decorated with doves. . . .

Private Vergun closed his eyes and saw before him his fellow machine-gunner Bernatski. Bernatski is no more—but still Vergun sees him, hears him, remembers. Bernatski had said "the time will come when we will turn the machine-guns on the officers. Over there in the East stands another army against which we are being prepared. But don't forget that they are our sort of people, peasants and workers just like we are. We shall be sent to destroy their freedom and win for our *pans* new lands, new domains. Then you and I and thousands of others will have to turn our machine-guns against those who are herding us off to kill our comrades, the citizens of the free Soviet Union."

Bernatski had said a great deal more, but Vergun hadn't understood it all. He remembered the most important part although he had not believed it, had not thought about it. He had always been too quiet, too timid, too subdued, brought up as he had been in the service of the rich. But for some reason Bernatski had always been very dear to him. There had been an understanding between them. Now Bernatski was no more. He had died, they said. Lieutenant Swistel had said:

"Bernatski won't be the only communist dog to get cholera."

Vergun remembers that terrible night. He was sleeping in the barracks and they woke him up by kicking him in the chest. He saw sergeant Zugik's red face above him.

"See here, get up, there's going to be some dancing."

Vergun jumped out of bed as Zubik was not in the habit of saying things twice. In the middle of the room pajama-clad figures moved about in the dim lamplight. The sergeants shouted and pushed the soldiers before them. The men also shouted and Vergun shouted with them as Zubik hit out at him and he fell on his companions who were in a heap on the floor.

"Now you've had a dance you can sleep," Zubik cried and the soldiers got back into their beds. The light was put out. On the floor under a heap of blankets lay the man on whom the soldiers had been dancing. Vergun heard someone whispering:

"Ber-nats-ki!"

After that Vergun was unable to sleep. He lay there till dawn tormented by his thoughts and listening for some movement from Bernatski. In the morning before the soldiers woke up an ambulance man took Bernatski away. They heard nothing more about it except lieutenant Swistel's remark: "Bernatski won't be the only communist dog to get cholera."

Three days later rumors began to spread, first from one soldier to another and then from company to company and eventually right through the battalion. Bernatski was done in for distributing communist leaflets. The order had gone out that his "existence be put an end to." Sergeant Zubik thought out his own way of getting rid of him—that was his dance. The next day Bernatski was brought to the hospital with broken ribs, injured lungs and kidneys, and features distorted beyong recognition. Someway or other he died, somewhere or other they gave him a hurried burial. Nobody quite knew what had happened. Zubik said that they had transferred him to another regiment on account of his subversive work. But nobody believed Zubik.

Bernatski is no more, but now Vergun can see him, hear him, feel him.

More officers come out of the building onto the steps. The captain bows to the adjutant and the latter shouts to the crowd.

"Come nearer!"

The crowd, still silent, moves forward, one sullen undifferentiated mass.

"Bow down!"

Hundreds of heads bow. Bright kerchiefs, coarse haired peasant heads.

Private Vergun thinks to himself.

I'm not here. . . . I'm also with them—I am one of them . . . perhaps my own native village is bowing like this. . . . I am not here at all. I am over there with Bernatski . . . Bernatski.

But he is only thinking. He is consumed with fever. His throat is parched and he trembles all over.

The captain's loud voice recalls his wandering attention.

"The law is the law. Try it once again and we'll burn the whole village and shoot the hostages. If you want to live a quiet life at peace with the powers that be, all you have to do is to sign the protocol. Our little account will then be considered settled."

There might have been not a single soul on the whole square.

It was as though all had turned to stone. The calm was menacing. The local priest who was standing at the edge of the crowd near the steps knew his flock and was afraid.

"Listen my people—are not our rulers given us by God?"

"They'll be made to pay," private Vergun murmured mechanically to himself as his eyes wandered from the machine guns on the other side of the square to the rows of soldiers standing with fixed bayonets—they'll be made to pay to the last drop of blood."

"Listen to the protocol." The adjudant's voice rang out and interrupted Vergun's train of thought. "You sign it and there'll be peace between us."

"We, the undersigned, hereby declare that those responsible for the rebellion in the village were Yurko Korpinchik, Vassili Smykalo, Ivan Shepetynk, Brits Zarubola and Yatsko Zarinchuk. We hereby of our own consent give them over to justice. We further declare that no violence was shown by the landlord Khalyavaki and that we ourselves agreed to reap his fields for seventeen sheeves. We have no doubt whatsoever that the *pan's* house was burnt by the above mentioned malcontents. We were very glad to receive the battalion of the Nth regiment and voluntarily supplied them with provisions."

The sound of a woman's wailing rose above the crowd and was borne across the square.

"Silence!" the order came from the steps. "Shout long live marshal Pilsudski, long live the great marshal Pilsudski!"

The harried tormented villagers could stand it no longer. They moved back, the same sullen mass, their eyes fixed on the steps, as though between them and the officers a gulf were opening up. A few faint hearted ones obeyed the command but their voices were drowned in the hysterical sobbing of women.

The priest waved his arms, as though uncertain whether he was appealing to his flock or to his god in heaven. But nobody took any notice of him. The loud voice of the captain rose above everything.

"Bayonets, charge!"

To Private Vergun all this was like a nightmare. The sound of that woman wailing pierced his heart. He trembled more than ever. His eyes began to blurr. The blood surged in his ears.

A sound rose from the crowd. At first weak, it slowly gathered in strength. Nobody heard separate words but all felt that the rising murmur was the wrath of defenceless people who were desperate. It made no difference now how many soldiers there were, how many machine-guns, how many bayonets. The square might have been full of children playing at soldiers.

The crowd stood for a moment, as though in drill formation, began to stir and then swept forward towards the steps.

"Machine-guns, ready!" the captain yelled at the top of his voice.

Vergun heard the command above the cries of the people, above the women's sobs.

"Tears are no good—tears will not save you from wounds or death. I'm with you," Bernatski had said.

Vergun braced himself, glanced angrily towards the steps and with trembling hands aimed his machine gun in that direction. He seemed to be moving in dream. He pressed the trigger and the machine-gun came to life, shots clattered out and the gun spat fire straight at the steps.

In Vergun's fevered head a voice echoed:

"They'll pay to the last drop of blood."

And that was his last thought. Sergeant Zubik put a bullet into his head just as the captain and adjutant fell down the steps onto the square.

No newspaper reported the matter. No newspaper will ever write about it. In army circles it was certified that Vergun had gone out of his mind, and the prestige of the Polish army cannot be undermined by madmen. "Silence" is the order of the day.

But the autumn winds have borne a whisper about Vergun's machine-gun all over Western Ukraine, and it is still being carried from village to village, from barracks to barracks.

Translated from the Russian by Neil Goold Verschoyle

Maxim Gorki

The Most Important Thing of All

Fifteen years of untiring work in which every able bodied man and woman in this vast country, of 163 million inhabitants has taken part. We have no publication which gives the working masses a yearly account of the results of this work, which opens up before their eyes the vast and brilliant prospect of all that has been done during the year in every part of the country. We write and talk a great deal about Dnieprostroi, Magnitogorsk and all the other imposing industrial undertaking, so that these huge enterprises are like a high mountain range in our minds hiding from view the great work that is going on, as it were in the lowlands, in every other corner of the land, changing its physical geography and bringing quite new industrial centers into being.

We even forget to mention such achievements as for instance the White Sea to Baltic canal, we omit from the map of 1932 the Turkestan Siberian railroad, we are unable to give a fitting account of what the conquest of the Arctic means, of the tremendous scope of the work in Siberia and of many other things about which the working masses ought to know, and of which they have a right to be proud as accomplishments arising out of their own heroic energy and their unquenchable enthusiasm for work.

The country's industries are steadily and rapidly growing, and a firm and permanent foundation is being laid for an unending process of enrichment. But it seems that our enemies understand the revolutionary significance of this process better and more profoundly than our working class. In order that they should have a wider and deeper understanding of their mighty and heroic labor, and should cure themselves of certain ailments the cause of which is social blindness, it is essential that they should know all that has been done, all that has to be done and all that has already been begun. They must know with what success the work of remoulding the country is everywhere going forward, thanks to the energy of the working class, work which is unprecedented, titanic, and almost fantastic in its scope.

They must know why the railway line is being built to the Yugorski Straits, and why an All-Union institute is being formed for the study of the human organism, they must know what Volgastroi, the harnessing of the Volga and the Transbaikal railroad, is giving to the country, they must know how year by year the earth is yielding up more and more liberally to the working class its numberless treasures: coal, petroleum, precious metals and minerals; they must know what the harnessing of the late Gokhchi is giving to Gruzia Armenia, Azerbaijan; they must know workers' inventions are enriching the country, how mightily and audaciously science is growing, and what a tremendously important part in this growth the young recruits from the working masses and from the peasants are playing. The working masses of the land of Soviet socialist republics, must know all that is being brought into being as a result of their own energy. That will be knowing themselves, self knowledge, and that will increase their creative energy. "Our country is immense and overflowing with natural resources," so that to know the whole of it completely would be a somewhat formidable task. But all the more it is necessary to know it. That is why it is so necessary that the working masses should have before their eyes every year a summary of the results of their work, as full a picture as is possible of the incarnation of their energy in a new reality, in a new world of facts. We must

publish a paper which will tell the masses of the full scope of their labor, of all their achievements so as to hasten the process by which they will come to a socialist, revolutionary knowledge of themselves.

This process is gradually spreading, it is spreading both in breadth and depth, bringing health to the land and giving birth to a new life and the work of creating a new civilisation. Ancient towns like Okurova are disappearing, the homes of coarse grained petty townsmen, people with lazy minds, parasites in a small way who all their life tried to cheat the workers and peasants, to grow fat upon their blood, who are now dying as semi-beggars. Instead of towns like Okurova new socialist cities are rising up in the industrial centers, putting an end to the ancient imbecility of the petty townsmen class, the crowds of wooden three windowed private houses, the stuffy store houses of all the ancient superstitious rubbish of the church, where day by day the same mean struggle went on, the struggle of blind zoological individualism, egoism, self isolation, jealousy, greed and everything else that is low and abject.

Under the advance of the tractor and the harvester, and the invasion of the new collective farm technique, the terrible imbecility of the country is disappearing, together with the slavish submission of the peasants to the forces of nature, their indifference to all activities of the mind and their animal acceptance of fate.

Hundreds of thousands, millions of young people "faded before their youth had come to flower" under the pressure of the imbecility of the provincial towns, the villages and hamlets of the old days, but now all paths have been opened out to the young, and the thirst for knowledge is coming to have a strong and stronger hold upon them. We have no unemployment, every young man and woman knows that they are certain of being allowed the right to work (which is the case nowhere else in the world.) Our young people are never faced with the problem of how to get work, they have only the problem of choosing a profession. The roots of the party are striking further and further down into them drawing from this fresh soil the most life-giving sap, finding nourishment in its youthful energy, organising in a revolutionary way and directing this energy into the most varied channels, thereby enriching the country with new intellectual forces. That is the most important, the most valuable, the most significant thing that is happening in this beautiful, rich, huge and happy country of ours.

V. Shklovsky

Cities and Rivers

From the Square of the Revolution you can see the manege. From Tverskaya the Universal Department Store can be seen. The horizons of the city are changing. It seems unbelievable. Moscow is acquiring perspectives. Its streets unwind like a knot.

Petersburg was built according to a plan, according to the will of a man. Petersburg was made, Moscow just happened.

It is very difficult to imagine how cities change. The boundaries of men's fantasy are described by their productive habits.

In 1828 Fadey Bulgarin described the Petersburg of 2020.

Fadey Bulgarin was one of the low-crawling creatures, author of *Sentinel Journeys Over Ante Chambers*. He visualized the future Petersburg as it was when he knew it, only more level and larger.

"Lord, I walked today a great deal. After leaving the house I went straight to the Vyberg sea-shore and reached the Okhotinsk square. From there I went over the Neva on a cast-iron suspension bridge and reached the Smolensk Hotel. Finally, I rested in the book-store."

"Poet. Of course it is a long distance, but on the granite sea-shore it is as easy to walk as on a parquet floor. Moreover, in the cast-iron houses spread along the shore one can sit down and rest and even hide oneself in bad weather. Only I don't like to walk amidst the palaces that are on the Vyberg, Okhta and Smolensk side: in those parts it is too noisy, there are too many people, too much grandeur."

In his *Utopia* Fadey imagined that future Russia would have a wonderfully organized police department.

Even then Petersburg was a well built city. It had cast-iron bridges, granite sea-shores and good houses. Fadey Bulgarin understood very well who needed these houses. Speaking of Petersburg, he wrote in his *Statistical Description of Russia:*

'The growth of a military class and *chinovniks* forever seeking comfortable houses will foster the building of new houses in Petersburg."

Pushkin said it differently:

"I love you, military capital. . . "

This type of Petersburg was never realized. The city was infested with *chinovniks*.

Moscow lived like a merchant. It was so rich that it did not think of investing money in the building of new houses. The city seemed as though it was built temporarily.

In Petersburg there was the river Neva. Timber, pork and pig's bristles were brought over it.

And the Neva changed Petersburg. They were now importing various bric-a-brac for the dressing table of Eugene Onegin:

All that imagination fancies
Sells the fastidious London
And on the Baltic Waves
Brings those for pork and timber

All these were "tiny things, light things."

Steamers came with cargoes of sand. The river police took care that the sand should not be dumped into the river, lest the Petersburg port be destroyed. From England machines were brought. Factories were built.

The factories demanded fuel and cargoes of coal appeared on the steamers.

Cheap English coal was brought into Petersburg.

Bulgarin was wrong. Palaces did not appear on the Vyberg side of Petersburg. Nor did they appear on the Okhta.

The *chinovniks'* Petersburg was cut like an apple by a row of factories.

There was a river in Moscow too. Only a wet river bed remained.

Before, it was a direct road from the Baltic Sea to the Volga, flowing through the valleys of the Moskva and Klyasma rivers. Here the first settlement of Moscow grew up.

Then the cities were situated on the shores of rivers.

Orel was a big trading city with many markets. And in the city of Belev where only merchants were known in the 18th century there were 2,300 people.

The river roads regulated the life of the country. They connected the country with Petersburg and Riga.

The rivers were becoming shallow while the barges multiplied. It was becoming unprofitable to exploit the rivers.

The railroad system was threading new paths. The city of Moscow, settled like a railroad spider on the cheap labor of the Moscow workers. And the river Moskva was neglected completely.

When we transport machines today it appears that the railroad bridges are already too narrow. Contemporary technique has outgrown the railway system.

There is in Berlin a triangle railway heart knit of rails. But the little Berlin river Schpree is being taken care of. It is being fed water with a device like a nipple. Berlin has a big port on this tiny river. Cargo goes back and forth.

Rivers are coming back.

At one time manufactured goods hummed on the rivers. Rivers turned spinning wheels. The steam engine created new cities together with factories.

"The steam engine. . . . is a city and not a village prime-mover. Like the water wheel, it allows concentration of industry in the cities, instead of spreading it in the villages. The steam engine is universal in its technical construction and is comparatively little dependent upon local conditions." (K. Marx).

Electricity, hydraulic power stations have returned to water its importance as a source of energy. The shipment of a vast amount of goods produced by capitalist civilization has returned to water its importance as a means for transportation. Moscow in not only changing its scenery, it is also cleansing itself of the dust that streams from the massive merchant houses. Moscow is turning its face towards the river.

Automobiles speed past little American cities . . . . Roads unite cities, but travellers do not change cities, they are changed by the nature of commodities produced there.

America, in spite of her numerous railroads and autos wants to join two oceans by a canal.

France, adjoining Spain, wants to connect the Mediteranian sea with the ocean, to clear a passage for her navy.

The sea gives fresh water to the land.

But technique shows the internal contradictions of the social system that created it.

"With the increase in the number of inventions and the demand for newly invented machines develops, on the one hand, the division of the machine industry into numerous independent branches, on the other hand, a division of labor within the industry producing machine made goods. Thus we discover within the manufacturing industry the direct technical foundation for big industry. It produces machines with the help of which big industry has put an end to the manufacturing process of production in those industries which it first captured. Hence, machine production arose in a

natural way, on a non-corresponding material foundation. On a definite stage of its development it will create a change in this foundation, which it found and developed further, retaining its old form, and will create a new foundation that will correspond to its own method of production." (K. Marx).

It is doubtful whether America and France, with their present social order, will be able to utilize all the possibilities created by the development of electricity. They have an appetite, as the Chinese say, wider than their mouths.

The old, discarded Petrov canals under Klin, and the Sniezhnye lakes, where fishermen caught perch, are being rejuvenated with new blue waters.

Good looking, smartly dressed, Kiev, waited for centuries, for the return of river traffic. Rivers and boats grew bigger. They cannot pass through the Dnieper rapids. Narrow water paths could not take the place of water road. The Dnieper was a river—not a river but a pond.

But this autumn, the Dnieper grew from a narrow path into a real water way, a river.

The Neva is connected with the White sea. Leningrad is a growing port.

At the same time the factories are being removed from the river, the sky becomes clearer. The factories are operated now by electricity.

And the Neva flows like a new river, with a new mouth and new sources.

The Moskva river is connected with the Volga.

It is difficult to see how grass grows, but today we see the growth of history.

Our rivers have an old and bad habit, they freeze in the winter. Their possibilities are thus limited at certain times of the year.

But our railroads are also seasonal. We have to store up supplies in our factories, because bread, timber, and fish arrive seasonally.

The seasons of the rivers, canals, and railroads are supplementing each other.

Old Russia was getting lost in too much space. Its rivers flowed aimlessly into the sea.

Today in our country, water is rising daily.

The country is being joined by new roads. Cities change.

Louis Aragon

The New Urals

From Moscow to Sverdlovsk

At one of the first stopping places in the Urals, I bought some wild strawberries. They were wrapped up in a piece of typewritten paper dated Oct. 1, 1917, an order from Kerensky's provisional government to the inhabitants of the Urals to put their clocks one hour ahead during winter. The Urals did not listen to Kerensky. They listened to Lenin instead and put their clocks ahead one century.

Sverdlovsk

It is essential that we consider the constructive work in the Urals from this particular point of view, that it is not integral to the first Five Year Plan, but an addition and a supplement to it. In many districts, the Ural plan has not been carried out. There are several reasons for this: first the geographical difficulties, then the transport difficulties, then the necessity for a railway development simultaneous to factory construction, etc., etc. But above all and in spite of the enormous influx of peasants into industry, it is due primarily to a shortage of labor.

The ordinary observer, ignorant of the plan projected for the Urals, would naturally ask, "What would happen if the plan had been fully carried out?" In many places it is. And from the moment the traveller leaves Sverdlovsk, the Urals reminds him of a picture in which everything is painted a little larger than one expects. It is conceived in what artists call "the heroical size!"

The huge house reserved for the Regional Committee is built on the site of a demolished church. This great building with its thousand windows, as bright as the future, might be taken for an example of Soviet architecture. The house is transparent where the central building joins the wings, probably marking the level of a staircase, and at this level there are high caps of glass on either side.

Opposite, at the corner of the quay, stands an antique house left from the old Ekaterinburg, a house which must have been in its day the pride of the town, for it has two storeys. Today the Trade Unions are lodged there. It is green, and is stuccoed all over with mixed Gothic and Moorish designs; it recalls those "cathedral" bindings which were once the joy of the romantics and the envy of the book collectors. Somewhere in Normandy stands a house where Lamartine once lived, built in this same style of a child who plays at being grown-up and grand. Little decorative pieces, bizarre carvings and other architectural absurdities.

Then on the edge of the water stands a wooden hut which must have been a chapel and which leans a little to one side from the wind.

Ten per cent of the population of the Urals, about 700,000 inhabitants belong to national minorities; Kirgizes, Tartars, Bashkivians, Komi-Perimaks and Maritz.

In 1930, 50,000 of the workers in the Ural factories belonged to national minorities. By the end of 1932 this figure rose to 100,000.

In 1928 the state paid 4 rubles 13 kopeks per head for the public education of the national minorities; in 1931, 8 rubles 60 kopeks; in 1932, 13 rubles 7 kopeks. (These figures of course represent a year's expenditure). In 1932, the corresponding expenditure per head for the Russians in the Urals for one year was 12 rubles 15 kopeks; that is more than a ruble less than the expenditure on a member of a national minority. These figures should be compared with those of any colony of an imperialist power. Finally

the number of elementary schools for national minorities rose from 325 in 1923 to 897 in 1931 and 987 in 1932.

Magnitogorsk

The huge combine of factories at Magnitogorsk defies not only description, but even the camera. No eye can succeed in focussing all the details of the monumental sight of the constructions springing up on every side. On looking at my note book, I discover that what impressed me most was not the finished buildings, not the huge chimneys, the highest in the world, not the chemical works—none of these; but the site itself from which spring all these separate parts of one great whole, already tracing itself on a much larger tract of ground than that covered by a town, between the cord of a road and the bend of the Ural river.

After crossing ten railway lines, on escaping from twenty railway engines, after following the whole journey the ore makes to the mouth of the furnace, after one has lost oneself among the various shops in the factory where the by-products are made, has recrossed roads, jumped ditches, stridden over heaps of scrap-iron, walked for ten minutes beside disorderly piles of cylinders, one discovers a little further on, below, a factory chimney, not as one thought, the seventh and last chimney at the end of and beyond a row of six red chimneys, but the first of a new row of six chimneys, and a skeleton of iron shoots up, a shed or a new factory, and it all begins again; more buildings, more railway-lines, more engines, more excavators in a giant pit, more roads, tractors, little carts, huge lamps for lighting up work at night, and so back again.

Behind, one sees the distance covered where one had planned to see everything and then one realises that to right and left there had been still more trucks, rails, buildings, ditches, factories, open foundations and machine bases. In the middle two high black furnaces, which look like serious gentlemen in mufflers, looking ironically at the passer-by who tries to have a general view of what is going on here between the town and the river.

Two blast furnaces are working; two more are under construction and will be finished by the end of the year. That makes four. Four others will be built, so that in 1934 eight will be working. It is this vast plain beyond the works, where everything is organized, where a new creation is springing from the earth among the huge heaps of litter covering it, where reigns an apparent chaos of tools and tubes, scraps of machinery and material, that should most fitly be described; ignoring the works itself, of which the figures quoted on the amount of metal produced daily, can give a much clearer impression of Magnitogorsk than any verbal description.

I should like to describe Magnitogorsk as though it were in a fairy tale, when one describes to the children the thousand rooms of the palace where the princess lies hidden. Perhaps they cannot see the room which is the color of moonlight, or the chamber built of drops of water, still they can imagine them and would see them if they could. In the same way I should like to describe the growth of the third and fourth furnaces, how they carry crowns of wood and crowns of workmen. I should like to lead you way beyond the tall furnaces to this tract of ground as chaotic as the note book in which I recorded its disproportionate features.

Indeed disproportion is the key-note of the scenery. All this which strews the ground, all these fragments of the future, are cast on too vast a scale for us humans. It is as though soon the whole stage must stretch itself, like a man waking up in the morning, and rise on its long sprawling legs: then these incomprehensible things lying on the ground will show themselves as roofs and chimneys; then these boiled rust-colored domes, now strange even to touch, so like are they to the ruins of some gigantic observatory, will be at the height domes should be; then something will be made out of these 300 square metres of piled empty boxes; then one will no longer wonder at crossing a whole

field of wheels. Indeed I mean it; a field of wheels, as a field of corn. Wheels of all sizes litter a space large enough to hold 1,000 men. Here is a railway line, and there another construction. Here lie half-buried chimneys, chimneys as high as a six-storey house, sleeping in the ground in a sort of easy tranquility. We are rubbing shoulders with giants. Here, in the midst of a landscape which recalls the ancient fortifications of Paris, tubes and more tubes as far as the eye can see. Suddenly it looks as though the earth had been bleeding white: just plaster. Here is a large wooden house, but who after washing clothes, has forgotten his two buckets, lying upside down? It must have been someone above common height, for the buckets are as big as the storey of a house. Then another wooden house, two storeys high and half finished, opening thirty eyes on to another mass of black pipes lying in scanty grass, and on to the criss-cross of roads where little Ural horses are dragging carts. In the air the telephone wires lose their way in a tangle where the roads cross. Then huge trenches with surprisingly wide conduits. And more railway-lines, either under construction or already singing under loads of raw material. Do you know the game of spillikins? With a little hook you take out from a heap of tumbled ivory splinters all those not marked with a design without moving any of the others, and it is the most vivid picture of this building site, of which I despair to give you any other description. But the rules of the game are different. Ah, at last I know how to make myself clear; it is a heap of matches three kilometers long.

The factories and the building-sites have behind them the town and the mountains for horizons. Over there is the black mountain, Gora Atash, which is all iron, and where you need only to stoop to pick up the ore: further to the right is the factory where the ore is washed and crushed, still further to the right lies the socialist town and more mountains. Within this circle stand out the various parts of Magnitogorsk, a city of 350,000 inhabitants, and all this covers a space larger than that of Lyons, the second largest town in France.

Tcheliabinsk

On coming from Sverdlovsk, after passing vast tracts of lakes and forests and a whole area of cultivated land where a succession of state and collective farms cover the endless plains, their grain elevators standing out like sentinels on their beat, one comes suddenly on Tcheliabinsk; kilometres of new houses, white banded with grey, crowd together. At their feet still stand the little hovels of black earth in which the people lived before, and perhaps in no other place is the contrast between the old and the new life thrown into so striking a relief. The socialist town which is rising up all along the river, stands out against those terrible little black mud huts as against a symbol of the nightmare past.

Here stand the new factories so clean, so handsome that not a visitor passes but asks, what they are. They are Tcheliabtractorostroi, and this is the electric station, Tchegres 1, (Tchegres 2, is under construction and will be finished next year.) Houses, and more houses, the rows of houses in Tcheliabinsk make one dizzy to look at them. Near them is a square red building surrounded by a high wall, in the corners of which are niches for sentries with ladders leading up to them; this is the old convict prison, where, on the very threshold of Siberia, so many revolutionaries were once imprisoned. They were imprisoned in this red building in order that one day these grey and white houses might arise—they have arisen.

In the mines of Tcheliabinsk, (Tcheliabkop), a red partisan, German by birth and an ex-political prisoner who stayed behind to work as a free man where he had once been a prisoner, told us all about the Civil War. In the prison of Irkontsk he ate wood—they gave him nothing else. "Birch is not too bad," he said, with the air of one who knows what he is talking about, "but pine is absolutely disgusting." We asked him whether labor conditions in the mine had improved. He laughed aloud, "Before we

worked 12 hours a day, now we work six. What do you draw from that?" He said as well, "The sort of life a working man led in those days has been so completely forgotten by everybody, even by the old men, that one gets easily discontented nowadays. So for example you have noticed that our club has been burnt down, and they are a little slow in rebuilding it; and then the comrades get furious and say it is no sort of a life for a worker without a club."

Coming back from the factories on our way to the meeting we crossed with a company of singing men. It was a contingent of soldiers doing military service here. They work six hours a day, four in the mine, and two for army instruction.

At Tcheliabinsk the baths are free.

Zlatoust

In the tool factory I met a new Soviet engineer. He was 43 years old, a barrister. "But," he explained, "that profession was impossible; one was continuously having to do with the enemies of the country." At the age of 40, he undertook to qualify himself for another profession and succeeded. "Now," he said. "I can feel every day that I am useful."

At the hospital, in the wood above the town, I heard the doctor saying, "Venereal disease? It has almost entirely disappeared from Zlatoust. I do not know of a single case of syphillis caught recently."

The director of the tool factory is an old Bolshevik. He is 45 and has been a red partisan; ten years ago, at the age of 35, he became the factory director, at which time he could neither read nor write. As soon as he became director he "liquidated his illiteracy," after which he passed through the technical school, and has now actually acquired his engineering diploma.

Karabache

Not far from the mine, our guide took us to see the house he lived in before the revolution. It was a long wooden house, with one storey and a big roof. The garret above, which is now used as a tool room, was then the dormitory for the unmarried men. The families lived below in the rooms on each side of the central corridor. Each of these rooms, which held from six to ten people, had only one window and was only 1.5 by 2.5 metres. Now the partitions have been knocked down, for no one lives there any longer, and the place has been turned into a carpenter's shop; yet even with all the windows for the one room it is hard enough to see for work.

The new houses close by, look gaily at this unused witness to the old life. Through the window, full of the growing plants the Russian workman loves so much, songs can be heard coming over the wireless.

Nizhni-Tagil

The evening of the day we arrived, they gave a mass performance in front of the metal works, at the foot of Demido's old house. There were hundreds of thousands of spectators and thousands of actors. They were acting (with a film commentary), the war, the Revolution, the construction of Socialism and the final appeal for the defense of the USSR against capitalist intervention. In the dark night behind the performers the blast furnaces blazed and now and then the Martin furnaces opened in a purple flash. I was sitting on the ground next to a little boy of 11, an American from the Bronx, New York. We were joking. "No," he told me, "I shall never go back to the States, or if I do it will be to make a revolution." He is a pioneer, and when I asked him if he was going to join the Komsomols, he answered, "Why of course! Only now I'm too young."

At Wagonstroi, we were received by the chief engineer. Two years ago I had attended the trial of the Industrial Party in Moscow. The problem was then; how to make use of the intelligentsia educated in capitalist schools at the same time encouraging the growth of a new class of Soviet specialists of proletarian origin. Here is a man of 27. In 1917 he was 12 years old and began to work in the factory. The revolution gave him a chance to go to school, which he finished in 1929. Today he is at the head of these enormous works, after putting in a period of work in the AMO works at Nizhni-Novgorod. He earns 1200 rubles a month.

Nadiejdinsk

After the meeting we held that evening in the immense Palace of Culture, we were asked more than sixty questions by the audience. Here is one of them, "In your country, who runs the factory, the workers, the foreman or the engineers, and are there any members of revolutionary organizations in the factory committee?" This question is the best answer I know to the lies of the Second International.

There are no churches in Nadiejdinsk. In 1905, Nadiejdinsk had its agent provocateur priest, African, just as Petersburg had its Gapon. The lesson went home.

This summer 80 per cent of Nadiejdinsk's food supply came from the Setkhozkombinat, in which no salary is lower than 100 rubles a month.

Lisva

On a state farm, one of the laborers, a peasant who has never been to any school but that of his own village, and that for only a year and a half, has invented a machine for sowing potato seed which is now being used on a large scale..

Perm

In the machine factory the men who have worked there for three years are already looked upon as old hands. The number of these is very small, as most of the hands came from the country in 1930-31 and 32. They leave their villages almost entirely illiterate; by the end of next year all hands employed at present will have qualified, will have learnt to read and write and will have finishd a course at the vocational school.

The director of this factory earns 400 rubles a month. We saw the skilled metal workers at their benches, and we have questioned them as to their salary; 600, 800 and 900 rubles a month. In the same room was a woman doing very simple work. This was our conversation, "How much do you get a month?" "Oh, very little, 120 rubles." "But you could earn more?" "Yes, if I were more qualified." "But you could become so?" "Yes, if I studied." "Why don't you study?" "I am too old, (she was 27) and I have a family and besides I get on with what I earn." "Doesn't your husband help you?" "He is at Leningrad, studying; next month he will be an engineer."

Lev Yudkevich

At the Gate of Indostan

Nineteen thirty-one was a hard year. It was heralded in by the speech of Abdu-Rahim Hodjibaev at Stalinabad. Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, and looking like a Mongolian, he delivered a speech of extraordinary eloquence. Sometimes as quaint as folk lore, sometimes heady and strong, like the air in mountain ravines, he used images that shook his hearers and startled them into attention.

"Our trade is successfully going over from semi-bartering to socialist forms. We have raised the veil from many districts in our country and have discovered beneath it a countenance by no means uncomely. The pre-war sowing area has long been exceeded, and our success with regard to cotton has been notable. You can't shut out the sun with the hem of your robe. This is the result of the enthusiasm of the workers, the assistance of the Soviet proletariat and correct Party policy."

And yet this year he said had been just as difficult as the one before. There are plenty of holes in Tadjikistan still and each of them is as big as the Varzob ravine.

"Vast alterations have taken place in our kishlak (Tadjikistan village)," he continued. "Each of these alterations is bigger than the biggest mountain in the Pamir range. But we must achieve still bigger alterations. We must tell our Dekh-kan (peasant) that we shall harry him and hurry him until we get him into a European house, in European shoes, properly dressed, educated, working collectively, until the kishlaks are connected by good roads. For that to be done every living soul has got to work for socialism. Let the horse pull the plough instead of the yoke, let the cocks stop fighting with each other and wake the Dekh-kan up in time for work."

Presidents of executives, district committee secretaries, agronomists, surveyors calmly swallowed virulent remarks in the sphere of self-criticism:

"You have tongues when it comes to complaining of too heavy work. 'We work all day, we work all night, we eat whatever we can get hold of, we sleep where we can. Let us work in peace for just one year!' But I tell you that whoever does not sweat to improve our cotton crop is no bolshevik."

But it is all true. People really have nowhere to eat, no time to rest or sleep, don't see their wives and children for weeks at a time; they lead a nomad life all the year round, owing to the lack of labour. Forever in the saddle, in rain or heat, in the trackless plain, to remote kishlaks where no post comes, jogging along in tilt carts. Just like life in the civil war. Where do our active workers get their endurance from? Whence the diabolical capacity of this generation for self-sacrifice?

But when Abdu-Rahim, bending over the tribune and shaking his fists began to abuse his hearers, because "some behave licentiously," and others "have remained sweet young things who mustn't be touched," there was excitement in the audience and the delegates to the conference answered the government grape shot with firm, outspoken words. Many of the accusations were admitted to be just, both errors and faults had been committed during the year.

If such a tone of self-criticism were to be taken in European parliaments the government would long ago have passed a vote of non-confidence, and prudent members would be working up a coalition and beating up the price of party concessions. But here, after having cursed each other up hill and down dale, higher and lower offi-

cials sat down at the same red covered table for a detailed discussion of the sowing plans in each district.

The delegates left Stalinabad in the best of spirits, each with his precise sowing plans, instructions and problems to solve. Last year such a state of affairs would have seemed like a dream.

But there was one thing which Abdu-Rahim Hodjibaev did not foresee, and this one thing made of the spring sowing the severest of trials.

Word went out over the fields.

Swampy Gissar seized upon the new instructions as upon a revelation. Ancient Gissar nestling up against the fortress unexpectedly springing up in the plain like a great raft floating on the marshes. The earth must have been dragged here on the backs of Tadjik serfs by some ancient victor, and now it stands piled up like an Egyptian pyramid, a souvenir of bygone tyranny.

Five years ago this cheerful townlet, with its population of 8,000, was the residence of the Bek, abandoned by the Bassmachi (bandits) as a hamlet of six homesteads. The ribs of abandoned shacks are still lying about. The grim *medress* stand out like jailers over the noisy Soviet crowd of the village. A visiting brigade leader sometimes settles in their deserted cells, opens an office there, stables his horse. But no one stays longer than he can help in this medieval, jail like building, where it is cramped and dark and where the human body is attacked by an army of parasites. The sacks of grain look odd in these jesuitical cells.

The fight for cotton goes on like guerilla warfare—in the rear, in the village, in the field, and among the comrades. Skirmishes are possible everywhere where traditional inertia lingers. But nobody wants to tolerate any more the sowing of mere grain on ground capable of nourishing the precious cotton. The economic and political absurdity of this has got to be shown to the Dekh-kan, and it is being shown to him.

The fight for cotton goes on late at night in the Gissar market. People sitting and lying about are drowned in the shadws cast by the dangling lamps, as in a pool of ink. Only those sitting at the table cast their own shadows on the white washed wall. The speaker seems almost to touch the ceiling as he addresses the meeting with the usual words: work undermined, responsibility, cotton, the Party. Hodjibaev's speech always comes in for special reference. The desperate results of the last few days are checked off on the fingers: only 50 per cent of the promised crop realized, not enough tractor agreements, no production plans, only 281 hectares ploughed by tractor of the 5,000 to be done, and so on.

"Inexperienced tractor drivers," growls an agronomist.

"Nobody wants to stay in the kishlaks where they've been sent," complains a delegate.

Everybody speaks. Many speak.

But the chief speaker knows that things don't happen of themselves, they have to be made to happen, and he proposes the most pitiless operation in the name of the cotton crop. Fighters are wanted and not loungers.

When the weary sowing committee has at last finished its cumbrous resolutions, changing its own makeup, the Party section has removed an unsatisfactory delegate, and everything is to begin anew from tomorrow, old man Mirzoev leaps from his foam-spattered nag and falls before the alarmed assembly.

"Bassmachi!"

The Bassmachi are in Tadjikistan. It is the call to arms, the call to heavy but accustomed fighting, to sleepless nights and redoubled labor. The fight with the Bassmachi is the fight for cotton against grain, the fight with the class foe, the civil war for Tadjikistan. The heroic inexhaustible devotion shown by the Red Army in this fight in the past and the retreat of the medieval feudalists and Islam fanatics form a splash of color against the dark background.

The last Emir, Olim-Khan, fled to the south in 1920 and brought with him his medieval vices. While waiting for the Red Army to reach Gissar the local big wigs passed the time in their favorite manner—seducing little boys and girls, who were brought to them in twos and threes a night, like sacrifices to an idol. Their Highnesses of the court did the same, and made no ceremony about it.

"They corrupted hundreds of our young girls, the swine," says the Soviet militiaman, whose own sister was thus honored.

In March 1921 the Emir at last fled to Afghanistan. This was the day of the Bassmachi. The Beki who remained got up a rising against the Soviet power. Enver Pasha, the well known adventurer and one-time Turkish Minister, styling himself the "supreme commander of all the troops of Islam, son-in-law of the Caliph and heir of Mohammed," rallied the insurgents around himself. But his thousand strong battalions were beaten off and he himself fell by a Red Army bullet. His cause was carried on by another Turkish general, Selim Pasha, and then by Faizula Maksum, Ibrigam Bek and a host of others. But Tadjikistan threw them all off in 1926 and the Bassmach remnants retired beyond Piandj and now only occasionally haunt these shores.

The episodes in these unsung battles are probably the most dramatic in the whole history of the civil war. Here in the hills much more often than in the plains there is no choice between battle and retreat. And the battles are merciless, to the death. Even here, in the land of strange doings, they speak with bated breath about one of them. This is the battle of Garm, a tragedy, a film-play and a revolutionary opera in one.

Garm is connected with Stalinabad by winding pathways. Behind the snow-capped mountains lies Afghanistan. Quite recently, in 1929, Faizula Maksum, the old Bassmach leader crossed the swift Piandj, the icy Darvaz range and suddenly appeared in Garm.

There was nowhere from which help could be expected, no garrison. Three cheka men, a dozen teachers and three Soviet workers heroically shouldered the unequal fight, in which they met their death. But just when the Bek was celebrating his victory and recruiting the "best people" for his troops, a huge bird flew over Garm. The inhabitants who had never seen a wooden wheel, let alone an airplane, ran for their lives. What then was their astonishment to see their old friends Maksum, Chairman of the Central Executive Committee, and brigade leader Shapkin emerging from the steel bowels of the bird! And then down flew other birds, from which came 45 warriors, armed with machine guns. And Feizula, his troops shot to pieces, fled back to Afghanistan like a mountain goat.

But to return to the 1931 spring sowing. That very night when the village of Gissar was gathering up its forces to repair its errors, it was forced instead to look to its guns for self-defense. "A band of Bassmachi are approaching Hanaka. Look out," flashed the telegraph wires to Hanaka, that desert, that shield flung down, on which the only feature is the railway line to the grain market.

What was the good of saying look out when the only arms were a couple of old rifles? But still they did what they could, after considering beating a retreat to Stalinabad along the railroad track. Raufov, director of the grain market, shouldered one of the rifles without a word. The watchman and militiaman took a firmer grip on the other. The rest stayed up all night, looking at their naked hands as if they had never noticed them before, awaiting the onslaught and its inevitable outcome. There was no one to help them. Everybody began to imagine himself with his ears, nose or hands cut off, or saw himself disembowelled.

People show themselves for what they are in such moments. Danger strips off all garments and human beings are left naked, try as they may to wrap themselves up in brave looks, words and gestures. Here is one who appears quite calm and confident, but his face is death-like in the moon, his nose stands out in high relief, the muscles

in his neck leap and sink impulsively, his eyes roll from side to side. The cigarette trembles in his shaking hand and he keeps on swallowing smoke instead of the air he needs so badly. Another one keeps on talking, talking, rapidly and much, so as not to think. Yet another walks up and down.

Here is one in an overcoat, with clenched fists, who has let everything go-class origin, labor dignity, everything, and runs whining to the director.

'I can't bear it. I shall never get over it!"

"What's the matter?"

"Let me go, I implore you! I can't bear it! I'm going away. Shoot me if you won't let me go!" And he bares his wretched chest, and wrings his hands.

All turn away in silence. But he is past caring about contempt. He has bared his soul anyhow. He has nothing to lose.

At dawn a troop train arrived. It distributed a score or so of rifles and went further along the line with more.

The Bassmachi crossed the frontier from Afghanistan, whence come locusts, the grasshopper, cholera and plague. Like all these pests the Bassmachi had been gathering their strength for the last five years and were now once more setting off for their "native" Bokhara, in order to destroy the crops, plunder the poor and cut the throats of the unfaithful, to join up once again with their own big-wigs—the Beks and the Mullahs—and at all costs get up a rising.

The battalion, a big one, led by Ibragim Bek, long a sworn foe of the Soviet Union, went straight for the hills. The hills are a special Tadjikistan, known only to the few. Before the Red Army could get there several bands had already reached the plain of Gissar through unpeopled Babatagu and were spreading out through the districts.

"Look out!" ran the anxious watchword throughout the Republic. "Load the tractors with rifles and cartridges! An unforseen disaster has deprived us of one arm for our sowing! The other must be three times as strong and confident!"

And so the spring sowing began. It was not quite how Abdu-Rachin Hodjibaev thought it would begin, but no one could have foreseen this.

Since the victory of October the tillers of the land have gone forth to sow in their millions. But they go forth not to sow as their fathers and grandfathers did before them, but to conduct a sowing campaign. Even the individual farmers, whose minds are darkened by grotesque traditions, who want only to sow, began, without knowing it, to carry on the Soviet sowing campaign. For they too began to organize, together with the collective and state farm workers, on a vast socialist scale, according to which each bears his share of the work in socialist construction.

Every day shows the increase of organized sowing area in this fortunate time of the first Five-Year Plan, every day brings its millions into the fields to add the peak of one harvest to the mighty crop-range of the years. But no one standing on Soviet land in 1931 could have foreseen that thousands would have been going into the fields not to sow the earth and make the land fertile, but for the barbarous purpose of throwing back invaders, and falling back into the bad old years of the past. Such a thing could only happen here on the borders of wild semi-nomad Afghanistan.

The last harbinger of the Emir and the imperialists, Ibragim Bek, bandit and new found prophet of Islam, undertook the counter-revolutionary job, in the hope of overthrowing the Soviets. He dared not go into the fields in broad daylight, after six years of Soviet rule. This would have been too dangerous, but results could also be obtained maneuvering in the unpeopled hills and craters, and making short and sudden raids upon the plains.

In his home country they call Ibragim Bek *Ugri* the thief, and a thief he is. Wherever he finds himself he only waits for the owner of the place to turn his back for a moment, and then Ibragim falls upon everything, plunders, cuts a few throats and disappears among the rocks and hills. And now, dreaming wistfully of the good old

chaotic days when he reigned supreme in the Lokai Valley, he concocted a high flown appeal "to influential persons and the people," quite forgetting his nickname.

"Five years ago," exclaimed Ibragim Bek, "I abandoned Eastern Bokhara to let you feel in your own persons what Soviet power means. Five years is enough to enable you to make your choice between me and the Bolsheviks. Here I am and I am convinced you have become wiser and will rally round my flag."

Alas, the Dekh-kans read the appeal but showed no signs of having become wiser. Only a handful of clericals whose history in Soviet Tadjikistan was long ago over, although they still clung to life—Bai and former Bassmachi—showed the slightest desire to help Ibragim in his sacred cause, but these doubled his ranks. They merged the class struggle which hitherto they had been carrying on sporadically at their own risk in the villages, with the counter-revolutionary activities of Ibragim Bek.

But in vain did Ibragim the thief sit for hours on the edges of craters sweeping Eastern Bokhara with a pair of field glasses and waiting for help from the Dekh-kans. Peaceful work, extraordinary work filled the deep valley to the brim. Oxen dragged knife-edged ploughs, gleaming in the sun like naked scimitars. The earth surrendered to the very foot of the mountains, one-time marsh land lay under the plough. The ploughers came out not only one by one, but in the mass, like soldiers, close behind each other. Tractors crashed over fallow land. With cotton mills, screaming engines, furiously turning machinery the ancient lands are as full of life as any modern state. The terrible steel birds hover in the sky as if they wanted to pounce upon Stalinabad.

Where is old Bokhara, the land without rights? Where are the ancient oppressors of the Dekh-kans—the Beks and the Mullahs? Ibragim can't believe they've really gone for good. He stole secretly into his native village. He gathered together his kinsmen and fellow-townsmen and held forth to them eloquently about his own power and how Allah and the great foreign states were on his side, armies with cannon and machine guns waiting at the frontier. He jeered at the Red Army and the Soviet power and called upon the Dekh-kans to follow him in the struggle for the sacred cause.

Then up rose a doddering old fellow, the teacher of Ibragim Bek in youth. Leaning heavily on his stick and shaking his head he said quietly:

"O, Ibragim, if you are so mighty and powerful why have you come here like a thief in the night? Why do you run and hide in the hills like a goat? We know you are working to get back old Bokhara. But we have not forgotten the times of the Emir. The only memories he has left us are wounds on our bodies. Now we sow the cotton in peace. Go away, Ibragim!"

And Ibragim went away.

The organization of the Lokai Dekh-kans, men bold and belligerent, till recently nomads, was a great event for Tadjikistan. Lokai used to be the stronghold of the Bassmachi, whence they guided the whole movement. From Lokai came the strongest bands, Ibragim Bek himself, the most prominent figure among them all, came from there. And now the tribe which had paid honor to Ibragim was driving him out like a wastrel. Everything done by the Soviet power was done to strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat, and what a revolutionary thrill they got, these Soviet officials when the Lokai Dekh-kans declared to all and sundry: "Yes, we are for the Soviets!"

And they followed up their words with deeds. On the 28th of May the Lokai battalions, armed with sticks only, came out against the armed Bassmachi to clear out Babatagu. They marched along the steep, well-night inaccessible ranges in good order, looking for the enemy in every ravine, in every crevice.

And not only the Lokai Dekh-kans rose against the Bassmachi. Military and Party organizations raised the red Dekh-kans, armed with sticks, straight from the plough, in their thousands. It was an unprecedented victory for Tadjikistan.

Red Army troops arrived from Tashkent as calmly as if they were marching to maneuvers, to help this remarkable spring sowing. They circled the intricate, bandit

infested hills, cut them off by a living canal of bodies from the fertile, crop yielding valley and made it possible beyond the barrier of bayonets once more to plough, sow and go about the day's work undisturbed.

And once again with the soldiers' coats and the khaki came this marvelous high sense of consciousness, this inspired thirst for duty to the socialist fatherland, to the commander, to the comrade, this high sense of personal dignity, this complete enlightenment, both political and grammatical, this balance attained in the best collective in the world—the Red Army. The Red Army always leaves traces behind it. It does not leave broken shacks, plundered villages and violated women behind it, but after it has gone the faith in the proletarian dictatorship is stronger, individuals organize more solidly and the love for this unique victorious army is increased.

After the Red Army, armed volunteers, the best in Tadjikistan, advanced upon the hills. They went to the fight with marvelous simplicity, these men, half an hour after hearing about it. The clock went back in Tadjikistan to the years of the civil war. Once again the hybrid clothing of the Red Guard, the uniform of all revolutions, all times and peoples, was seen in the yard of what are now the District Offices. Once more were seen the careless poses and unhampered movements of warriors, their eyes filled with a profound belief in their cause.

There stands a delightful short-haired Moscow lassie, in breeches, blouse and high boots. She works in some government office and she shoulders her rifle with something feminine in the action of her fingers. But in the fight she will be firmer than many of the men around her, if only because she is the only woman among them. Who told her to come here? Nobody. She came on her own.

The non-Party commander of a communist regiment is an official in the Worker-Peasant Inspection, a short ,thick-set Jew with dark eyes. He has long ago won the confidence of the Red Army divisions and the Cheka. Beside him stands the District Attorney of the Republic, and a bookkeeper from the financial department, their guns at their sides. Tadjiki, Uzbeki, Jews, Georgians. . . .

This hybrid international is addressed by the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. Before speaking he tries the improvised platform with one foot and then clambers up heavily. He is a little clumsy in his jacket and heavy boots, and his face, the color of old bronze under the khaki cap, gleams darkly like an ancient oil painting in a gilt frame. But he speaks with confidence.

He speaks as usual slowly and thoughtfully, forcing his hearers also to think about what he says, then he begins to talk more quickly. He speaks long to his fighters, using examples and facts just as he did at the conference. The soldiers of various races and nationalities turn to him faces of various colors, sometimes they smile, sometimes they frown, sometimes they stamp with their feet.

This picture of civil war must be supplemented by a description of their wild songs and dances. Tired out after the day they dance till it is dark, till marching orders. Each race has its characteristic dance, the Tadjiki with a certain strange Oriental grace, with lithe figures and upturned palms, the Osetini ligher than air, the Russians facing each other like fighting cocks, squatting on their heels and shooting their feet back and forward.

In the dark all disperse. New boots sound evenly on the stones, flags and camp fires gleam, the regimental cart creaks familiar in the background. One feels safe and happy in the midst of the collective as a child in a cradle. The logical strength of this human stream was forced upon the observer most especially at the cross-roads where every regiment, a mass of separate individuals, turned silently without questions or orders in different directions. Each regiment had its own orders and belligerent task. With what crazy delight one felt oneself experiencing a second youth!

And how they all fought together, the Red Army, the volunteers, the Red Stick Brigades!

And once again the worthies meet in conference with Ibragim Bek at Kurgan-Kuduke. The cream of the Bassmachi sit about on felt mats in their rich robes and huge turbans. Like Hodjibaev in Stalinabad this leader also sums up the campaign.

"Allah alone is all-wise, all-knowing and all-beneficent. We are losing ground. The Red Army and the volunteers from the town are dogging our footsteps like wolves. Our people are not meeting them. There is no rising, despite the work of influential persons." He pressed together his fleshy lips and wrinkling up his eyelids in contempt, looked over his hearers. "Even my kinsmen in Lokai have turned away their faces from me." He inhaled through his thick beaked nose and fingered his sparse beard. "We must go to other districts," he ended somberly.

"How can we go to other districts," cries one. "Every pathway here is an old friend, every cliff is a familiar home. How can we go away without ammunition? The people will never stand it, there's nowhere to get arms and it would mean the end of the struggle and surrendering to the mercy of the victors."

Many a Pasha and Bai and Bek agreed with the speaker, but they held their tongues. It's not always necessary to speak of one's intentions. A huge Mongol, stout and greasy, pulls at his pipe and relates the unfortunate adventures overtaking his troops during the last few days.

"First a squadron of Uzbeks cut down 35 Djigiti, and took prisoners and horses. Then they cut down seven more at Mundi. Once ruffian took six Bassmachi with Djigiti and rifles. Several Djigiti were lost at the Kara-kli pass and two more battalions were waiting at the hill. Only the night saved us. They're swarming like ants in the valley. You can't tell where you may meet them."

"The accursed ruffians fell upon us in the Rengan hills," complained another. "We were going to scatter as usual but they occupied all the cracks and crevices. We had to fight. Oi, what a lot of good Djigiti fell! We left behind us 16 killed and numbers of horses, saddles and robes. Thirty Djigiti surrendered to the Kyafirs. The Kyafirs fight like devils. They have plenty of rifles and steel to tear the Djigitis to pieces."

Every one has a similar story to tell. But you don't always need to say what's happened to you. They held their tongues.

Afterwards, resting from their long day in the saddle, they lie about gossiping about Ibragim. Old man Pasha Kul, an uncle of Ibragim, indicates his nephew with a jerk of the head:

"Never once has he spent the night in the village. He's afraid. He's got hold of some Kyafir cloaks and always sleeps in the hills, even when it rains. He doesn't trust his own Djigiti and always stays in the rear when fighting is going on, not to be killed by his own men. He'll only eat with the Mullah, for fear of being poisoned. The Djigiti are angry. They think he has robbed them. They say they have won victory for him and all they get for their pains is death. Ibragim was once as firm as a rock, now he is a quaking marsh. I think it would be better to surrender today than to die tomorrow. Will the funeral plaints and the tears of the women over my tomb give me back my life?"

He waved his hands.

"Cursed be he who taught this to the Djigiti!" exclaimed another. "May the voice of ruin sound continually in his ears! May he die young! Have you heard how the last Djigiti left in a battalion, went to the Kyafirs and took with them their commander's head to show their submission. Accursed! You can't even believe the Djigiti any more."

And Ibragim Bek was forced to give in to the "cowards," to agree to surrender to the mercy of the victors. But the Bassmachi were mortally offended. "It wasn't you who gave me my arms," said one defiantly, "and I'm not going to give them back to you."

After a week of intensive fighting in the mountains another stormy conference was held. Many were absent from it. Some had fallen victims to Red Army swords, others had been taken to Stalinabad to acquaint themselves with this strange thing, the Soviet power and the town that had suddenly sprung up there.

This time Ibragim could find nothing hopeful to say. He was forced to declare that it was impossible to oppose the Soviets with such forces and that he would have to go to Afghanistan for ammunition and supplies. But everybody knew what that meant. They did not mean to be left alone, let Ibragim stay with them and face the music!

But Ibragim Bek, the glorious leader of the Bassmachi, fled from Tadjikistan on June 10 with the piteous remnants of his band, fled to the mountain ravines in Baisun.*

The sowing was accomplished. And what an expenditure of strength and substance and human life it cost! If all this heroic work by the Red Army, the volunteers and the stick brigades could have been put into the cultivation of cotton, miracles could have been accomplished, vast territories covered with the precious Egyptian cotton, foreign cotton planted, bales accumulated and the growth of three years covered in one.

Strange and unexpected were the fruits of this spring sowing in Tadjikistan: 970 Bassmachi killed, 85 per cent of the sowing plan fulfilled, nearly 2,000 Bassmachi surrendered, over 200 taken prisoners. Not a single one of the raiders escaped from Tadjikistan. The wheat sowing was fulfilled 141 per cent. Thousands of horses and English rifles were seized. The Stalinabad district was decorated for the successful conduct of the spring sowing.

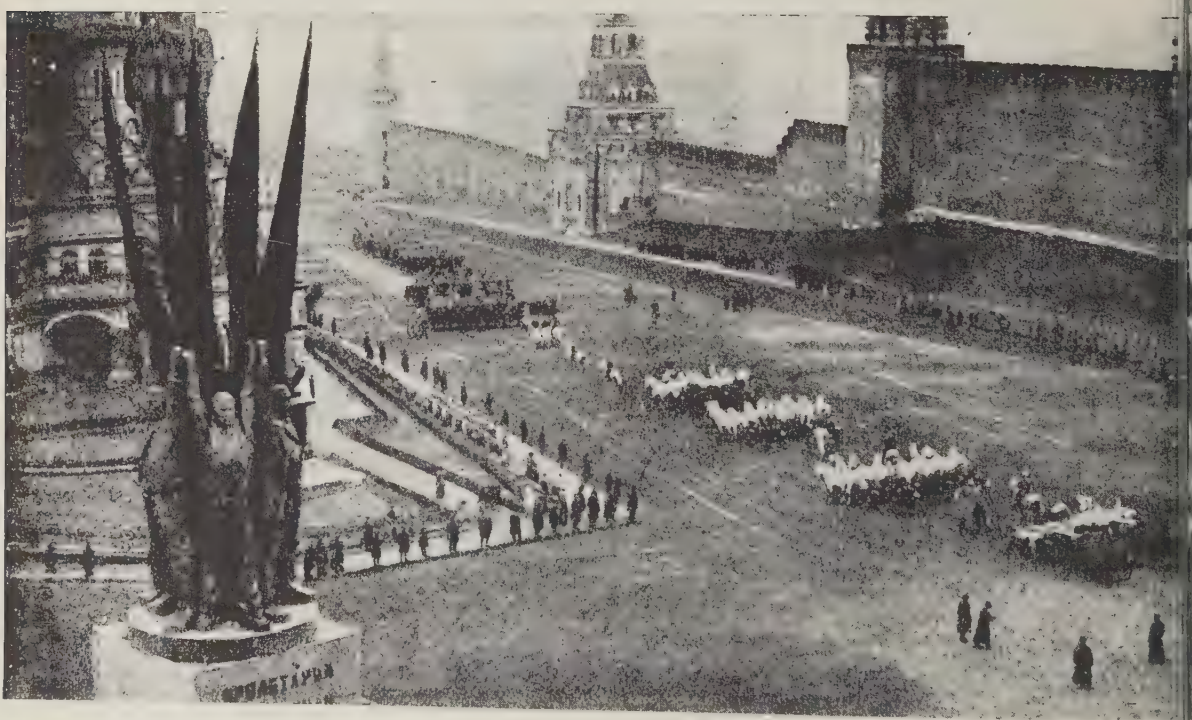
The Tadjikistan sowing cost scores of brave and devoted heads, ruined cooperatives, burned down schools and hospitals, but the cotton crop will be all right. The Party directing the struggle made no allowances for these events. The deficiency is being made up for by energetic banking of the earth around the roots of the young plants. Yes, the cotton will be all right!

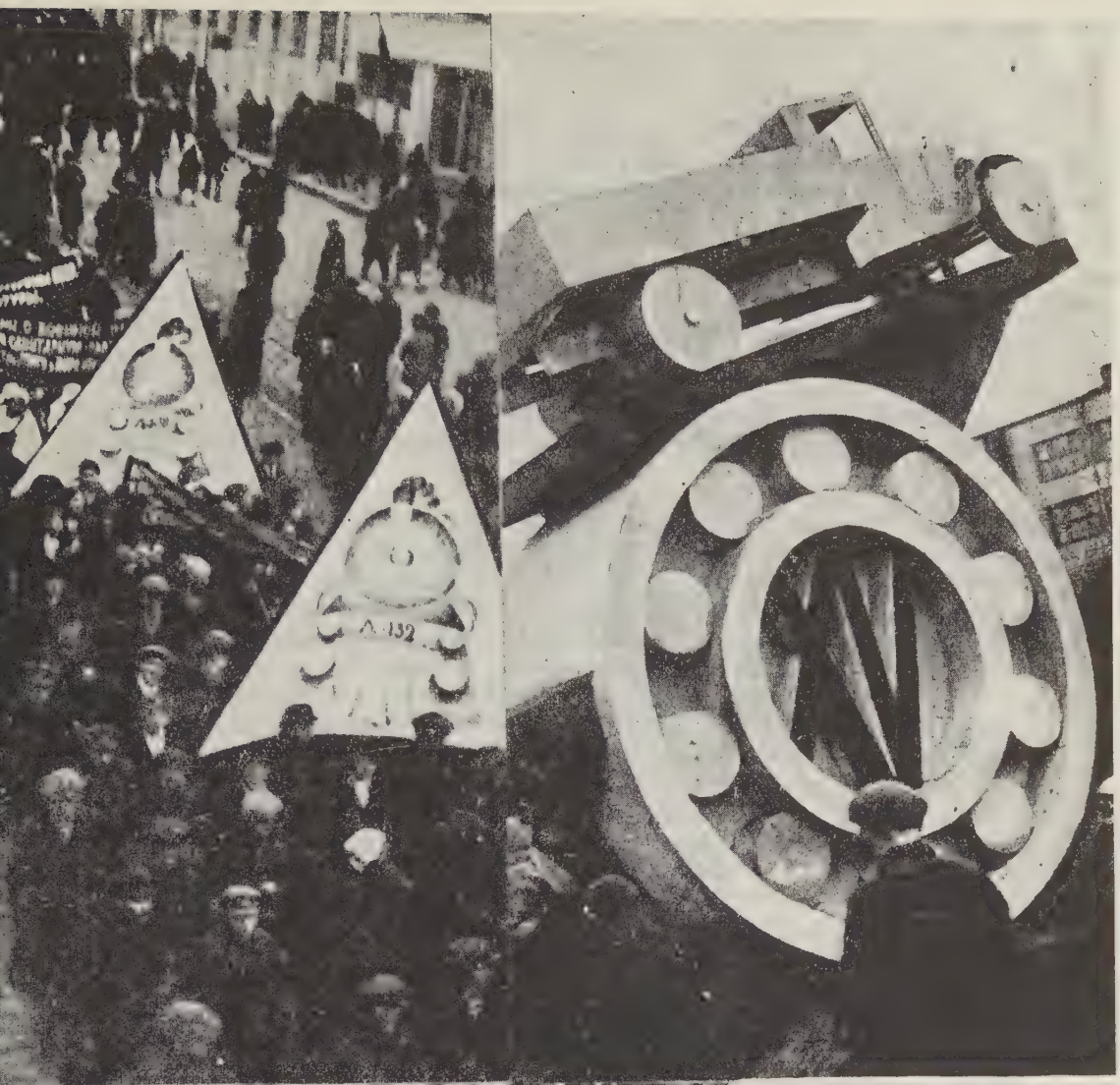
* Ibragim Bek was seized, while crossing the river Kafernigan near Stalinabad, on June 23, by collective farm workers in the villages of Hodji Bul-bulana and Ishkabada and volunteers from Mukum Sultana, and handed over to the Soviet authorities.

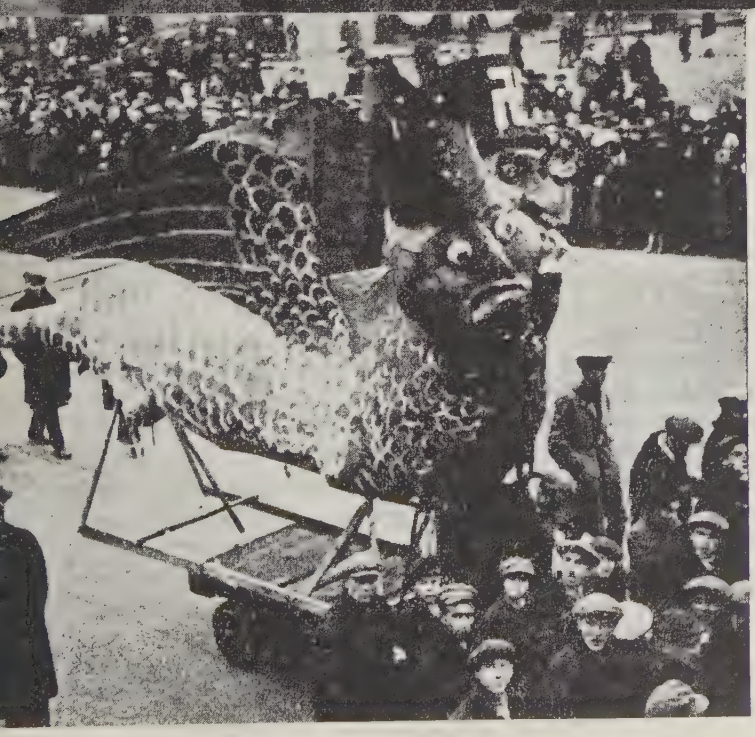
15 th Anniversary of the October Revolution in Moscow

Above: The Red army on Red Square

Below: The artillery passes







Above: Auto float on Peasant Square and railway workers on Sretenka street

Below: Anti-religious and anti-fascist float on Pushkin Square

ARTICLES and CRITICISM

A. Lunacharsky

HAUPTMANN: From Sunrise to Sunset

The Seventieth Anniversary of Hauptmann

1

Unanimity may have been lacking, and differences of tone may have existed, but for all that Germany has celebrated the seventieth anniversary of the birth of Gerhart Hauptmann, her greatest living poet, with due solemnity.

The venerable poet himself contributed to the brilliance of the celebrations by presenting German literature and the German theatre with a remarkable new drama entitled *Before Sunset,* just in time for the anniversary.

The poet would seem to have chosen the title in order to establish some connection between this his latest work, and the play with which his tempestuous literary career began - *Before Sunrise.* I would also draw a parallel between the earliest and latest dramatic works of Hauptman, for such a parallel cannot fail to be instructive.

Before doing so, however, it may be as well to give, however briefly, our social and cultural estimate of the significant figure of Gerhardt Hauptmann.*

2

The ex-kaiser Wilhelm II, who persecuted Hauptmann systematically, and did all in his power to injure him, referred to him in public as "a poisoner of the national German spirit."

This is, of course, all to the good, and only raises our esteem for Hauptmann. Unfortunately, however, the ex-kaiser's attitude to Hauptmann was the result, not so much of the advanced ideas and intensity of the writer's social-political outlook, as of the shallowness, ignorance, backwardness and obtusity of the erstwhile monarch.

Even *Vorwaerts,* quoting, in an article on Hauptmann, the extremely favourable opinion expressed by von-Buelow, when he was Wilhelm's prime minister, is bound to admit that high praise from the lips of a shallow and superficial dilettante like von Buelow can hardly be considered very flattering to the hero of the present celebrations. As a matter of fact, many persons and circles in their essence profoundly conservative, are to be found among the admirers of Hauptmann.

Was Hauptmann, then, even a revolutionary? Yes. In a certain sense he was. He was the greatest of those petty-bourgeois literary leaders who, following in the footsteps of Zola, endeavoured to inject merciless honesty and austere naturalism into German literature. The pictures of real life which, like Arno Holz and others of his contemporaries at that time, he held up in the mirror of his art, were biting enough to be sure, and all that the writers deigned to reply to the complaints of their irate contemporaries was a laconic: "Don't blame the mirror because your face is crooked!," or words to that effect, approximating the English injuction: "If the cap fits, wear it!"

Any estimate of the work of Gerhardt Hauptmann must take into account the opinion of that knight-errant of art for art's sake, Plekhanov.

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* I am giving a general summary of Hauptmann and his works in my essay "Hauptmann and Goethe; an Experiment in Historico-Literary Parallels."

According to Plekhanov, a devotion to art for its own sake often bordering upon the fanatical is to be found among those representatives of the petty-bourgeoisie who feel themselves to be profoundly at odds with life. Such was the case with Zola and Hauptmann, and herein lies their revolutionary quality.

Plekhanov, however, goes on to say that this quarrel with the status quo only relates to certain outrageous features in society, to what may be described as the unsightly surface of society. The champions of art for art's sake do not ask themselves what are the profound inner causes of the absurdities they show up and the suffering they expose, they are not profound enough to go to the deep roots of manifestations which they recognise as objectionable, to question the foundations of bourgeois society, and to rise in revolt against them.

"Such writers," says Plekhanov, "while criticising individual features, nevertheless, remain themselves in all essentials, within the framework of bourgeois society."

Herein lay their great weakness, as has been pointed out quite lately by Henry Barbusse, in his excellent article on Zola.

Plekhanov thinks that it is precisely because of its superficiality and lack of the true fighting spirit that the creative program of naturalism leaves the reader profoundly dissatisfied, so that it is often succeeded by every variety of romanticism and mysticism, fraught with dreams and struggling endeavour, but equally superficial in their hostility to actuality, and equally incapable of rising to the level of a really revolutionary attitude.

One of the most interesting things about Hauptmann is that both these schools are housed in his personality, so that we have Hauptmann the realist and Hauptmann the mystic. In both cases, however, he is the same half-hearted critic, standing in awe of the foundations of that very society which he criticises.

Hauptmann has ever been a man of caution, and unfortunately this caution has its roots in his being, and is not merely external, is no mere reluctance to irritate the gendarmerie and those patriotic geese ever ready to set up a honking at the sigh of an attack on the capitol of the bourgeoisie.

In justice to Hauptmann it must be admitted that he has not always been consistently cautious, and that he has even been "insolent" now and then. An example of this is his first drama, written as a young man, but there is also plenty of "insolence" to be found in *The Weavers,* in the *Gala Performance* which the hundredth anniversary of the "war of emancipation" (1813), inspired him to write, and in some other works. Every time Hauptmann showed himself capable of audacity he wove a rose that will never fade into his poet's wreath, and the defamations and abuse showered upon him each time by the reactionaries have become, in the course of years, so many badges of distinction in the eyes of all the progressive elements in Europe.

As has, however, already been said, it is Hauptmann's misfortune that his caution comes from within. He has never been able to shake off his middle-class ideals, with which goes something of the preacher, and his essentially superficial class-intellectualism and sentimentality.

Thus it is that in his boldest flights there seems to be a rope round his ankles, which the mighty pull of his wings is unable to sever: his social origin makes itself felt at the psychological moment, and drags him down to earth. And strive as he may to paint his native dove-cote an azure blue, and assure himself and others that it is in very truth sky-high, the dove-cote remains a dove-cote and nothing more, and we see that Hauptmann was not destined to become the falcon sung of by Gorki in his "Heroic Madness."

Hauptmann is, nevertheless, a very great man, with the true poetic gift, and true humanity, and he has often felt profound disgust for his surroundings. Sometimes if one places an ear against the heart of certain of his works one can hear groans from the poet's own heart, showing that there is a flame within him which would fain burst out. Hauptmann's latest play, *Before Sunset,* is such a work.

3

But we will begin at the beginning, with *Before Sunrise.* This is a social drama in five acts. It was written forty-four years ago and performed for the first time on October 20th, 1889, by the "Union of Free Theatres." At that time Hauptmann made one of a circle of talented young writers, profoundly at odds with society, but finding no revolutionary means for breaking with it. They were all typical disciples of Zola. "Our business," they said, "is to reflect life in our art with the utmost faithfulness, not shrinking from any of its distortions. It is not our business to draw any political conclusions whatsoever."

Tall, auburn, delicate the young Hauptmann inspired the whole circle with enormous respect, and raised the greatest hopes. Some saw in him a likeness to Schiller, others noted his Goethe-esque profile, but so far he had not written anything of real value. And then came the first sounding chord—the play we are now discussing.

When, much later, after the public scandal of *The Weavers,* Hauptmann assured the judge investigating the affair that he had not intended this drama of working-class poverty and a working-class revolt as a call for protest from the lower classes, but merely as a "drama of suffering", merely as a "warning to the upper classes, to draw their attention to the sufferings of the poor," he was perfectly sincere.

His first youthful drama interested him first and foremost from a technical point of view: the very coarseness of the material attracted him, and the possibility of relentless treatment. And yet, while displaying great talent in the sombre description of a family ruined by drink, Hauptmann never rises to any social generalizations. The longings which make themselves felt in the speeches of the various characters and something in the nature of a promise implied in the very title (after all the sun *does rise!),* do not alter matters.

The bourgeois world was nevertheless extremely irritated and excited by the appearance of this play. According to the press the dramatist was "an individual with a markedly criminal physiognomy, an individual from whom nothing but plays which were at once rebellious and unclean could be expected." He was dubbed successively anarchist, the most immoral dramatist of the century, tap-house poet, or merely a swine. One critic declared that Hauptmann wanted to turn the German Theatre into a brothel.

The performance, according to Henstein, who was present, was continually accompanied by stamping and whistling, and when the author appeared before the curtain the most infernal din was raised, still further increased by the fact that the sympathisers of the young innovator replied to his numerous opponents with applause and loud shouts of approval.

It was one of the most notorious theatrical scandals in Germany, something like the famous performance of Victor Hugo's *Eriane* in Paris.

It was however, a very definite beginning. The note of that great sincerity, that desire to stick to the path laid down by conscience and literary convictions had already been struck and at the same time the absence of real revolutionary radicalism, characteristic of the poet all through his life had begun to show itself.

4

Hauptmann is now seventy years old.

Life has dealt kindly with him. Rich, officially recognised as a great modern writer all over the world, as well as in his own country, he is well preserved, and brimming over with ideas and creative force.

But life has not been consistently kind. Hauptmann has known failure and suffering both in his literary and intimate life. But it is not this with which we are concerned at the moment: what interests us is the melody achieved by the seventy-year old Hauptmann, the vital conclusions to which he has come.

Before Sunset, Hauptmann's new play, is excellent both from the literary and theatrical point of view. It has gained wide popularity. It has glorified the anniversary. It is as if the veritable sunset had caressed with its lingering ray this late fruit of a great talent.

Werner Krauss in Berlin and Emil Jannings in Vienna have had dizzying successes in the part of Mattias Klausen, the hero, a part which is at once attractive and fresh in conception.

This is in itself sufficient to make the play of interest to the Russian public.

Its plot, is, however, something of a disappointment. It treats of a seventy-year old privy-councillor, a great capitalist, represented as a man of the highest and most subtle culture, broad views, and the creator of his own great business.

At the age of seventy, Klausen, like Goethe, falls passionately in love with a young girl, and, moreover awakes passionate feelings in the young straight forward, fearless heart of the girl, who loves him for his tenderness and talent and not for his money.

Klausen is more fortunate than was the seventy-year old Goethe, on whom a prudent mother refused to bestow the hand of the young girl who had roused his tardy passion.

So far so good. The real point of the play lies, however, in the fact that Mattias Klausen's heirs, some of whom adore him will not hear of this "appalling marriage." Led by the capitalist's son-in-law, a coarse shallow fellow, at once avaricious and tyrannical, and incited thereto by the lawyer Hansfeldt, who owes all his success in life to the old man, outwardly correct, but inwardly cunning and conscienceless, these relations bring an action for legal guardianship over Klausen.

Since Klausen is a man of iron will and clear mind his friends never doubt for a moment that he will win the trial. According to the German law, however, should heirs seeking guardianship bring such an action against the head of a firm who is an old man, he is temporarily disenfranchised for the duration of the trial and a sort of guardian has to be appointed over him. In this case the role of guardian was bestowed upon the perfidious Hansfeldt.

This is undoubtedly a barbarous law, but it hardly seems possible that Hauptmann should have written a long, impassioned play merely to protect rich old men from an absurd law created by their own class.

We must not, however, take the plot too literally. It has been hinted that Hauptmann himself has been at one time or other in like case. This is, however, highly improbable. It is much more likely that the case of a certain wealthy publisher who married a young woman in his old age and was really so to say bound hand and foot by the legal action taken by his heirs (themselves owing all their prosperity to the head of the firm) suggested the plot to him.

No, it is not here that the meaning of Hauptmann's play must be sought.

What are the lineaments which begin to form themselves for the attentive and sympathetic eye, once the externals are dismissed and the inner meaning is sought for?

What sort of a world does Hauptmann describe for us? All his sympathies are on the side of the old man. It is characteristic of Hauptmann that he never stops to ask how his hero's vast fortune has been amassed. A big capitalist is not in himself to be deprecated in the eyes of Hauptmann.

But Klausen is a creative personality. He is the founder of a big business. More, he is a man with a poetic and philosophical outlook, a gifted and noble nature, a man of many-sided and brilliant culture.

And who causes his ruin? Who defiles his passion burning and living despite his age? Who dares to declare him feeble-minded? Who hounds him to death, humbling his dignity, driving him mad—a modern King Lear?

His children.

Have we then a repetition of the story of King Lear? Is it merely another case of the ingratitude of children? Surely not.

Two generations are here represented: one represented by creative mind, a personality that may almost be described as great, the other by avaricious and middle class non-entities, such men and women as compose the ruling class in modern society.

We have seen how in his time that subtle torch-bearer Anatole France, turned in his old age to socialism, even to communism, because he felt that the ruling-class was deteriorating and that human culture was perishing in their keeping. We have heard quite lately Romain Rolland, the most cultured man of our time, for long an advocate of non-resistance to evil, declare solemnly that he was going over to the camp of active revolutionaries, in order to save human culture from the devasting clutches of capitalism. We have heard Bernard Shaw, one of the most brilliant minds in Great Britain, declare that if the hopes in the new world built up by the immortal Lenin and his followers disappointed him, he would despair of the future of humanity.

Still more recently yet another famous leader of the cultural intelligentsia—Henri Gide—declared that he was on the side of the Soviet "experiment" with all his soul, and was ready to give his life for it, since if communism is not victorious night will have fallen for humanity.

As we have already said Hauptmann is a prudent man, both outwardly and inwardly. We are not likely to see the day when he denounces the old bourgeois world, and welcomes the new world. . . proletarian, non-class and truly humane.

When, however, we are shown an old man of high culture, persecuted by his degenerate, typical representatives of modern capitalists, thrashing about on his death-bed, taking poison, and saying over and over again "I thirst for destruction" and when this play, written with such concentrated passion, itself so moving, bears the ominous title *Before Sunset,* we are bound to think of its inner melody, to hearken to the beating of its heart. This heart tells us: "The cold twilight is coming, the sun is hiding behind the horizon, it is growing darker and darker; not so long ago there were real human beings among the "gentry", but the ruling classes are degenerating, petty-shop-keepers, non-entities, are taking power into their hands, and the laws support them. Look on this picture and learn from it that everything is going downhill, heading for the precipice. Night is falling. I myself, an old poet, covered with glory, sometimes feel inclined to wash my hands of this rapidly cooling world, and in me, as in my contemporary and hero Klausen, arises a longing and a thirst for destruction."

Such is the inner harmony of Hauptmann's new play. He is grief-stricken. We ourselves would prefer cheerful, glad sounds, for we are people of a new dawn. But we can pay due respect to the latest work in which can be made out the hollow groan of despair, which does not venture, cannot become a call for an active protest, but is, nevertheless, an anguished and honourable, if passive, protest.

And, however the borugeoisie may cover Hauptmann with their praises, praises which may be compared to those of the egregious v. Beulov, we although we are unable to claim him as our own, are nevertheless entitled to tell the bourgeoisie—you lie, he is not *your* poet!

Berlin, 1932

V. Ivasheva

LIONEL BRITTON: English Writer

The friends of the English writer Lionel Britton, among them G. B. Shaw and Bertrand Russell, had to work vigorously for two years to get his novel, *Hunger and Love* published. It was finally issued by Putnam Ltd. in February 1931.

The appearance of this work had the effect of a bomb explosion in "respectable" England. Britton's book contained an indictment of the capitalist system and the bourgeois critics in the capitalist *Daily Mail, Daily Express, Times,* etc., poured out buckets of vitriolic abuse on the novelist.

"Crazy," is the laconic opinion of one of Britton's milder critics, while the main attack against the author accuses him of communist propaganda and spreading the "red danger."

A class battle is being waged around this book which scathingly attacks the capitalist system throughout its 700 pages.

While the capitalist press indulges in attacks on Britton, G. B. Shaw—who may claim to have "discovered" the young writer—describes him as a "a young man that can deliver the goods," and Upton Sinclair—first in a letter to the publishers of *Hunger and Love,* and next in the preface to the German edition—declares it to be "supremely great. . . . having the divine rage of genius. . . . revolutionary fire and at the same time a world-embracing grasp," and he places the author on a par with H. G. Wells.

Britton's extremely interesting book unquestionably awaits the appraisal of its artistic value and of its class significance on the front of the literary struggle, in the light of Marxian critique.

A homeless waif in childhood, Britton went through a severe school of life. Constantly changing occupations, he never became a factory worker. He worked successively as an apprentice in a bicycle shop, errand boy in a grocery store, book hawker, salesman for a book firm, a docker for a short time; subsequently he was Rothstein's secretary in the Soviet Delegation in London, then again became salesman in a bookshop, and so on. For only a short time he was a member of the British Socialist Party. Upon the outbreak of the imperialist war he became an active anti-war propagandist and was frequently arrested and jailed for his activity. With all this he stubbornly remained a lone unattached rebel, showing all the traits of the typical anarchist.

Britton has amassed a vast store of miscellaneous knowledge. He is well versed in physics, mathematics, astronomy, etc, and knows a score of foreign languages. Yet he had but little schooling or even opportunities for independent study. He began to work on *Hunger and Love* shortly after the war, declaring it his contribution to the revolutionary struggle. *Hunger and Love* to a very limited extent is autobiographical, in reality it concerns itself but little with the life of individual personalities. In fact *Hunger and Love* is scarcely a history of the life of Arthur Phelps, practically the only "person" in the book.

The 700 closely printed pages of *Hunger and Love* can hardly be classed under any of the extant literary definitions. There is such a variety of *genres* in the book, while the boundaries between fiction and philosophy on one hand, and prose and poetry on the other, are scarcely discernable.

It is also difficult to speak of a "plot" in this novel. The plot is primitive, fragmentary, almost schematic.

Quite deliberately—this being one of the features of his rebellion against all the canons and traditions of bourgeois society—Britton defies all the restrictions of the established literary language creating a quite arbitrary language of his own, ignoring the rules of academic syntax, punctuation marks and the rest of linguistic traditions, his sole aim being in every case to attain the utmost flexibility and expressiveness. With equal deliberation and defiance he destroys all the boundaries between artistic and theoretical literature, shifting and displacing them at will.

Most of the time the author of *Hunger and Love* theorizes, argues, and summarizes. The life of Phelps—given in separate sketches which bear a somewhat impressionistic character—obviously serves the author merely as a pretext for these general arguments. These fragmentary sketches, although quite poignant in their effect, are not intended by the author as the basis of his work. They are in every case structurally the starting points for philosophic argument by the author.

Nevertheless *Hunger and Love* is not a "theoretical work with art illustrations." The creative plan of the author sheds a curious light upon the whole work. In this plan, the substitution of theorizing for artistic portrayal acquires a deliberately demonstrative character. Moreover, the author establishes in all cases his own rules, and in his manuscript play *Animal Ideas* he says about his own style:

"It is more complex but the minds of the future will be more complex. Men of my type look rather forward to the developing complexity and expanding minds of the future than back to our simpler and more wormlike ancestors in the past. . . ."

"Many people now living," he continues, "will find work of this character difficult to understand, but I would rather feel that I am coming to birth and keeping pace with the time and finding my appreciation among—the more complex and more human natures that are gradually multiplying in the world than that I were a mere dead body out of date before the work saw the light."

As against everything conventional, Britton puts forward his own reasoning that is free from all tradition and conventionality. The arbitrary fusion of the two different methods of Britton's somewhat anarchistic protest against all conventions, no matter by whom or for whatever purpose established.

Britton usually starts by depicting some situation in the life of Phelps, but soon he rambles off into lengthy arguments on general topics in which social problems are frequently handled upon an inter-planetary plane, touching upon the vicissitudes of the universe, the birth and death of worlds, etc. Somewhat chaotically, now and then executing incredible thematic jumps, Britton reveals here the whole of his vast erudition, turning the book into a comprehensive, yet entirely unsystematized encyclopedia. Such theoretical superstructure on top of a fragmentary description of some situation taken out of the life of Phelps—this also being done without any particular worry about the coherence of the plot—is usually carried out without any connecting passage and apparently with no regard to the preceding text, ending in a literary stunt which takes the form of a harsh shriek, challenge, or abuse, levelled against the existing realities. The succession of these different features in his style has, however, its definite creative logic.

Phelps is introduced by Britton from the very first page of the book as a lone and forlorn laborer who has to worry all his life about earning his daily bread. At the same time the author reveals on the very first page his basic creative position, emphasizing that to him the human being is the "toad" of Flaubert which has become famous in literary theory, whose substance consists in its belonging to the animal world, in its physiological properties:

> "Arthur Phelps was just beginning to think about it. Here he is, ladies and gentlemen, on the earth. Life, you will observe, has different forms, in worms and crabs and men. . . . A living thing—it might be a maggot or it

> might be a man; this one here is Arthur Phelps. He is the young of the species, zoologicaly known as man."

Clearly presenting Phelps to the reader as a unit of a zoological species, Britton makes use of this assertion to develop his argument to its logical conclusion:

> "Considered zoologically in this way our definition of man would be a wide one, and that is probably how A. Phelps managed to creep in; it would include men with black skins, yellow skins, red skins. It would even include the youth of the working class."

The subsequent development of the personality of Phelps from a multitude of quite disjointed and fragmentary pictures selected by the author with a view to providing a background for his further general arguments, is a repetition of the development of Britton himself.

Phelps endeavours to "get on in the world," to become "middle class," and along the road to this utopian middle-class bliss he has a hard struggle against tremendous odds presented by the realities of capitalism. Constantly threatened, and frequently afflicted with unemployment, Phelps uses his few spare moments snatched from his employer to imbibe a varied stock of knowledge and information.

At the same time Phelps' thirst after knowledge is constantly checked by irrepressible craving after "intimate relations with a pure woman," which are impossible under the capitalist system, the "filthy and eavesdropping" system which offers to such as Phelps but prostitutes or dooms them to "love hunger."

Having finally arrived at his little haven of bourgeois happiness, Phelps perishes among the first victims of the imperialist war into which he was driven again by the system of bourgeois coercion, hypocrisy, and exploitation.

This bare outline built of fragmentary episodes, covers all of the plot.

Conceived as a zoological specimen, Phelps is naturally shown by the author as developing along these lines. All the incidents in the life of Phelps as a representative of the "oppressed section of mankind," yet chiefly as a representative of the "human species," are depicted by the author under the aspect of physiological evolution:

> "You're Arthur Phelps and you're growing older day by day, and presently the incident will be closed. Man came through the fish stage, he was marine and confined to the sea, but he swished about through the water and increased his range; he was coeleterate, and what was it luck? that he wasn't ultimately fixed to the ground with a stalk? he was protistic and lord love us! he might have developed into a tree."

At the same time Phelps does not exist for the author as a character, as an individual personality, as a definite slice of reality. Britton treats Phelps as the generalized, schematized image of the oppressed type, and the facts of his life showing how he was affected by his environment (fighting against the circumstances is out of the question for Phelps) are depicted only to the extent that the author understands these to be the experiences of hundreds and thousands like him. Hence the deliberate absence of individualization in the image of Phelps, the express generalization of his experiences, as a sort of collective picture of the experiences of the entire oppressed section of mankind. Accordingly Britton depicts not a single, relatively small slice of reality, but endeavors, with more or less success, to portray reality as a whole. Phelps is one of the oppressed. Over him hovers the boss, the exploiter, the owner who purchased his labor-power. This point of sold human labor is the aspect under which Britton treats every individual case in the story:

> "Customer's gone. Old Sarner looks at you queerly. He speaks cheerfully and fatherly. But he looks at you queerly. Profit very nearly went away from

him. Profit is his life. There's cradle, and there's grave; he lives in between; for profit.

""It's his life. He has nothing else. What else has he got? He looks at you queerly. He talks to you like a father. Bad bawl over. Language of game; sport-give-take-pull-together, talks like man playing fields of Eton. But—there's a threat in it. Don't forget he owns you! Don't forget his God. He speaks fatherly to you language of game. But there is something of tiger and wolf, something of threat of dark—there is a snarl. He owns you. Don't forget that. Body and blood! Blood! Body and soul!

"The old Saxon serf wore an iron ring round his neck, the bull wears it through his nose. Your collar is "linen" from the cotton puds of Carolina—fuzzy upland—short staple stuff—wears though in the laundry—cheated you in the shop—pressing down on your jugular—reminding you always that your life is not your own, no right to comfort, no *right* to life. The old Sarners of the earth are padding about in the dark. Watching you. Meat for them, whenever they like.

"Language of game; with snarl. Losing him profit. Be careful, the social darkness will get you; you will be one with the dark; you will be unemployed."

Thus Britton understands the relations between the exploiter and his victim: "He owns you . . . . Don't forget his God."

Britton merely states the facts without calling for a struggle against them. The complexity of the relations between the exploiters and the exploited in capitalist society, the struggle between them, are things which Britton does not see.

Shown by the author in various occupations as a wage-earner save as a factory worker, Phelps invariably remains a lone, isolated individual, helplessly wrestling with an organized system of oppression, brute force, and exploitation.

In order to show the might of this system and its various springs, Britton, as already said, selects the most varied and what he considers the most telling situations in the life of Phelps. Now as an errand boy he displeases a grumbling customer and is sacked by the boss without further ado; now he is the lodger in a filthy stinking hole where the bed linen is never changed and is never aired; now he reads a book and feels that he does this also as part of his service to the boss; now he has to cringe before customers in order to avoid being thrown out into the street; now it is the church which bars Phelps' longing for woman; finally it is the system of bourgeois ideological coercion which drives him into the war. . . . .

Every time he goes into lengthy arguments on one topic or another, Britton generalizes and at times he comes very close to (but never quite reaches it) a correct understanding of the mainsprings of capitalist reality.

In describing crises, Britton almost arrives at the main cause. He understands that the bourgeois state as a system of bourgeois violence and domination, but he shows no understanding of the contour of the ruling class. He usually speaks of "mayors, bishops, and lords," and it is not accidental that he omits the decisive figures of the big capitalist. In one passage, commenting on the advertising boards on the streets of London that are scanned by the employed Phelps, Britton gives the following interpretation of them:

"Our soap is the best; our tobacco is the best; come to our store, we want your money! Refuse all substitutes; we want your money! Put up a tariff wall-keep out the wealth. No hands wanted! no wealth must be produced! Our machinery for punching is not ready. Nobody must produce unless we are in a position to bag the lot; speed up the spending. We live on the spending. Destroy! We live on destruction! Let us have war! It squanders

the money! Get on with your job, you scum! The sack! What's that? You've got no money? Constable!"

The State, as the apparatus of violence, is not infrequently depicted by Britton in his impressionistic "despatches":

"The copper with the bludgeon, the soldier with the gun. The shopkeeper must have his profit, the landlord must have his rent, your life belongs to the employer. The farmer takes the fleece off the sheep. If you are quiet and make no resistance the policeman will not bash you and the soldier will not stick the bayonet into your guts. Go down Whitehall or round St. James Palace; see the soldiers with the bayonets fixed. Remember that when the landlord comes for his rent."

Britton sees the dependence of all the ideological super-structures upon the bourgeois system as a whole, and more than dependence, the active role played by them. Yet his approach varies as regards the ideological hegemony of the ruling class and its exponents. At times he writes:

"The (alluding to philosophers and theoreticians generally) may not be mentallly dishonest. Making such a good thing out of it. Motives so clear. Can't believe such fools as try to make out. Motives so clear. No criminal in Christendom makes steady 5,000 pounds: send to prison for stealing less than stealing self. Business magnates dishonest, talk unhappiness riches—go on pinching all can get. Philosophers more difficult. Not quite so obvious, how they assist the Foul Purpose in society."

At other times he bursts out in sharp attacks on the exponents of bourgeois "culture":

"You see this is a Prime Minister civilization. The Prime Minister stands in the way. What's duty drawers to him. My lords, the House of Lords—will they organize society so that we can have a clean shirt every day—what's a clean shirt to them? Here's mighty Empire. What does a louse or two matter to its organizers? Greatest statesmen of our age walk around London and sniff . . . . . .

They are louse minds
They like dirt
It's their nature
They controls

Thus, Britton depicts, and consequently sees many things correctly, or nearly so. Nevertheless, Phelps—conceived by him as personifying the "oppressed," as one out of a mass of similar "Phelpses"—hopelessly remains to the very end a petty bourgeois, and a petty bourgeois only:

"You're all right. You're doing your job: the guvnor's satisfied with you, the prince and the minister's pleased, the bishop's as contented as hell, your wages are going up, you're making your way, presently you will be able to save up for a bit of furniture."

Preparations are in progress for the imperialist war. In the face of imminent big events and big social concussions, the miserable Phelps believes that he himself will be spared by the war. In depicting a miserable and confused individualist that is quite isolated and detached from the collective body, Britton apparently does not even suspect that the image created by him does not in the least resemble the mass of the exploited and oppressed of the twentieth cenury. . .. In his portrayal of the image of the toiler, Britton shows his own understanding, or rather misunderstanding of the type:

"Life, life what has death to do with you. . . . You are Arthur Phelps.

> You take no notice of that surely, all that—it cannot be for your kind, for people like you? . . . . You are Arthur Phelps: how could anything like that happen to you? It these people want to have their ribs stove in and their legs torn off-well, let 'em get on with it: it isn't your business.
>
> "What you're more concerned with is getting on in the world. You are putting a few shillings into the bank. Every week you bring a little bit in. .
>
> "You are beginning to feel more secure. You are beginning to feel that you have a share in society, you are getting your feet planted more firmly in life. Have a look round Golders Green Garden Suburb or some of the newer houses they're putting up round places like Wimbledon Park. . . . . Wouldn't be so bad, you know, all on your own in one of those little places, nicely furnished. Perhaps you would have a gramophone. . .bookcases anyhow, and a writing desk; books all over the place and a bit of study to yourself. And Doreen."

And Phelps goes on dreaming about this middle class paradise:

> "You are middle class now. . . You have entered upon your career. You will have authority, you will be master . . . and you will certainly have your real house with bookshelves and a writing desk. This is the future including all your hopes."

These, according to Britton, are the "hopes" of the Phelpes, and capitalist reality at every step demonstrates to the Phelpses how little founded these hopes are. Phelps perishes in the war. But the impression gained from Britton's book is that these Phelpses are the masses. . . . .

Thus, in drawing the image of the oppressed, Britton creates a fairly clear but exceedingly narrow image and does not go any farther than depicting a petty-bourgeois individual, or at best an intellectual, completely crushed down by modern capitalism; yet in no case the image of the oppressed proletarian, the "oppressed" who represents the deciding force in our contemporary class battles. Britton's failure to understand the proletariat as a class—which causes him in his creation to put up Phelps as the generalization of all the oppressed, and in this respect a wrong image—renders the author incapable of drawing the true image of the proletarian, and in the only instance in the whole book where such an attempt is made, the typical features of the proletarian are substituted by those of the classical hobo.

The only time that he sketches the image of a worker—although distinguished by the author from that of Phelps—Britton furnishes additional proof of his inability, in his present stage of creative development, to depict the figure of the proletarian, the representative of the ascendant class:

"There's a dirty-looking blighter just in front, one of the working class—you know, the real working class, you being middle class yourself—chap with an overcoat although the weather's as hot as hell, walks with all his foot on the ground, no bend, no joints in his legs, no spring, none of the vigor of life in him ,one of those chaps with the stench of stale tobacco oozing out of him yards all round, takes his dirty old pipe out of his dirty old mouth, and spits his dirty sput out on to the pavement. . . . ."

Through the whole of his book, while verbally combatting individualism and at the same time demonstrating the biological fitness of man for collective organization, Britton, owing to his total inability to understand the motive forces in society, remains in deed a profound and out-and-out idealist. While presenting Phelps as a petty-bourgeois who climbs towards middle class prosperity and is ruthlessly thrown down into the abyss by the mighty hand of capitalist violence, Britton pictures him as an absolutely lone individual standing alone against organized capital who, owing to his

vague petty bourgeois character, is absolutely unable to find his collective associates in the struggle, to join the united front of working class struggle against capital.

In order to prove our contention, we will quote a few characteristic passages from the book:— Britton speaks on the subject of the banefulness of individualism:

> "If you take the left-overs from all combinations and associations of all cells in the body you have a unified group of associated energies which we know as the soul. . . . .
>
> "With this conception it is also quite easy to see that human beings as well as cells can be so associated and therefore that we can ultimately build up a soul of the world. And that may be something to live for, though we die.
>
> "If the bourgeoisie can stop such a growth, they will. It is opposed to the individualist conception of society. The disease germ is an individualist in the body, although the body is a community of cells. An individualist is a disease germ in the race body. But the race has not yet reached the stage of a community of cells.
>
> "So here we are, all of us units in a diseased race, and the Disease has taken control. Whether we can, individually and on our own, struggle up to humanity I do not know. Although Phelps,—shirt dirty, wants a bath, wants a mind, wants a soul: well, Arthur, do the best you can for yourself."

Thus the writer considers with profound scepticism the possibility of collective struggle by the oppressed and let us reiterate, it is because he pictures to himself these oppressed people as isolated individuals crushed by the capitalist machine. Such is the position which he maintains and emphasizes.

The few remarks made by Britton concerning "Phelps's first acquaintance with the Socialists" emphasize once more the writer's total blindness in approaching the class struggle. In describing Phelps's meeting with the Socialists and in his comments, the author emphasizes that Phelps's isolation is not merely the result of not knowing how to find his associates in the class struggle, but is also due to his own failure to understand the collective struggle. Remaining blind to the end in regard to the motive forces of capitalist society, utterly failing to fathom its intricate mechanism which bristles with contradictions, and in his protest against the system substituting the exploiter with some hazy portrait (of a merchant, bishop, especially of a mayor or a landlord; making almost no mention about manufacturers or about a financier in the whole book), and the exploiter with a type of petty-bourgeois, Britton could not get any further than a bare protest. This as well as his physiological materialism, leads the author to the fallacious idea which substitutes for him the problem of the class struggle.

According to Britton, man can take up the struggle against the surrounding reality and begin to understand it only when his basic physiological needs—hunger and sex—have been satisfied. Here the author gets somewhat confused between his assertion of practical experience as the criterion of understanding and the abstract contemplative understanding which consistently follows from the whole of his ideological position.

Thus, the beginning of the struggle against the bourgeois order of society is pictured by the author as the result of theoretical reasoning and philosophic thinking, which, in their turn, are possible only on a full belly and a satisfied sex instinct.

> "The bourgeoisie," says Britton, "have saved themselves mainly by this device of sex starvation. . . . Next to belly-hunger, sex-hunger is the most imperious of all our needs."

And again:

> "The bourgeoisie have a theory. It is quite simple. They think that if they can keep men's thoughts fully occupied at the very lowest plane of life, belly-starved and sex-starved, there will be no time to worry about the bourgeoisie."

Yet, as elsewhere in the book, while closely approaching the correct understanding of the bourgeois state, Britton advances once again the principle of passive protest:

> "They" (that is, the ruling class), he says, "keep an efficient police and army armed with bludgeons and bayonets and all the latest murder appliances to bash mankind into submission, while the robbery is taking place, but unless mankind in the main did not submit without being bashed, there would have to be more soldiers than public. . "

Thus we see that, apart from rebellion against the existing order of things, *Hunger and Love* purports also to prove the thesis, that the struggle begins only after freeing the thinking abilities of the people from the constant worry about satisfying the basic physiological needs of man. This thesis could be deduced by Britton only upon the basis of his lingering captivity in the ideology of the very class against whom he so vigorously rebels. Notably, he appears to be very much influenced by the bourgeois theory of Freud.

The same reasons of vague ideological dependence are at the bottom of the entire creative method of the author. Having revealed from the first page his conception of man as a particle of nature that is not substantially any different from the worm, the gnat, or the crab, Britton sticks throughout the book to his position of consistent, contemplative materialism.

The evolution of Phelps, and of his whole environment, is by no means traced by the author in its entire complexity, but is rather impressionistically sketched. The growth of Phelps is given by way of showing his passive perception of the environment which was moulding his destiny. Consequently, each sketch reveals a purely mechanistic conception of every movement and a total lack of vital dialectic understanding of the qualitative differences and dynamics of the surrounding realities. Hence the glaring similarity between Britton and the bourgeois French naturalists, especially in depicting such scenes as the wholesale killing of ducks, or the death of an old woman shopkeeper, or a cheap restaurant where the author gives generalized naturalistic descriptions of profoundly different phenomena. Thus, in stressing only that which is common in phenomena that are profoundly different as to quality, the author fails to see the differences and limitations within them, overlooks all the contradictions of the living realities.

He simplifies, being unable to discern the whole complexity and contradictoriness of the phenomena he depicts. From this simplification arise also Britton's particular inclination to dwell on secondary matters while overlooking the fundamental and the essential. Giving his main attention to effect and consequence, the writer frequently keeps mum on the basic causes. Thus, quite frequently instead of showing the real and fundamental aspects of capitalism, he gives merely a minute and profoundly naturalistic sketch of some isolated incident, which might perhaps acquire great importance if it were given in connection with the causes that conditioned it.

Having subjected everything to a sweeping and unreserved denunciation, and finding nowhere the force which might be opposed to the discarded old order of things and undermine it in reality; having rebelled against bourgeois society, yet having far from severed the ties of its ideological influence, and maintaining a thoroughly passive attitude, the writer naturally falls into the profoundest slough of pessimism and skepticism by which his whole work is coloured. This attitude of passivity and resignation impregnates many of Britton's utterances.

"Inside you," he writes, "the life forces press up against their limitations. All over mankind this pressure is slowly accumulating. Human nature squeezes outwards against the containing shell of the best nature of its rulers. Some day I should think something will burst. . . . "

"Some day something will burst," is the helpless deduction drawn by the author. The deduction drawn by Britton from the facts which he observes from his angle of vision, invariably terminates in one persistent motif:

"You're in the snare, Trade has got you. It fixes the hours for you. Nine till eight, hour for dinner, 20 minutes for tea. Your life *ereb va boker* (morning and evening), it passes, and they fix its purpose: to pinch from your fellow men. All the energies of your body, all the rest of your life, and then the undertaker's fee, the parson's fee, the doctor's fee, the ghouls that feed upon disease. And after that it will be as if you had never been. There will have been Atlantis, there will have been Greece, there will have been Rome, there will have been, and you will no longer be. And all the result of your activities will be that you helped the dirty profit sneaks to prey upon their fellow men. Life was a brightness; and the foul thick fog of trade will have come down upon you and nothing will be seen: spar or star, its passage will have been invisible, everything will be as if it had never been."

Or:

"To be born and to be buried. The stillness of the bright sky before. The stillness of the bright sky after. There are the great majestic nebulae in their ages. The unfolding A.P.-20th century, A. P.-10th century, A.P-1st century; what will A. P stand for in the year 200,000, in 2,000 million years from now?"

Throughout the book the author never forgets to remind the reader of the paucity and helplessness of man before the stream of time and matter in which he forms a negligible and entirely dependent particle, thereby blunting the very edge of his protest against oppression and exploitation which—in the light of such interpretation—become an unavoidable and preventable evil.

Particularly forlorn is the tone of the author's musings every time that he sums up the activities of Phelps, all his attempts to get out of the miserable conditions of existence to which he is doomed by the circumstances of capitalist reality:

"That is the future—which holds all the tomorrows. It is coming towards you, Arthur my boy, at the rate of 18.5 miles per sec. . . . You go to it, it comes to you—all motion is relative. . . . In the meantime you wait and your life forces fritter out,—and what is there in this future that will compensate you for this complete, almost total surrender of your life? When the year 200,000 comes along—where will you be then: and what will have happened to man? . . . ."

Thus, by his book, the author not only does not bestir to struggle, but on the contrary, he uses the power of his art to disparage in advance any attempt at struggle in the immutable stream of matter. With all its repeated emphasis on the contradictions of reality, the book is imbued with a pessimism which strikes the predominant key.

The authors mechanistic conception of the processes of evolution in nature and in human society suggest to him a typically opportunistic deduction. Evolution is Britton's hope. Not the class struggle, but the onward course of motion, the evolution of thought, technique, science, progress. Such is the deduction he draws, and in this he sees the whole content of life.

Especially interesting in this respect are the concluding pages of the book, which give a brief and exceedingly characteristic summary of the whole:

". . . . . We question distances and times. We have come through the glorified ages, we are moving on into the future. *Mind* is moving on to *mind. Individuals,* we have

come through the development of the earth. . .. WHO CAN DISTINGUISH ONE RAINDROP FROM ANOTHER IN THE SEA? What consciousness can separate out the separate contributions of its cells? Men live and men die, names distinguish us from each other, the STREAM OF MOVEMENT GOES ON FROM THE PAST INTO THE FUTURE, over the planet. One age flows into another. The ideas of one mind transform themselves into new combinations in the brain of another. . . . .

". . Over the face of the planet men move, the products of their hands are transferred from the interior of the earth to its face, in railway and ship and in the air, the thoughts of men's minds are transmitted in book and journal and radio through the world, and the libraries store up the thinking of past generations, the towns and the buildings and the harbours and the factories spring up, from the earth to the stars, from the past to the future, everything that is in spacetime comes up for question. It is an endless, unceasing movement. . . . "

In conection with the political and economic crisis, the whole of bourgeois science and of bourgeois art and literature is in the throes of the deepest crisis. The path of departure for the better, most conscious and honest elements of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia is towards the left. Naturally, however, the writers that are becoming revolutionized cannot emerge from the very first steps of their creative realignment as consistent dialecticians of materialism. On the contrary, the path of their realignment, the path of their creative growth, is frequently slow and tortuous.

Hunger and Love is the first major work by a writer of unquestionable originality (his play *Brains* may be considered as a sketch of this work) and it affords a brilliant example of the truly gigantic difficulties and obstacles that have to be constantly combatted and surmounted by those writers who have conceived the need of vigorous protest against capitalism, but have not yet found the way of fighting it—the way that leads into the camp of the revolutionary proletariat.

Having imbibed a well-nigh inexhaustible fund of knowledge from the most diverse fields, Britton has at the same time imbibed along with this knowledge a great quantity of the poison of bourgeois ideology, and it proved a by no means easy matter for him to get rid of the poison, although a considerable part of the road has already been covered by the writer in this direction. Britton is still on the first lap of the journey which leads to the final adoption of the position maintained by the opponents of capitalism. The protest contained in the book is still rather object-less due to inability to grasp the motive forces of contemporary capitalist society.

To sum up, what is the specific value of Britton's work to the revolutionary proletariat of the West? It would be a big mistake to ignore the danger for the struggling proletariat that is contained in the pessimism and negation with which this work is impregnated. Britton's nihilism—which denounces the system but takes no creative part in the revolutionary struggle against it—is the sort of thing that can exercise a pernicious and baneful influence upon the perplexed mentality of a disgruntled but timid petty-bourgeoisie.

With all this, by the great force of his creative work, by the intensely sincere revolt contained in the pages of his book—Britton is to us an exceedingly interesting writer who, on his road to the left, carries with him a great force of creative possibilities which he will be able to put at the service of the Proletarian Revolution.

I. Stetsky

Maxim Gorki

*Forty Years of Literary Activity**

Comrades, the beginning of Gorki's literary career is a significant date in the history of the workers' revolutionary movement. It coincides with the years when the working class of our country appeared for the first time as an independent force; when the first nucleus of our Party had been organized; when Lenin began his revolutionary activity. This is not mere coincidence. The activity of Gorki is closely bound up with the revolutionary movement in Russia. The spirit of the revolution has found its expression in Gorki's literary work.

The forty years of Gorki's literary activity cannot be characterized in a few words. This activity embraces an historical period of great significance. The upsurge of the working class in the 90's, the revolution of 1905, the years of reaction and the imperialist war, the October Revolution, the years of Civil War, socialist construction—this is the hisoric period in which Maxim Gorki worked and is still working. Behind his wide shoulders stands a whole historic period, and what a period! When the generation which I represent was being born, Gorki's voice was already resounding throughout Russia.

I, comrades, will only speak in passing of Gorki's remarkable personal life which is well known to everybody.

Our great writer passed a great school of life. He drank from the cup of bitterness, in his childhood and youth, he wandered throughout Russia, and suffered in the depths of bourgeois-landlord Russia the pressure of hundreds of hostile atmospheres. And in spite of all that, he emerged a hardened man on the wide field of literary and social activity.

Forty years ago, when his *Makar Chudra* was first published, it was written in Gorki's passport: "Occupation-painter." Many years have passed and the painter's apprentice has shown himself to be a great master of the word. As such we greet him today.

Comrades, it would also be impossible today to fully characterize Gorki's creative output. It is too varied. He has written great literary epics and short stories, poems and dramas. The themes of Gorki's works are just as varied. Today I shall only deal with his main, his dominating theme, which makes Gorki a great proletarian artist - with that theme which prompted Lenin to say that Gorki is the greatest authority on proletarian art and that his creative works have closely bound him to the working class movement in Russia and throughout the world. Gorki came to literature full of hatred for the bourgeois landlord order which crushed and crippled people; he hated the petty bourgeois stupidity and conservatism which hindered the workers in their fight against the order of oppression and exploitation.

In his creative works Gorki subjected this order of oppression to annihilating criticism. He did this as an artist. The theme which he developed in his novels and stories —the exposure of capitalism—is not new in Russian literature. It found expression in the works of Tolstoy, whom Lenin valued as the man who tore off all masks from the bourgeois-landlord order. Gorki however, injected something new into this theme. He developed it in his own way, thus marking a turning-point in the history of Russian literature. If we were to take Gorki's most important works as well as his short

*Report given at a public meeting in the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, September 25, 1932 on the 40th Anniversary of Gorki's literary activities.

stories, we would find that the dominating theme running through all of them is the unearthing of the beastly and cruel force of capitalism. Take, for instance, works like *Foma Gordeyev, Three, The Case of the Artomanovs, Matvey Kozhemyakin,* and others, and you will see how Gorki exposes this force, tears off its mask, shows its true nature consisting of lies and blood, the dirt of capitalist accumulation, oppression and exploitation. He also shows in his creative works how this force chokes and cripples the human personality, how it roots out every vestige of free thought and destroys every desire for the new life. "You are not building a life," Foma Gordeyev accuses the bourgeoisie, "you have created a pit, with your own hands you have created dirt and filth. Have you a conscience? Do you remember God? Your God is a five spot! You have killed your conscience. . . . You work with someone else's hands. How many people have shed tears of blood because of your 'great' deeds. There is no place even in hell for you, for your services. . . Not in fire , but in dirt, boiling dirt shall you be chastised. You shall never atone for your cruel deeds. . . ."

Here Gorki is exposing capitalism as a great artist should do it. He does not limit himself to speeches alone.

His works are art and not journalism. You cannot find in them economic treatises and formulas of surplus value. Gorki brands capitalism, he exposes its essence utilizing his own weapons—the creative weapon, the artistic word. This is much more complex and lends greater force to his works.

Engels said of Balzac that he considered him one of the greatest realistic novelists. He thought him to be much more important than Zola, because Balzac did not reduce his work to simple journalism and history but always remained an artist and depicted the history of France with such force and such clarity that a reading of Balzac gave a much clearer conception of French society than dozens of economical, historical and statistical works. This measure with which Engels gauged Balzac's works can be also applied to Gorki. Gorki operates with images. The characters in his book arise before the reader as living people. No wonder that the millionaire, the Volozhski merchant, Bugrov, tried hard to find out from Gorki in whose image he created the merchant Mayakin. Bugrov believed that such a merchant must actually exist somewhere. Of course, Gorki did not copy this merchant, he did not photograph him, but on the basis of his observation, on the basis of his experience in life he created him. Moreover, Mayakin's character is so remarkably forceful, it seems so real that one necessarily believes such a man to exist. In his portrayal of these characters that rise in all their reality and individuality, you feel that he has created a general artistic type. Behind the Shchurovs, Artomanovs, Mayakins, one feels the Morosovs, Bugrovs, Mamontovs—dozens and hundreds of Russian capitalists—capitalists which Gorki observed and whose natures he presented in his works.

These images called forth whole series of analogies and thoughts. Take, for instance, the merchant Shchurov in *Foma Gordeyev* that giant from the Volga who grew up on blood and dirt. When Gorki opened the door of his tiny room in the hotel, you at once whiff the smell emerging from it. And yet when you see the figure of this merchant, you are reminded of the brilliant pages of *Capital* where Marx describes the process of capitalist accumulation. This figure of the merchant who speaks about god, a figure of an old believer who supports some old religious sects, but who is at the same time ready to break the neck of anyone who stands in his way—does it not remind one of the characteristic of capitalist accumulation expressed by Marx, not with the aid of images, but with the aid of iron logic. Does not this figure embody the characteristic of capital which Marx gives in his great work: "When there is enough profit on hand, capitalism grows bold, guarantee it 10 per cent and capital will agree to any terms, with 20 per cent it becomes lively, with 50 per cent capital tramps on all human laws, having achieved 300 per cent there is no crime that capitalism will not agree to, even risking the hangman's noose."

That which found expression in Marx's logic, found its artistic presentation in Gorki's work.

A too critical critic, reading the deeds of the Artomanovs would say: "What kind of a work is it, the factory seems to be of secondary importance, nor does one see any exploitation in this factory."

True, the force of capitalist accumulation, the force of the robbers, is not given its economic meaning by Gorki. The author does not take us into the factory, but for all that we learn how it grows and how the deeds of the Artomanovs grow. You can feel how it squeezes and sucks the life out of the working class. With a series of artistic strokes, Gorki paints the relation between the capitalist Artomanovs and the workers. These strokes are expressive because they show the contradictions between the working class and the capitalists, their relations and struggles at various historical stages. Here, unfolding before you, is the theory of the collapse of capitalism and at the same time you see and feel throughout the novel that the "case" of the Artomanovs is coming to an end. And when Tikhon says to the old Artomanov: "This war is against you, Pyotr Grigorevich," we feel that this "against you" is aproaching in all its inevitability throughout the novel. We have critics and critical theories which tend to give an entirely different evaluation of Gorki's creative work. But they are both false.

There are theories according to which a writer can never go beyond the limits of his own class and create images of another class; and that in each work the writer himself is a central figure which reflects his thoughts which characterize his class nature.

Gorki's creative works, more than anything else, show the stupidity of this theory, for Gorki with all his force as an artist, with all the artistic means at his disposal, achieves striking figures of workers, for instance, Pavel and Pilageyeva Nilovna, both unforgettable images, then, too, there are striking figures of merchants and common men. This theory of an artist's limitation is plain nonsense: it hinders the understanding of a creative work; it brings about a completely false evaluation of such work. The idea of the artistic work, its effect, its content and how the reader reacts to it, is most important; and in this case we would say that the effect of Gorki's works are characterized by the fact that they mobilize the reader against everything that is conservative, stale, slavish, against everything that confuses the human mind, against depression and exploitation, and arms him for the struggle for socialism. "One must put a hedgehog under human scalp so he will never be peaceful." Thus speaks one of Gorki's characters, and Gorki puts such a hedgehog under the scalp in each of his works.

Gorki masterfully portrays the psychology of people, but he does not bother with analysing and portraying minute psychological reactions.

He does not look upon psycholgical life as upon a closed circle detached from the rest of life. No, Gorki views the psychology of men in relation to social conditions. Some of his novels may be considered as great literary biographies. He takes his characters in their youthful days, leads them through life and shows them how the environment, suroundings, and all the events in the lives of his characters form their psychology. In fact, this is Gorki's great literary achievement. Take, for instance, such characters as Matvey Kozhemyakin, Foma Gordeyev and Klim Somgin: you actually feel, page after page, how the human personality is being formed. This is great art. This is a materialistic portrayal of human psychology. Presenting one individual, Gorki succeeds in portraying the life of his social entity. He does this without encroaching upon the field of journalism or history. Our writers should learn and keep learning from Gorki.

Gorki is also a great master of literary generalizations. Superficially it would seem that he only portrays merchants, manufacturers from Volozhye, and sometimes queer people, cruel and beastly; but a careful analysis would show that he always presents them from a revolutionary point of view. His is the point of view of the proletariat for whom these Mayakins, Artomanovs and others have created inhuman living conditions. Indeed, it

is because he is tble to show a whole order, all sections of society at once, that his work has a force that cannot be achieved by any other artist of another class.

It is from the class view that Gorki removes all masks of hypocrisy, bigotry and fake humanitarianism worn by his characters. He is able to show them in all their nakedness. He is able to show the true nature of the capitalist robbers. Thanks to these his literary works present a general picture of life.

This, to be sure, is not only true of his major works, but in the shorter ones too. For example, take such a story as "Kirilka". It seems like a short account of an incident that occurred near a ferry, and yet he gives in this short sketch a rich summary of social relations. He has ucceeded in showing here some of the most truthful aspects in the psychology of the peasant. This makes "Kirilka" one of Gorki's best works.

And the *Village Okurov!* Who, before Gorki, was able with such power to portray the beastly life of Okurov Russia of which other writers have written little idealistic pieces, calling it the queer and simple-minded Russia? Gorki has shown the swamp of this Russian life which swallowed everything in its way. This could be done with such force only by an artist of the proletariat. No wonder the *Village Okurov* became a nickname for all middle class and provincial Russia, showing the difficult life of the Okurov village without any adornments, not for a moment minimizing the truth of life, the blood and dirt of the case of the Artomanovs. Yet Gorki's works do not depress one. He sometimes portrays moving incidents in life with all the horror, blood and filth. But he always calls to follow the path of a revolutionary socialist renovation of life.

Some readers with weak nerves were horrified at Gorki's works and the bourgeois critics wrote that his works should be banned from public and private libraries. There were philistines who were surprised at Gorki's popularity, for just think of it! - on every page of his books he is breaking human and heavenly laws. The latter is a true remark: Gorki represents the class which made it its task to destroy all old laws of life and create new ones.

I repeat, however; Gorki never makes one feel depressed. He was not broken by the struggle of life. He appeared in the social and literary life in order to tell the bitter truth of life and in order to voice his flaming protest against slavish conditions of life—a protest that is felt on every page of his books. This flaming protest, this call to struggle differentiates Gorki from other great artists.

Tolstoy, who has removed all sorts of masks from the bourgeois-landlord order, who has exposed the nobility, the chinovnik bureaucracy and capitalism, at the same time preached pacifism: he called away from the great historical path to beg at the doors of reactionary utopia.

Chekhov has colored his remarkable works with a pessimism, gloominess, with the pensive thought that perhaps in a hundred or two hundred years, life will be better.

Gorki came to literature as a fighter. He injects his fighting temperament into each of his works. One of the critics of the 90's tried to find out what sort of strange poetry it was that Gorki was writing. Why is the sky in his poems empty? Why are the birds stormy petrels? Why do they fight? Why the strange tunes? Is it not better to have the old tune: "An angel flew in the heavens by night singing a gentle refrain." This was written seriously. This very wise critic did not understand one very little thing: he failed to realize that revolutionary thought was penetrating the country and that this revolutionary upsurge had thrown out of poetry all angels and devils. The country demanded new songs. And Gorki sang them. His song of the "Stormy Petrel" spread throughout revolutionary Russia, and Lenin entitled one of his articles "The Stormy Petrel", finishing it with the following words: 'Let the storm strike more forcefully!"

No one was able to characterize Gorki's works better than Gorki himself. In one of his letters to Vallery Brusov he wrote the following about the mobilization of students in Kiev: "My mood is like the mood of a ferocious dog that has been beaten and then chained. If you, sir, love men, I think you will understand me. I think that to make

soldiers out of these students is an abomination, a crime against the freedom of the individual, an idiotic step taken by scoundrels fattened on power. My heart is boiling and I would like to spit in the face of these man-haters who will read your poems, *Northern Poems,* and will praise them as they have praised me. This is outrageous and disgusting on the part of all, even on the part of Bunin whom I love, but I can't understand how he does not sharpen his wonderful talent like a knife and stab with it wherever it is necessary."

Since Gorki wrote this letter, many years have passed. Much has changed since then. Bunin's great talent is outworn and decorates the dens of the whiteguard immigrants. But Gorki who has made of his genius a shining knife that stabs the heart of the bourgeois landlord order, became one of the world's beloved writers. His flaming protest against the slavish conditions of life Gorki first expressed in a romantic form portraying tramps. It is not true that he is a Nietschean and that the figures of his tramps are supposed to represent the Russian Nietzschean. Not at all.. These were artistic creations with which Gorki expressed his protest against all that destroys human personality. But of course, these characters could not be a starting point for the change in the old order of life. But as the working class movement develops, as Gorki becomes closer associaed with it, new figures appear in his work who show that the order of the life should be changed. Figures of revolutionary proletarians appear, figures of revolutionary intellectuals who fight in an organized manner to destroy the slavish order. These figures who called for struggle, who called for a change in the social order, are already to be found in Gorki's early works. They are given in *Foma Gordeyev* in the story *Three,* in his play *Enemies,* and particularly in his novel *Mother.*

That is how Gorki looked upon his creative work. Some people may ask: what kind of a strange approach to his creative work is that? What tendenciousness! In answer to this, let me, comrades, call forth the shadow of another great poet of other times—the shade of Dante. Of course, some of our severe critics may make it hot for me because Dante speaks of things that are no longer part of our life in his *Divine Comedy, Heaven and Hell.* But Dante represents one of the highest peaks of art. And yet his work is thoroughly satured with political ardour which found expression in his artistic work: Dante placed all his political enemies, all the enemies of his native Florence, in hell and invented all sorts of tortures for them. For one of them, the Pope Nicholas, he has invented a particularly bitter and insulting torture—he put him in a fiery grave head down, feet up. Not a bad place for popes! Dante was contemptuous of those people who neither waxed hot nor cold, who neither hated nor loved. He made their shadows wander around the doors of hell, like leaves driven by the wind.

Did not Gorki in his works brand this type of people? Does he not brand them in his latest literary epic - *Klim Samgin?* Gorki, like the great Florentine poet, is first of all a writer warrior.

In his novel *Mother,* Gorki paints a great canvass of the proletarian revolutionary struggle. In this novel he calls for a new life. The appearance of this novel called forth violent attacks upon Gorki from the bourgeois writers who had hitherto not spoken of the end of Gorki's literary career. It called forth abuse on the part of social-democrats and mensheviks. Only Lenin correctly and pointedly evaluated this novel from the very first days of its appearance. He stated that this is one of Gorki's best novels. And indeed, we see in *Mother* how he develops artistically the organized political struggle of the workers. We see here for the first time in imaginative literature images of worker-bolsheviks, we see the wonderful image of the mother through which Gorki has shown all the force of the socialist idea. With remarkable strokes he has shown how the conscience of this ignorant woman is awakening. He has shown the struggle of old traditions, old customs and ideas within her, and how they give way to new ideas—the ideas of socialism. Gorki shows with conviction how this ignorant woman becomes gradually a revolutionary fighter for socialism. The character of Pelageya Nilovna is one of

Gorki's best images and the novel *Mother* is the best that the proletarian revolution has hitherto given.

The more Gorki connects himself with the working class movement, the more pointed becomes the basic aspect of his work—realism. Gorki does not gather details for the sake of details. No, the truth of life passes through his creative laboratory. He creates typical characters and typical circumstances.

But Gorki's realism is a revolutionary realism. He is not, as some say about him, merely a writer about *byt* (everyday existence). No, Gorki hates the *byt,* the static, stultifying *byt* which hinders the movement forward and deadens the human personality. Gorki appeals for a change in the conditions of life. He calls to the struggle against the order of oppression and exploitation, and it is this call forward which we find in all of Gorki's works that characterizes Gorki as a revolutionary realist, as an artist who not only portrays reality but also calls forward to a revolutionary solution of the contradictions of reality.

Gorki's literary work is national in form. When you read his novels you feel that actions take place right here where the great revolutionary events of our history took place. He portrays Russian people of various classes under various circumstances with all their faults, with all their good qualities and defects. The free Volga glistens in his works, the Russian songs resound from the pages of his books. Resound, indeed, for Gorki loves songs and loves to sing. That is why when you read his books you can hear those songs.

No one else has such a rich mastery of the Rusian language. And yet Gorki's work is also international. Gorki is loved and read by the proletariat far beyond the boundaries of our country. There his books are distributed in hundreds of thousands. For the proletarians see in these Volozhye merchants and manufacturers the same force which chokes and oppresses them in their own country. In a type like Pelageya Nilovna and Pavel, they recognize their own flesh and blood—people of their thoughts and their desires. They find in his books the terrible depths of capitalist society where the remnants of human lives broken by capitalism are thrown, and now particularly in this epoch of the world crisis. They catch up the slogan for the struggle of socialism which resounds from the pages of Gorki's books. Therefore, they say together with us: "Gorki is ours!"

Lenin was very warmly disposed towards Gorki. He always watched his work carefully. In letters he would always inquire about his health and about his literary work. He helped Gorki with his advice. There was a great friendship between them. At the same time Lenin was the first one to evaluate Gorki's work as the work of a great proletarian writer. Contrary to the mensheviks, contrary to Trotzky, Lenin was the first to say that Gorki was the greatest authority in the feld of proletarian art. Lenin is no more—Lenin to whom Gorki had dedicated such beautiful works, but our Party is alive. Lenin's deeds are alive and the people whom he has taught. Gorki always called forth malicious attacks from his enemies. They were trying to silence him, but he spoke so that everyone could hear. They spoke about the end of Gorki as an artist, but he answered with new and better works. And now that Gorki is here with us, the dogs of emmigration continue to bark. Let them! Gorki is surrounded by love and honor of the millions of people of our country and far beyond the boundaries of our country.

This is a strong shield that cannot be penetrated by the poisoned arrows of his enemies.

I remember one of Gorki's most beautiful legends—the legend of Danko. People were seeking a path out of the darkness, out of the swamp of life towards a new life: they were wandering. The youth Danko, who was full of love towards people, decided to help them. He tore out his heart full of love and raised it high above his head and it shone like the sun, lighting a path for men. Thus did Gorki. His works in which he has put all the blood of his heart, all his hatred for oppression, all his love and fidelity to the exploited, shine like a bright light calling towards a new order, towards the struggle for socialism.

Gorki lives, struggles and works with us. He participates in our common work for communism. His activity is varied; he continues to work as an artist, writes journalistic articles and edits the *History of Factories,* and the *History of the Civil War.*

We should not forget the activity shown by Gorki, together with Romain Rolland, Dreiser and Henri Barbusse, whom we greet today in our meeting, in calling the anti-war congress and uniting the best forces of the intelligentsia for the struggle against imperialist wars. We hope that Gorki may continue this noble self-sacrificing and energetic work.

We trust that Gorki who is still fresh, lively and young as the Second Pyatiletka will live to see our country freed from the remnants of the Okurov dirt, will live to see the full blooming of the socialist culture for which he constantly works.

G. Munblit

The New Stories of I. Babel

It is generally believed that if a writer prints nothing in the course of a year, he will write something entirely new the next year, and if he remains silent longer than a year, this supposition becomes a certainty.

Babel printed nothing for five years. And he writes now just as he did five years ago.

It would be relevant here to remind the reader about all that took place during these years, about the road covered by our country during this period: but the reader knows all this, and there is no need to remind him.

Babel, too, knows all this.

He strolls through the new streets of the new cities. New factories rise in the distance. New people live in the new houses and new gardens separate the factories from the cities. New relationships among people arise. A new attitude towards human labor asserts itself. Men make machines and machines remake men. The outlines of the world's first socialist country are becomig discernible. Yet Babel goes on writing about what he saw five years ago. He wites with extraordinary strenuousness and force, with a sharpness of style carried to the limit. But he writes about the same old things.

About the muddy and motley outskirts of Odessa, about shattered freight-cars, about the irrepressible valor of guerilla fighters.

He uses words sparingly, writing even more laconically and tensely than before. His is a masterly simplicity of style which few possess.

In one of his latest stories he says himself about this style:

"A phrase is born into the world both good and bad at the same time. The secret consists in a hardly perceptible turn. The lever must be held and warmed in the hand, and must be turned only once, and not twice."

In his new stories Babel never lets go of the lever for a single moment. He turns it unfailingly and never turns it twice. He always finds the right word, and his phrases are laconic and pointed. There is nothing to be corrected or abridged.

Obviously during these years the writer did some intense creative work.

The country was moving onward. The writers barely managed to keep pace with its progress, writing about it hurriedly and spasmodically. Babel sat meanwhile over his literary crucibles, coining and purifying his style.

And after emerging from his laboratory, Babel must have gone on thinking about crucibles and words.

New themes flowed around him in the world outside, for which there was no room in his crucibles. They lay under his feet and beat at his window.

And when Babel came out to tell men he had found what he sought, they could not feel that his conquest of language was any victory of theirs.

It turned out that his ability to present themes with wonderful clearness and depth was misdirected. For the themes chosen by Babel were not those that stirred the country during his period of silence. His stories do not deal with the people who built the new cities and factories. Nor even with the gardens that have grown between these cities and factories.

These stories give no indication of the future progress of the writer. For, while living in a new country, Babel has not yet found it in his themes, and the time and energy required for finding these themes and working them out were spent by him working on themes and materials for which the new country has no use.

The situation might be figured like this:

Babel, a writer limited to his class, like a complex optical apparatus reacts only to a certain kind of stimuli. His creative activity is aroused only when he comes in contact with a definite kind of phenomena. Moreover, these and kindred phenomena are conceived by him in a transformed manner, acquiring quite novel characteristics. He glances only upon one side of things. Of human beings he sees only those whom he wants to see, and only in a certain portion of their manifestations.

This point of view, however, cannot satisfy Babel. It suits only artists of a transition period, or during periods of stagnation. The epoch of revolution is perforce accompanied by profound and drastic changes in the human mentality.

Babel entered the revolutionary period as an accomplished writer.

Few of his works had as yet been published, but his mental outlook was already well defined. His working method was established. Two short stories were the result of great work.

Shklovsky writes in an article on Babel, that those stories were not noteworthy and memorable.

The first story was about a Jew who was not allowed to live outside the tsarist "pale" how this Jew, hiding from the police, had spent a night with a prostitute and how they became friendly.

The second story was about girls who do not know how to bring about an abortion.

Both stories were Maupassant stories as interpreted by Babel.

The absence of thematic purpose in these stories was compensated by pungency in the telling.

Those were stories about nothing in particular. The twilight period of Russian pre-revolutionary literature was fully reflected in them. There was a hopeless gloom in those stories.

But everything changed one year afterwards. The revolution was rude to Babel dragging him through an array of themes. He was beaten and tossed by the themes and scarred by them. It was exactly like in childhood. The themes roughly intruded into life, and the people who brought them evoked both awe and admiration. There was an outward similarity, people looked alike, were equally peculiar and heroic; but there were profound internal differences which escaped Babel's notice. His attention was held by the difference between himself and those people.

Speaking here of Babel, we have in mind his hero-that "I" who looms invariably in every story of his.

He, this hero, "was boisterous at the writing desk, but stuttered in public"; he could not ride horseback, he could not kill a man to end his sufferings.

They, those people, could do all these things. People of either type. Both the people of Odessa's underworld, and those who side by side with Babel were making the revolution. And the theme which engrossed Babel during the first revolutionary years was that of a man with defective physiology and subtle psychology living among people of robust physique and primitive psychology. The conflict was between the man of word and the man of action. And action triumphed over word.

Babel had to invent this theme. It was not at hand in the revolution, where word was never divorced from action. But Babel failed to grasp its word, its thought, its substance. Meeting revolutionary people who were able to mount a horse and fight, Babel lost sight of their inner beings.

Babel acquired a view-point on things which pervaded all events and rendered vivid his reminiscences. His pen was guided by it. Babel began to write stories about people "with steel shoulders, and with feet resembling girls' encased up to their shoulders in shining jackboots." Babel was untiring in his admiration of those people, in comparing them with the "weaklings, liars, and slackers, who stuttered in public."

All his stories were permeated with gloating self-mortification. With a sort of creative fury he colored the figures of those people whom he could not understand, who evoked his admiration and envy. With a sort of fatalistic pathos he urged the futility of his hero in the revolution.

> "Galin, I said, overwhelmed by a sense of misery and solitude, I feel bad, this must be my end, Galin, and I am tired of living in our cavalry regiment.'"
>
> "'You are a driveller,' Galin replied, and the watch on his slender wrist showed the first hour of morning, 'you are a driveller, and unfortunately we have to put up with you, drivellers. . . . .
>
> "'The whole of our Party,' he went on, 'are walking about in aprons soiled with blood and dirt; we are cleaning for you both the core and shell; a time will pass and you will see the cleaned core; you will then at last take the finger out of your nose and start singing in wonderful prose about the new life. Meanwhile, sit still, you driveller, and do not nag while our hands are full of work. . .'"

The story from which the above is quoted was written in 1920.

Ten years have elapsed since then.

And in the story "Argamak," written in 1930, Babel reverts again to this theme. Again the slender figure of the man in eyeglasses among strong, taciturn men of action.

This story differs from the first. It is not quite so flowery, it is more restrained, more poignant. But this is the only difference. There is the same feeling of futility, of aloofnes and solitude in the heart of his hero. The hero cannot ride a horse, and this deprives him of the friendship of people around him. Every night he dreams of riding along the road, but nobody takes notice of him because he has learned to ride properly.

> "My thirst for happiness and rest was not stilled in my waking hours, and so those dreams haunted me at night."

The story concludes with the curt information:

> "Months passed. My dream came true. The cossacks ceased to follow me with their eyes every time I rode on horseback."

It is characteristic that even now, ten years after writing those words on the "wonderful prose" about the "new life," the theme of Babel's story is not ability, but inability. A writer of a different outlook from Babel's would have made with the same material a story about the man who learned to ride a horse.

Babel tells about his inability to ride.

Similarly in regard to all actions and happenings, Babel writes mainly about inability.

Only in one domain he feels himself able and skilled. There is one army in which he feels like a field-marshall—"the army of words, in which all kinds of weapons are arrayed." He knows that "no iron can pierce the human heart so mortally as a well-pointed sentence."

And he knows how to turn out a well-pointed sentence.

Yet, whence comes this feeling of a gulf between the army of words and the army of deeds, a gulf which causes the aloofness of Babels hero? Whence this feeling of weakness from a writer who masters his craft? Whence this fondness for describing inability in a writer living in a country that is straining every nerve to master things, to gain skill and ability?

Does not the master of words feel himself a full-fledged citizen in this country which is striving to become a country of skilled masters? Or does the slowness and complexity of the creative process, which causes the writer to lag behind the forward-moving class, deprive his work of urgency and importance in the onward movement of the class?

It must be admitted that these thoughts did occur in the speeches of some impressive "men of action." Nevertheless, these speeches did not prevent Babel from working all these years on mastering his craft.

Why then now that he has mastered his craft, why does he revert again to his old heroes and to his old theme, to an outlook which has unquestionably become already a thing of the past in Babel's own personal experience?

Because in him the artist lags behind the man. Because having spent all these years on mastering the army of words, on mastering the secrets of their combinations, he has lagged behind the progress of the country and its people and its conquests, and it will take time before he will be able to keep pace with it. A new theme is not easily taken up by writers of the type of Babel. The road from the intelligent perception of phenomena to their embodiment in artistic form, is a long and onerous one. To perceive phenomena does not yet mean to grasp them creatively, to determine one's attitude towards them, to fix the angle of vision of the artist who essays to portray them.

So far Babel has been the artist of inability, destruction, mouldering, and revolt.

So far he has written pathetic stories about Cossacks plundering churches, about the individual "with autumn in his soul."

But now when Hassidism has mouldered away, when nobody does any plundering, when trainloads of coal and ore are carried over the railways, and the bespectacled individual is working as a secretary in some village Soviet—something different should be written about. Otherwise the writer runs the risk of losing possession of a common tongue with the reader. The things and phenomena which the writer perceives esthetically, the reader perceives differently. The ties will be broken. The voice will sound like passing through thick glass. The words will become inaudible, and the gestures unintelligible. And the contrast will be far from esthetical.

Among Babel's new stories there is one in which this experiment of changing robes has been performed by the writer. This story as stated in the sub-heading, is a chapter from a novel entitled *Velikaya Krinitza (The Great Well)*. The heroine of the story is really the Lyuba Kozak of the *Odessa Stories,* but differently dressed, and the village of the "Great Well" is merely a rustic reproduction of the familiar Odessa outskirts and its inhabitants.

In the story the people celebrate weddings, dance, and talk about collectivisation. Live people are portrayed in the story, but their collectivisation talk rings rather unconvincingly. The trouble is not even that the people do no look at all like peasants. Maybe in the Ukraine these, let us say,Flemish traits are characteristic not only of the people of urban outskirts, but also of rustic inhabitants. The people are out of place here not etnographically, but chronologically. All of them, with their talk, gestures, and human characteristics, were taken bodily out of the years of famine and dilapidation and forcibly transplanted into the strange environment of the collectivised village. The defect here is entirely thematological. Collectivisation becomes utopian in this muddy, rowdy, drink-sodden village. And perhaps against the author's wishes, the people who carry out collectivisation here look like lone dreamers or legendary knights. For, who but a dreamer would talk here about socialism, who but a legendary knight would attempt to carry it into effect?

The result is that this story, although penned in the utmost realistic style, with living people and with seemingly realistic environment, becomes fanciful and unconvincing. All the carefully pictured details, all these masterfully drawn portraits, all the excellent dialogues and situations, fail to develop the theme of the story, but rather distort it.

Babel loves contrasts, and frequently by placing phenomena in an atmosphere alien to them, he renders them extremely expressive. Suffice it to recall his refugee, wearing the robe of Alexander III, or the monologue of Antonius pronounced by a frail Jewish lad, and similar incongruous situations in his stories. All these contrasts are deliberately

coined, they are part of the plot, and are esthetically conceived. As to the contrast in the story about collectivisation, it does not tally with the plot, leaving an impression of irrelevancy, and is non-esthetical.

To assume that Babel is unaware of this is to underestimate him as an artist.

But, as already said, he does not easily master new themes. Superficiality is not in his nature, and things and people, before appearing in the arsenal of his "army of words," must be organically conceived by him.

This process develops rather slowly in Babel?

Quite so. Nevertheless, it may be safely assumed that the results will be considerable and extremely valuable. The themes of Socialism in construction, when organically conceived by such a writer as Babel, are capable of growing into works of tremendous significance.

Lydia Filatova

LANGSTON HUGHES: American Writer

Langston Hughes represents a bright and interesting talent. Hughes is one of the important poets of America today, and so far, is the only established Negro writer whose work tends to leave the beaten track of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois Negro literature. Hughes has been for a number of years a contributor to *New Masses* and the revolutionary press of the U.S.A. In his poems of 1931-32, he is a revolutionary poet who uses his writing as a weapon in the struggle against capitalism, for the emancipation of toiling Negroes and toiling humanity in all countries.

Yet, before arriving at such poems as "Good Morning, Revolution," "Goodbye, Christ," and the play "Scottsboro Limited," Hughes had to go through numerous stages of gradual transition in shaking off the beliefs, moods, and illusions foisted on the Negro by centuries of oppression, in overcoming and eschewing the petty-bourgeois radicalism which is still upheld by many of his contemporaries, even such as Claude McKay who once was near the revolutionary movement. These writers endeavor to solve the "Negro problem" within the framework of capitalism—a condition which renders solution impossible. Their work does not show the way towards the real emancipation of the Negroes and thus fails to yield the results that their outstanding talent might have achieved. Hughes goes farther and deeper. Hughes reflects the process of class differentiation that is going on among the petty-bourgeois Negro intelligentsia of America—among its best section—and becomes particularly outspoken under the stress of the economic crisis. Petty-bourgeois radicals of the type of Dubois, under the present march of events, are losing their function as leaders, and the leadership of the Negro masses is now going over to men like James Ford (American Communist Party candidate for vice-president in the last election) and their associates. Highly indicative of the realignment of forces among the Negro intelligentsia is the statement made by the poet Countee Cullen that he would vote Communist in the presidential election. Such a declaration by Cullen, hitherto an esthete advocate of "art for art's sake," furnishes added proof of the depth of the crisis of the capitalist system which severs the firm ties knitting the artist to capitalist society.

Hughes came into literature together with writers and poets of the so-called "Younger Generation" in 1920 to 1925 which united the varied writers: Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, Jean Toomer, etc. Bourgeois Negro ideologists like Alain Locke and James Weldon Johnson hailed these writers as the heralds of a new era for the American Negro, as the harbingers of a Negro renaissance. Among the growing Negro bourgeoisie and Negro bourgeois intelligentsia the idea was assiduously preached that by means of education, by creating a Negro literature and art, the Negroes would upset the theory of the "superiority" of the white race, and thus achieve social equality.

"No people that has produced great literature and art has ever been looked upon by the world as distinctly inferior," James Weldon Johnson wrote. "The status of the Negro in the United States is more a question of national mental attitude toward the race than of actual conditions. And nothing will do more to change that mental attitude and raise his status than a demonstration of intellectual parity by the Negro through the production of literature and art."*

As the most convincing proof of intellectual equality, they advocated the creation

* *The Book of American Negro Poetry*, edited by James Weldon Johnson. Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York.

of literature and art of world significance going beyond the "narrow" frame of immediate racial problems—the themes of racial oppression. Hence their advocacy of "pure art," of "art for art's sake," of art and literature divorced from the vital problems of the race. Race questions were to be limited to expressing "Negro genius," to asserting specific traits of the race, while questions of racial and social oppression that are so acute in America were tabooed as "tendencious." The writers of the past generation, DuBois, Chestnutt, are considered by these critics as doctrinaires and moralists who created tendencious, and therefore a "poor" art. Theories of this kind diverted the attention of writers from social themes, weakened their criticism of existing conditions, and admirably suited the tastes of the American bourgeoisie.

The activity of the "Younger Generation" group coincided with the rise of so-called "prosperity," when the "American paradise" was quoted very highly and when a place at the feasting table of American capitalism was more than ever coveted by the Negro bourgeoisie. Art and literature were considered by the Negro bourgeois intelligentsia as a card of admission into the capitalist "paradise." This is the reason why bourgeois critics extol "objective" art, the blunting of the social sentiment, and if one cannot avoid such "ticklish and unpleasant" themes as race oppression, lynching, etc., it is more preferable "to speak the truth in love."

On the other hand particular encouragement is given by the white bourgeois critics to the Harlem tradition in Negro literature that has been so assiduously advertised by the white writer, Van Vechten. The Negro is taken as some exotic creature against a background of Harlem cabarets and jazz bands. The book market in America has been flooded with this kind of Negro literature, which serves the American bourgeoisie as a weapon for the cultural disarming of Negroes.

Hughes fell under the spell of these theories. He advanced a program of bourgeois estheticism, the right of the artist to hold aloof from social themes, to be indifferent to the day's racial and social problems.

"We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it does not matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too. The tom-tom cries and the tom-tom laughs. If colored people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure does not matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves."*

"WE SHOULD HAVE A LAND OF SUN, OF GORGEOUS SUN . . . ." (Our Land)

His first book of verse, *The Weary Blues,*** which appeared in 1926, placed him near the first rank of American poets. The book is made up chiefly of lyrics, and these are among the best examples in contemporary literature.

Hughes emphasizes that he is a Negro, that the word dark-skinned has a proud ring. Nevertheless, he almost ignores the question of racial oppression. His aim is to show the world how beautiful his people are, and he asserts his race esthetically first of all.

The night is beautiful,
So the faces of my people.
The stars are beautiful,
So the eyes of my people.

* "The Negro Artist," by Langston Hughes, *Nation,* June, 23, 1926.
** *The Weary Blues* by Langston Hughes. A. Knopf, New York.

Hughes naively believes that the whites, recognising the beauty within the Negroes will extend them the hand of fellowship and all questions of race inequality will disappear. In *The Weary Blues* Hughes does not yet see the class differentiation within the ranks of either whites or blacks. He places race against race.

He asserts the right of the Negro to be an American citizen. But he believes in the possibility of solving the race problem under capitalism. In "Epilogue" he writes:

Tomorrow
I'll sit at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.
Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed,—
I, too, am America.

The desire to assert his race accounts for what Hughes writes about those aspects of Negro life in America in which the peculiarity of Negro culture is manifested—the life of Harlem with its cabarets, jazz bands and blues. On the other hand, in giving these exotics which in no way reflect the life of the toiling Negro masses, Hughes is held captive by the Harlem tradition. The preface to the book, written by Van Vechten, is in the same strain.

In common with other Negro writers, Hughes endeavors to establish the historic past of his culture, to contrast the conventionality and inward emptiness of capitalist America with the spiritual richness of the race that has not been spoilt by civilization—the African motifs in the book. Hughes dreams about the far-off land of his ancestors. Notes of discord are sounded. The poet is lonesome in the cold prison of capitalist culture. Strong are the notes of death, suicide, and hopelessness as in "Afraid:"

We cry among the skyscrapers
As our ancestors
Cried among the palms in Africa
Because we are alone,
It is night,
And we are afraid.

The poet, however, shuns reality and varnishes it with romantic illusions.

Tomorrow is to bring liberation; but the poet's dreams about the better future are hazy and nebulous. His protest against the surrounding realities is an abstract one. It resolves itself into a vague striving toward sunshine, toward the exotic. But with all this, we must note that the element of conflict is already evident.

"I BEEN RUNNING THIS ELEVATOR TOO LONG. GUESS I'LL QUIT NOW." (Elevator Boy)

His second book of poems, *Fine Clothes to the Jew*,* published in 1927, is a serious qualitative change primarily in the widened scope of his themes. Hughes begins to describe the principal strata of Negro population: hotel servants, elevator boys, sea-

* *Fine Clothes to the Jew*, by Langston Hughes. A Knopf, New York.

men, workmen. The traditional image of the Negro with the banjo and the blues, with the broad grin, is replaced by an attempt at realistic writing: "Elevator Boy," "Porter," Brass Spitoons." The poet writes from personal experience, he worked as an elevator boy, porter and seaman. Hughes' turn to working class themes is a considerable event in Negro literature, as before him they were almost untouched. Many of his verses are patterned after the popular "blues." Hughes makes use of Negro dialect, continuing the traditions of the well known poet Paul Lawrence Dunbar.

In his new book of poems Hughes does not yet appear as a revolutionary artist. It contains merely the promise of a future growth. He still approaches the Negro worker purely from a racial standpoint, and all his hardships are ascribed solely to racial inequality. The question of class interest is entirely ignored. Yet the very fact of taking up racial problems, of pondering over them, constitutes a step forward in the creative work of the poet. Hughes still fails to state the "Negro problem" correctly, but he evidently seeks now for a solution of it in the interest of the toiling masses. Hughes does not see as yet any way of relieving their lot. Motifs of despair and disappointment are the prevailing notes in the book. Nevertheless, the spirit of protest is ripening, and notes of bitter irony break through, as in "Porter:"

I must say
Yes, sir,
To you all the time.
Yes, sir!
Yes, sir!
All my days
Climbing up a great big mountain
Of yes, sirs!

Hughes makes yet another step forward as compared with his first book. The poet probes deeper beneath the surface. Thus, in *The Weary Blues* the elegant dark-skinned prostitutes appeared as spots of sunlight on the bright background of Harlem, the poet never stopping for a moment to consider the meaning of this phenomenon. In the second book Hughes refers to the economic causes of prostitution—the low wages of Negro servants which drives them into prostitution ("Ruby Brown"). In the poem "The New Cabaret Girl," Hughes pleads for a different fate for the mulatto girl. Yet he stays essentially in an empirical position, confining himself to a bare observation of facts. Depicting a lynching scene, the most revolting phenomenon in "democratic" America, the most frightful form of race oppression, Hughes in the poem "Song for a Dark Girl," gives merely a realistic picture without any comment whatever.

The book contains a number of religious mystical verses. Hughes pays tribute to the dope of religion with which the American ruling classes keep the Negro masses in subjection. The Negroes comprise the most religious strata of the American population. Thousands of Baptist and Methodist ministers teach the Negroes humility and submission. The soporific action of religion, with its gospel of non-resistance, largely accounts for the difficulty of spreading Communism among the masses of Negro toilers. Hughes in religious ecstasy complains to heaven, sings about white wings of angels, and seeks solace in prayer.

In *Fine Clothes to the Jew,* the poet speaks in the name of the exploited Negro proletarian in whose psychology there has been but little change since the time of slavery.

Hughes is highly skilled in the technique of verse. Departing from the canons of classic poetry, he experiments in blank verse. In this respect he was strongly influenced by Walt Whitman and Carl Sandburg.

His poetry is characterized by simplicity, by a sparing use of the means of expression. Hughes is particularly gifted in the technique of verse miniatures—graceful cameos. He has a rare ability of presenting a theme in four to eight lines. Frequently he achieves fine effect by applying the method of concealed irony. Often his poems are skilfully constructed as in "Mulatto," "Cat and Saxophone," etc. Hughes has a good sense of rhythm. His rhythms are varied and original. Many of his verses border on folklore.

*Not Without Laughter,** his first novel was published in 1930. Its publication was a significant event in contemporary American literature, a serious stage in Hughes' creative growth and in the development of Negro literature as a whole. Hughes breaks with the Harlem tradition. He now becomes a realistic writer. The book describes the life of a Negro working class family, the childhood and youth of the Negro lad Sandy. Hughes is revealed here as a fine artist capable of presenting the typical traits of American Negroes in vivid, memorable images. The images are generalizations of Negro experiences, they reflect the processes of class differentiation (Tempy), the change in slave psychology and the birth of the new (Sandy, Harriett, etc.).

The writer in great measure overcomes the motifs of the preceding period—passive obedience and piety. The leading images in the story are those of the rebels Sandy and Harriett. Religion becomes to Hughes a heritage of the past. In Aunt Hager, a slave in the past, Hughes gives expression to what is still the mood of large numbers of Negro toilers, the religious psychology of humility and obedience. But for him this image becomes now only material for his creative work. Hughes himself has already passed this religious stage.

"White folks is white folks, an' colored folks is colored, an' neither one of them is bad as 'tother make out. For mighty nigh seventy years I been knowin' both of 'em, an' I ain't never had no room in ma heart to hate neither white nor colored."

Anjee is a similar type to Hager. She is an humble and patient servant of a white lady. Jimboy, her husband, a typical Negro worker, is forced to tramp from place to place in search of work. Jimboy's tramping is one aspect of the migration of Negroes which has become particularly widespread in America in recent years; the Negro workers migrating from the Southern into the Northern states and from one town to another in quest of better wages and treatment. Harriett is the very antithesis to both Hager and Annjee. Harriett hates the whites. She does not want to slave for them in the kitchen. Eventually she becomes a well known singer. It is a strong and expressive image of the rebel who throws the gauntlet to her enslavers. The creation of this image is proof of the growth of the writer. The central figure in the story is that of Sandy. From early childhood the boy is made to feel that he is a "Nigger," that his place is in the backyards of life. His only guilt is the color of his skin. Sandy works successively as hotel porter, elevator boy, and in a barber shop. Humiliation and insults are his daily lot. This life becomes unbearable for Sandy. He wants to study, to become a great man, a leader of his people. Sandy sees in education the road to the racial, economic and political emancipation of the Negroes.

Hughes is still swayed by the theory that the Negro can attain social equality only through education, through demonstrating the creative abilities of the Negro people. Hughes still fails to see the illusory nature of such theories, that the real cause of racial inequality is capitalism, and that only through revolutionary struggle against the capitalist system will the Negro gain complete emancipation. Culture and talent will not solve the problem. In the course of his recent lecture tour through the South the author of *Not Without Laughter* might have learnt this from personal experience. Hughes—a recognised writer—was forced to eat in the kitchens of public restaurants,

* *Not Without Laughter,* by Langston Hughes. A. Knopf, New York, 1930.

and at times even to go hungry, because in the country of "democratic liberties" Negroes are forbidden to dine in white people's restaurants.

Hughes raises in this novel the problem of race with immeasurably greater sharpness than heretofore. Nevertheless, he still does not raise the class issue involved. For Hughes the whites are still an undifferentiated hostile mass; Harriet and Sandy hate the white folks in general. Hughes does not yet see the powerful ally of the toiling Negroes—the white workers of America. The story, however, contains one image which indicates the large social vision of the writer. In the image of Tempy is mirrored the process of class differentiation among the Negroes. Tempy is typical as the reflection of the psychology of that strata of the Negro petty-bourgeoisie who imitate the rich whites, who try to show that they are in no way inferior to them. It is a character which Hughes detests.

"When niggers get up in the world, they act just like white folks."

Hughes gets quite close here to understanding the same differentiation among the whites, and to the correct solution of the "Negro problem." And indeed, in the poems of 1931-32 the black and the white proletariat are going to become for Hughes a single force coming forward to struggle against capitalism.

"I SPEAK IN THE NAME OF THE BLACK MILLIONS AWAKENING TO SOCIALISM" (A New Song)

The last two years have been a decided turning-point in Hughes' writing. His art enters the revolutionary period. His new poetical *credo* is the total negation of his former creative position, as in the "Call to Creation:"

Listen!
All you beauty-makers,
Give up beauty for a moment.
Look at harshness, look at pain,
Look at life again.
Look at hungry babies crying,
Listen to the rich men lying,
Look at starving China dying.
Hear the rumble in the East!

The art of Hughes becomes social. His themes are now—the crisis, unemployment, revolutionary struggle, U.S.S.R. The questions which intensely agitated his mind in the novel, are now solved. The writer has found the road which leads to the emancipation of Negro toilers. It is the same road as that of the working class of all countries—the one common road of the revolutionary struggle for Communism.

The motifs of passiveness and despair give way to militant verses. Hughes' poetry calls to struggle, and the solidarity of the world proletariat. The writer has faith in the strength of the working class, in the ultimate victory of the revolution. The poet turns to the more backward strata of the American working class—the workers of the southern states who are particularly contaminated with race prejudice—and in "An Open Letter to the South" he tells them:

White workers of the south:
. . . . . .
I am the black worker.
Listen:
That the land might be ours,

And the mines and the factories
And the office towers
At Harlan, Richmond, Gastonia,
Atlanta, New Orleans;
That the plants and the roads
And the tools of power
Be ours:
. . . . . .
We did not know that we were brothers.
Now we know!
Out of that brotherhood
Let power grow!
We did not know
That we were strong.
Now we see
In union lies our strength.
. . . . . .
White worker,
Here is my hand.

The revolutionary turn in the work of Hughes is accompanied by active participation in the revolutionary struggle. Hughes works on the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners and takes active part in the campaigns of the American Communist Party for the liberation of Tom Mooney and the Scottsboro prisoners. He becomes a publicist in verse. After an interview with Tom Mooney in St. Quentin prison, Hughes writes a mass choral recitation on the recent refusal of the governor of California to free Mooney.

Tom Mooney.
Tom Mooney.
TOM MOONEY
A man with the title of Governor has spoken
And you do not go free.
. . . . . .
But the man with the title of Governor
Does not know
That all over the earth today
The workers speak the name:
Tom Mooney!
Tom Mooney!
TOM MOONEY!
And the sound vibrates in waves
From Africa to China,
India to Germany
Russia to the Argentine,
Shaking the bars,
Shaking the walls,
Shaking the earth
Until the whole world falls into the hands of
The Workers.

Hughes writes a one-act play about the beastly Scottsboro frameup, showing up the corruption of American capitalist justice and the mockery of democracy. The play,

entitled "Scottsboro Limited," has been and is still being staged by many American workers theatrical groups and it has since been translated into foreign languages. He writes a poem entitled "America 1932—Variations of the International" in support of the Communist presidential candidates Foster and Ford. In a clever satirical piece, "Waldorf Astoria," Hughes invites the American homeless and jobless to accept the hospitality of the sumptuous new hotel on which the bourgeoisie managed to squander 28 million dollars in the throes of the crisis:

FINE LIVING . . . . *a la carte ? ?*

Look! See what *Vanity Fair* says about the new Waldorf Astoria:
"All the luxuries of private home. . ."
Now, won't that be charming when the last flophouse has turned you down this winter?

. . . . . .

So when you've got no place else to go, homeless and hungry ones,
choose the Waldorf as a background for your rags—
(Or do you still consider the subway after midnight good enough?)

. . . . . .

Have luncheon there this afternoon, all you jobless.
Why not?
Dine with some of the men and women who got rich off of your
labor, who clip coupons with clean white fingers because
your hands dug coal, drilled stone, sewed garments, poured
steelto let other people draw dividends and live easy.

The form of the sketch, the mass song, recitation and the short play are the means which help in popularising Hughes' work among the toiling masses, serving as a valuable weapon in the revolutionary struggle.

Hughes speaks now as an agitator-poet. His writing is a call to militancy. Many of his poems are constructed as the poet's address to revolution, to white workers, to Negro workers, etc. Hughes is to a considerable extent an emotional poet. He frequently speaks in the first person. In one of his best poems, "Good Morning, Revolution," the image of Revolution is drawn by him as the living person of a "pal" and a "buddy."

His novel was essentially realistic work. In his recent poems Hughes speaks of revolution and the proletariat in general, drawing broad canvases. The incidental, the concrete, becomes dissolved in the general. Hughes does not portray individual participants of the struggle; he gives revolutionary symbols. All eight Scottsboro boys are in no way distinguished from each other, they are merely symbols of the working class; individuality disappears. This kind of portrayal leads to a certain schematism, to abstractness, to a loss of some of the living concrete substance of the struggle. Revolutionary symbolism is common in writers in the period of approach to revolutionary themes. Schematism, abstractness, and rhetoric, are usual in the first stages of revolutionary poetry; we find these elements also in the work of the German proletarian poet Becher, in the Soviet poets of *Kuznitsa* ("The Forge," a group of Soviet poets) and in American revolutionary poetry.

The ability to generalise is characteristic of the proletarian outlook and of proletarian art. This is unquestionably a positive fact in the evolution of Hughes. Thereby he overcomes the empiricism of the earlier period which constitutes one of the basic defects of American revolutionary literature in general. Yet there is danger here of lacking proportion, of falling into schematism and rhetorics. A synthesis based on living, concrete reality is always more convincing than abstract symbols. The ability to give generalisations while retaining the concrete individual substance may be seen in the work of the great poet of the October Revolution, Vladimir Mayakovsky.

Revolutionary art is international in character. Hughes' verses are impregnated with the spirit of proletarian internationalism, which ought to be welcomed in every way. Yet the poet goes to extremes by obliterating national boundaries and to some extent destroys the specific national atmosphere of his poetry; in this sense it is a step backward in comparison with his earlier works. We are for an art that is national in form and socialist in content. Hughes first of all is a poet of the Negro proletariat. His writing should help to solve specific problems confronting the Negro toilers of the United States. Hughes has closer grasp and understanding of these problems than many writers of other races and nationalities. The writer should present with the utmost sharpness the problems of his own race, but they must be presented in a class aspect. The force of Hughe's poems will be stronger, the influence deeper, if he will draw closer to the Negro masses and talk their language. An example of poetry that is national in form and socialist in content is the work of the Chinese proletarian poet Emi Siao. Other conditions being equal, the creations of the writer who retains national coloring will meet with greater response from the masses than the work denuded of it.

Hughes' road to the revolution is a hard one, with contradictions and inevitable setbacks. Along with the new anti-religious trends, we find in Hughes' writing occasional relapses into religious motives, as in the closing lines of "Waldorf Astoria." In a recently published anthology for young people *The Dream Keeper and Other Poems** Hughes thought it possible to include religious verses of the previous years. This year, too, he published (true, in a limited edition of 100 copies) another collection of his verse, *Dear Lovely Death,* containing a whole number of mystical verses. However, in a recent poem entitled, "Goodbye, Christ," Hughes bids farewell to religion and asks Christ to get out of the way. This may be taken as a final break and we can think there will be no relapse.

As a blot on his general revolutionary background is a "touching" story for children written by Hughes in collaboration with the bourgeois Negro writer Arna Bontemps entitled *Popo and Fifina.*** It describes the cloudless, idyllic existence of native proletarians on some wonderful island where the climate is so warm that there is no need for clothes, where nature itself solves social contradictions, and where the sea abounds not only in fish but also in mermaid nuns with angelical faces and flowing golden tresses. In short, an idyllic picture of "peace and good will." One is surprised to learn that this blissful place is located on the not unknown island of Haiti, the arena of brutal aggression by Yankee imperialism and of merciless slave-like exploitation of the natives. A sketch on the same country by Hughes, "People Without Shoes," was printed in *New Masses,* in which the writer gave a realistic picture of life in Haiti. Does this soothing syrup of *Popo and Fifina* represent the author's conception of chilren's literature? Does the method of the complete elimination of contradictions of life, such varnishing of reality, help to forge fighters for communism, to increase the membership of the Negro Komsomol? Works of this kind detract from the revolutionary value and importance of Hughes' creative work.

These, however, are mere slips on the road of the writer, unsurmounted survivals of the past, due to the difficulty of breaking away from deep-rooted mental habits. The predominant trend of his work leads to revolution.

Hughes' poetry has special significance. To him has fallen the great honor of being the first revolutionary poet of the Negro proletariat. Hughes' art is becoming an organising force of the awakening race and class consciousness of the Negro workers, a mighty means for remolding the psychology of both the black and white masses, a revolutionary weapon of struggle. Responsible tasks confront the writer. There is every reason to think that Langston Hughes will prove equal to these tasks.

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* *The Dream Keeper and Other Poems* by Langston Hughes. Knopf, New York, 1932.

** *Popo and Fifina* by Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps. Macmillan Co., New York, 1932.

Walt Carmon

An American Artist in Moscow

Fred Ellis will tell you that he first received major recognition as an artist when in the course of his work as a sign painter, he fell from the sixth storey of a building on to a cement sidewalk, breaking every bone in his body. He tells this with a twinkle in his eye, but also with a great deal of warmth for the comradely appreciation he received then.

He will also tell you of another fall he had from the fifth floor. With an engaging smile he recalls: "For some fool reason, I walked off the scaffolding backwards. I landed on the canvas top of a passing milk wagon and bounced off to the ground unhurt." That was all in the day's work.

At that time, he was known as an artist mostly among the workers of Chicago, where he was born and raised; and where he drew cartoons for the trade union, Socialist and I.W.W. papers. He hardly dreamed then that he was known beyond the limits of his city.

This is what he thought as he lay in the hospital in a plaster cast, every bone broken. Many workers came to the hospital to see him—sign painters, stockyard workers and others. His comrades. Then Art Young, one of the leading revolutionary artists of his day, passing from New York to Chicago, came to see him. He had always admired Ellis' work, watched it closely. Robert Minor, perhaps the greatest living political cartoonist, also came to offer him encouragement to get well, to continue his valuable services to the working class. Ellis often tells how much these visits by two great artists meant to him.

And he is particularly proud of the fact that John Reed came to see him at this time. "Reed stayed for a long while," Ellis recalls. "He talked of his writing, how he was coming to the conclusion that writers would have to learn from the cartoonist to tell their story briefly, directly, to reach a great number of workers. He planned then," Ellis continued, "to experiment with a series of brief paragraphs instead of short stories.. 'A kind of literary cartoon idea' he called it."

Today, after many years of service as an artist in the revolutionary movement, through his work in the *Liberator, Workers Monthly, Labor Defender, Daily Worker* and many other publications, Ellis is known far beyond the limits of Chicago. There is scarcely a revolutionary publication in any country which has not reproduced his drawings.

Ellis comes of a working class family. He has been a worker all his life. As a proletarian artist, and because of the deep love he has for the class from which he sprung, he has much in common with Zille, revolutionary artist of Germany. He worked in the stockyards of Chicago, in Upton Sinclair's *Jungle,* and took part in the strike of 1905. During the long strike he attended art school for four months—the only art training he has received. Then he became a sign painter. As an active member of his trade union he worked at this dangerous occupation for twenty years. He painted signs on buildings and smoke stacks at great heights. In the evenings he perfected his art.

He has drawn for bourgeois publications only once—three anti-war drawings he sold long before the world war. "My only recognition in the bourgeois art world" he calls it. Asked why he does not draw oftener for bourgeois publications, he will tell you he has no time. Revolutionary publications have absorbed all his energy.

He is in the forties now. His head is prematurely gray, but he looks ten years younger.

He has a delightful sense of humor and his stories of the reformist trade union to which he had to belong in his trade in Chicago are gems of story telling. Despite his views, he was liked so well in his union that he was once proposed for the position of business agent. "I declined" he says, "I couldn't shoot that straight." In the American revolutionary movement there is hardly a person better liked, with more loyal personal friends. Ellis' genuine personal warmth is reflected in his drawings.

Ellis has drawn for the American *Daily Worker* since 1924. Many of his cartoons have been particularly effective in struggle. The packing house workers of Omaha sent for five thousand copies of one issue of the *Daily Worker* because of a cartoon by Ellis. His daily cartoons at the height of the struggle to free Sacco and Vanzetti were inspired. His best work has been collected in the books *The Case of Sacco and Vanzetti in Cartoons by Fred Ellis* and in the yearly *Red Cartoons* books which were issued for five years.

For two weeks in 1930, he drew cartoons for *Rote Fahne* in Berlin, on his way to the Soviet Union. Russian workers knew the work of Fred Ellis long before he arrived. His American cartoons were reprinted widely in the Soviet Union. In Moscow he was for a while on the staff of *Pravda (Truth)*. Since then his work has appeared in the Leningrad *Pravda, Komsomolskaya Pravda (Komsomol*—Young Communist League—*Truth)*, Leningrad *Krasnaya Gazeta (Red Gazette)*, the English *Moscow Daily News* and many other publications. He has done scores of posters. He has illustrated Mary Heaton Vorse's novel *Strike*.

But Ellis' best work has been done for *Trud (Labor)*, Moscow daily of the Red Trade Unions. Ellis is at home here. He understands the problems of the trade union workers, their struggles, their friends and their enemies. His bold, sure lines, the simplicity and directness of his ideas, his bitter satire and mellow humor, all are incentive to struggle against the capitalism which he hates and exposes unmercifully.

A worker, Ellis knows his fellow-workers. He has little patience with art "modernisms" and mannerisms that confuse the worker. He is content with telling a direct story in pictures drawn simply, strongly. He is an expert craftsman. Robert Minor describes some of his drawings in the *Red Cartoons* series as equal to the best drawings done by Daumier.

A book of drawings done by Ellis in Moscow will soon be issued here in book form. He is also busy on a series of drawings for the exhibition to be held on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the RedArmy. Meanwhile many of his drawings are now being shown at the International Exhibition of Revolutionary Artists at the Museum of Western Art in Moscow.

But Ellis will tell you that all this is "on the side." "I've got a job" he says. He must do his cartoons for *Trud* where he is staff artist and where its thousands of readers are looking for the work of "Tovarish" Ellis.

"Tell me," I asked Ellis, while he carefully touched up a cartoon he was working on, "what comment has there been in the Soviet press on the work you have done here. I know the press has discussed your work. I also know that workers have written in to your paper about it."

"Well," he replied in a slow, pleasing drawl, "I got a few letters from workers pointing out deviations in some of my drawings. And once I got a serious reprimand on my job." He wasn't joking now.

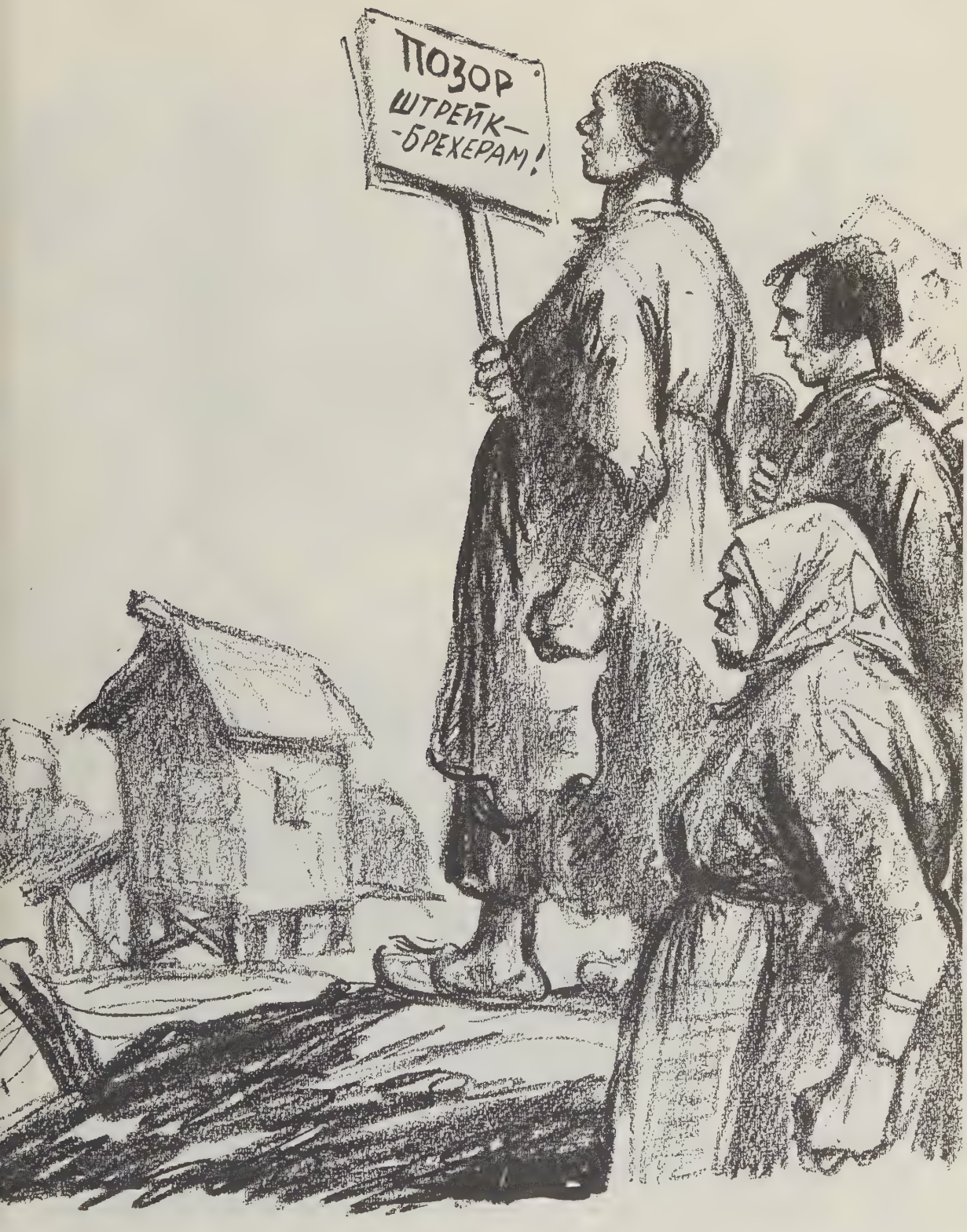
Robert Minor, great judge of art as well as great artist, once called Ellis "the least appreciated genius in America." But that was a long time ago. He is known and loved now by workers in all sections of the world.

Moscow, 1933

CAPITALISM FACES THE CRISIS

From "Trud"

SIX DRAWINGS BY FRED ELLIS



"SHAME TO THE SCABS!"

From "Trud"

THE BOSS SHOWS HITLER HIS JOB

From "Trud

"VOLUNTEER" LABOR IN POLAND

From "Trud"

THE PATH TO

From "Tru-

TOWARD A CLASSLESS SOCIETY

From the "Moscow Daily News"

LETTERS and DOCUMENTS

Y. Oxman

Banks and Bourgeois Literature

I. The Police Department and the "Reptile Press" of Pre-revolutionary Days

The evidence given before an extraordinary commission of enquiry in 1917 by various persons who acted as assistants to the old *Ochrana* (the tsarist secret police) together with the actual text of several secret documents of the tsarist staff and of the Ministry for Home Affairs, published not long ago, permit us to make certain conclusions. From these documents we may most decisively conclude that just as certain banking cartels and industrial trade concerns subsidized and controlled the most powerful organs of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois press—from the Nationalist-Octobrist *Novoye Vremya (New Time)* to the Menshevik-Bundist *Den (Day)*—so, in an analogous fashion, the semi-official conservative, clerical and "Black Hundred" press owed its existence, during the intervening years "between the two revolutions," to funds provided by the police department which directed the entire Right-wing press by means of a special so-called "reptile fund" of the head office in press affairs.

It is not yet known precisely how large were the sums expended during the years of the war by the Franco-Russian Bank on the newspaper *Novoye Vremya,* by the Don-Azov Bank on the paper *Rech (Speech)* and *Sovremennoye Slovo (Contemporary Word),* by the Lesin Bankers' Bureau on *Den,* by the Ryabushinskys' textile syndicate on *Utro Rossiyi (The Morning of Russia)* etc. Nevertheless an examination of the secret expenditures made under the "reptile fund" shows that all estimates of this fund which ranged upwards of one million rubles in 1914-15, had even in 1916 increased to 1,700,000 rubles. It was from these sums that the following papers were able to cover their deficits: *Russkoye Znamya (The Russian Banner)*—25,000 rubles per annum; *Golos Rusi (The Voice of Russia)*— 45,000 rubles; *Kolokol (The Bell)*— 13,000 rubles; *Moskovskye Vedomosti (Moscow News)*— 17,000 rubles *Svoboda i Poryadok (Freedom and Order),* Zubatov's paper for the workers — 14,000 rubles. The same source provided funds for the entire semi-official Black Hundred press of the provinces—*Yuzhnoye Slovo (The Southern Word), Russkaya Rech (Russian Speech), Kiev, Dvuglavy Orel, (Two-Headed Eagle) Volga, Kazansky Telegraph, Vitebsky Vestnik (The Vitebsk Herald), Kozma Minin, Minskaya Mysl,* etc. etc.

The estimates of the "reptile fund" grew from year to year, but the state apparatus did not of course receive any really tangible advantages from the state-supported organs of "pure Russian thought," though the latter continued to spring up like mushrooms. The circulation of *Zemstchina, Kolokol, Golos Rusi, Russkoye Znamya* etc. was always a quite negligible quantity, but during the war, after the first serious failures at the front and the economic disasters in the rear, both the central and the local "reptiles" lost all credit even among those strata of their clients in the local nobility, the clergy, the petty-bourgeois philistines and the military in whom they had previously found, if not subscribers, at any rate non-paying readers. It was under these circumstances that A. H. Khvostov, leader of the Black Hundred landlords' wing in the IV State Duma and one of the last tsarist Ministers for Home Affairs recognizing, on the one hand, the ever growing significance of organs of the "independent" bourgeois press, and, on the other hand, the hopelessness of all attempts to raise the prestige of the now finally discredited

"reptile press," presented the cabinet with a proposal that its agency should secretly penetrate into one or another of the powerful central newspapers in order that the latter might receive the instructions of the state apparatus through secret channels.

The deposition of S. P. Beletski testifies to the fact that—

> "The *Novoye Vremya* was chosen as such a paper, it being an old newspaper and one moreover which was run on shareholder principles. I. L. Goremykin then summoned me and commissioned me to buy up the majority of the shares, and besides this arrange the means for distributing them, in compliance with the instructions of A. H. Khvostov. A list of the shareholders was in the hands of the ministry. This was at the end of 1916."

Judging from the letters of the last Tsaritsa to Nicholas II, it would seem that everything connected with the transference of the shares of *Novoye Vremya* from the vaults of the Franco-Russian Bank to the Ministry for Home Affairs met with strong opposition on the part of P. L. Bark, the Finance Minister. One cannot help recognizing that in this respect the Finance Minister showed a more just appreciation of the situation than Stürmer or Khvostov. For, in the first place, the state of revolutionary feeling, both among the troops at the front and also in the rear, had undergone such a rapid process of activization that by 1916 *Novoye Vremya* had already lost all vestige of authority among any broad sections of society; in the second place, from the administrative and financial point of view, it was hardly a rational course to extend large sums of money upon a paper whose abject grovelling before the tsarist government could not possibly be constructed into a demand for further grants; and finally, in the third place, governmental "penetration" into a paper which was most ardent in keeping up the chauvinist frenzy which had characterized the first few months of the war and which made a speciality of hurling accusations at the "Huns" after the manner of the allied secret service, was not altogether pleasant, from a tactical point of view, for certain influential groups in the antechambers of the tsarist court who at that time were trying to find common ground for a separate peace with Germany.

Nevertheless Bark's resistance was overcome by the resolute action of the governing clique, directed by Alexandra Fyodorovna and Rasputin, and the transaction was effected on May 16, 1916. Bark, with due devotion, reported to Nicholas as follows:

> "Your Imperial Highness was gracious enough to command me to take steps in order that the Finance Ministry might get possession of a certain quantity of shares of the newspaper *Novoye Vremya* with a view to exercising a suitable influence on the tendency of this widely circulated organ of the press. At the present time the possibility presents itself of issuing a loan of 160 newspaper shares belonging to Michael Suvorin at 5,500 rubles per share, and in this way of approaching a solution of the question of subordinating this paper to the influence of the government. While recommending that this operation be effected secretly, in order to preserve the ostensible independence of the *Novoye Vremya,* I would regard it as most expedient to issue the loan through the medium of the Volga and Kama Bank which has in its time carried out in the most confidential manner a similar commission from the Finance Ministry, *viz.,* the issuing of a secret loan to the King of Servia, with grants amounting to 880,000 rubles out of the revenues of a foreign finance ministry.
>
> I hereby most humbly solicit your imperial highness' sanction for carrying this matter to fulfilment.
>
> *P. BARK, Finance Minister."*

Nicholas granted his consent, and in this manner the purchase of *Novoye Vremya* was finally effected. From certain documents preserved in the archives of one of the secret secretariats of the Finance Ministry, it is clear that M. A. Suvorin had already begun to receive money "as per agreement" and only the February Revolution shattered this bond of union between the "reptile press" and the tsarist government. From the very start, however, the maneuvres undertaken by Khvostov did not justify the hopes that had been reposed in them; they did not in any way alter the situation on the newspaper and literary front.

Above we have already mentioned a marked discrepancy which was to be noted between the transactions of the Ministry for Home Affairs and the interests of those magnates of finance capital and heads of the court bureaucracy who at that time were determining the home and foreign policy of tsarism behind the backs of the Rasputins, Stürmers, Khvostovs and Barks. The radical change which was to be noted among these circles in connection with the general alterations in the economic and political state of affairs at the beginning of 1916, made it imperative that the state apparatus should attempt to "penetrate" more deeply into the "independent" bourgeois press, as had been done in the case of the purchase of the *Novoye Vremya.*

II. The Ochrana and the Banks

From the evidence given by S. P. Beletski on July 20, 1917, we may establish the fact that long before the famous Petersburg conference of the managers of the Russian metal-working industry, which the general opinion credits with having given birth to the paper *Russkaya Volya (The Russian Will),* V. P. Litvinov-Phalinski, one of the oldest and most influential agents of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, acquainted the leaders of the police department with a plan to found a large and ostenibly progressive newspaper. When this paper, by means of large monetary resources and the publication of broad-minded liberal slogans, would have rallied around itself the most prominent public men in the field of literature and journalism, it could easily enough

> "suppress the rest of the influential newspapers in Petrograd. It would thus be the only powerful daily publication left in existence and could come to the defence of the interests of industry in the struggle against the revolutionary movement among the working class."

This very plan of Litvinov-Phalinski's—a plan which by its boldness and provocational scope baffled even such an old Ochrana man as Beletski—was laid before the managers of heavy industry by A. D. Protopopov in the spring of 1916. If we consider that Protopopov, the president of the metal-working industry congress and "comrade chairman" of the IV State Duma, was at that time paving a way for himself to a place in Stürmer's cabinet as minister of industry and commerce and was closely allied not only with the court and Rasputin circles (through Badmayev and Kurlov), but also with the heads of the police department (through S. P. Beletski), several questions, at first sight obscure, will become clear to us, such as, for example, why it was that in the following spring the entire business of creating a firm material basis for the future penetration of government agents into the periodical press (as prescribed by Khvostov and Litvinov-Phalinski) should have been placed in the hands of Protopopov.

It was, we may assume, by no means an accident that the final decision as to the question of the future newspaper along the lines laid down by Protopopov (*viz.,* the formation of a *bloc* of the court antechamber cliques and the secret police department together with the banks controlling heavy industry) should have coincided with the work of the secret commission of which S. V. Stürmer was chairman and which had to prepare for the elections to the next (the fifth) State Duma. This new Duma, which was to have been convened in 1917, had the task, on the one hand, of securing for

tsarism the most painless possible outcome from the seemingly interminable war, and, on the other hand, of attaining by the time-honored "parliamentary" channels the quickest possible realization of all the concrete political and economic consequences of this alliance between the leading lights of the local aristocracy and the sharks of the metal-working industry. One of the instruments for the attainment of this end was was to be the paper *Russkaya Volya.*

The state apparatus, while keeping in profound secrecy the agreement which had been arrived at with the "party of the banks," was able not only to disembarrass itself of a considerable part of the expenses connected with the coming election campaign, but actually succeeded, under the aegis of A. D. Protopopov—then still the undisclosed leader of the notorious "progressive bloc"—in causing its government agents to penetrate deep into the liberal-bourgeois press. It was therefore no accident that among the number of Protopopov's closest advisors in the business of organizing the new paper was included also I. P. Manasevich-Manuilov, a journalist and secret police agent of great experience, who at the beginning of 1916 was combining editorial and technical work on the *Vecherneye Vremya (Evening Times)* with the post of an official charged with special duties under the chairman of the Council of Ministers, B. V. Stürmer, and with the additional functions of a secret agent under the director of the police department, S. P. Beletski.

That spring Manasevich-Manuilov was also formally entrusted by Protopopov with the task of conducting negotiations with the Ministry for Home Affairs on the sale of the machines for the new paper (the machines which had previously been used to print the state-owned paper *Rossiya,* now done away with). But in actual fact it is probable that he himself was designed to fulfil that function of connecting link between the editorial board of *Russkaya Volya* and the police department. The very formation of the new paper was based on this calculation.

III. The Genesis of Russkaya Volya and its Financial and Technical Base

On July 15, 1916, to judge from information contained in *Rech* and the last "disclosures" of the Black Hundred agent, V. M. Purishkevich, Protopopov came to an agreement with the representatives of the St. Petersburg banks on the question of what forms and scope the financing of the new paper should take. The sum required for the paper was calculated at five million rubles. The economic significance of this sum may be judged from the fact that it exceeded by twice the value of any of the largest former great publishing enterprises and by three times the sum total of the entire "reptile fund" at the expense of which the whole Ochrana press was supported, both in the capital and in the provinces.

IV. Russkaya Volya and Bourgeois Literature

From the very start, the plan for rallying the most powerful and popular figures in the world of pre-revolutionary literature and journalism around the *Russkaya Volya* pursued the same aims of a dual masking of the paper's true character as had been followed in the creation of its material basis, when a reference to the funds provided by 43 different factories and commercial-industrial enterprises was used to cover up the names of the new publication's true leaders—Utin, Shaikevich, Vyshnegradski and Manus; while the latter in their turn concealed their immediate connection with the court antechamber cliques and the heads of the tsarist secret police apparatus. Thus it came about that Protopopov, having already told the police department that the function of the new paper was to "defend the interests of industry in the struggle against the revolutionary movement among the working class," on the very day before his meeting

at Stockholm with agents of the German government to discuss the conditions of a separate peace, sent an invitation through A. V. Amphiteatrov at Rome in the summer of 1916 to G. V. Plekhanov and G. A. Alexinski to co-operate on the new paper (the latter were then leading the social-chauvinist "Call to Arms" group in Paris); while to the decorative post of head of the entire literary-artistic and critical part of the publication he proposed Leonid Andreyev, whose sharply pronounced pro-Entente views during the war were also beyond all doubt.

Like the ardent intriguer that he was, Protopopov foresaw the inevitability of a discussion in the press about the platforms of the new paper and tried in advance to divert the entire discussion on to the sole question of the recrudesence under the conditions of 1916 "of the naive prejudices of our *Narodniki* against capitalism," thereby obscuring the true character of the new paper as an alliance between the banks and the Ochrana.

It is highly characteristic that this ruse should have been completely successful, and even at the time when the campaign against *Russkaya Volya* had become most acute, after the initiator of the paper himself had become the tsar's last Minister for Home Affairs while Rodzyanko and Purishkevich "elucidated" his complicity in the Rasputin clique, the question of the new paper still continued to be regarded first and foremost from the standpoint of its connection with bank capital—a connection which, it was alleged, was incompatible with "the great traditions of Russian literature." The first organ to express itself on this question was the doctrinaire Liberal *Vestnik Evropy (Herald of Europe),* the oldest organ of the bourgeois "opposition" press. In the seventh number of this magazine, V. D. Kuzmin-Karavaev wrote as follows:

> "This liberal-banking venture (the malicious but witty nick-name of *The Bankers' Comforter* has already been affixed to the new paper) is planned on a broad scale—first and foremost of course, as is only fitting in the banking business, on the financial side. In order to defend themselves against "unfair" reproaches, the banks and industrial firms have got together capital to the tune of about five million rubles. However, breath and scope are not lacking either in the planning of the literary side. According to *Rech,* A. D. Protopopov, at a conference held on July 15, spoke of the necessity of attracting 'authoritative and conspicuous representatives of science and literature, professors and popular writers' to co-operate on the paper, and of the fact that "the leaders of the new organ have already received the assent of certain prominent authors.' And he proceeded to mention Gorki, Leonid Andreyev and Korolenko as having consented to co-operate on this new *Bankers' Comforter*. . . naturally, it would be the crowing triumph for the banking business men to have such collaborators. And indeed for organizing the defense of these 'humiliated and insulted' gentlemen, whose profits in this third year of bloodshed only amount to 49 kopeks in the ruble, it would really not hurt at all to expend a mere five million rubles, the more so since this orgy of profit-making, sanctified as it is by authoritative and conspicuous representatives of science and literature, professors and popular authors, would repay even such a huge expense as this with interest, and would, incidentally, assure Mr. Protopopov the victory in the coming Duma elections. But unfortunately for the bankers and industrial millionaires, we still have certain values which cannot be bought for money. Yes, in view of the 'backward' state of our public opinion, we may confidently assert that one indiscreet exposure on the part of *Rech* would be enough to consign this new paper to irrevocable extinction even before it sees the light of print, since it represents a venture by business who in their orgy of profit-making have acquired such a conviction of their own righteousness and

> reasonableness as to invite 'prominent authors' to co-operate with them. But to such persons, the 'prominents authors' in question—Gorki, Leonid Andreyev and Korolenko—cannot stretch out the hand of friendship."

For the initiators of *Russkaya Volya* it was of course most expedient that the discussion upon their publication should be diverted into precisely this channel of highfaluting newspaper rhetoric which obscured the question of the newspaper's essential class and political character under a torrent of liberal phraseology.

Refusals to co-operate on the *Russkaya Volya,* especially in its early days, were only made in isolated cases. Maxim Gorki did not, of course, join the new paper. Korolenko's refusal to work on the paper was published in the *Russkye Zapiski (Russian Notes).* Alexander Blok declined the invitation sent to him, as was announced to Andreyev in a letter of October 29, 1916. But here, for example, is what Andreyev himself wrote on June 24, 1916, going into ecstasies at the "munificence" of the offers made to him:

> "I have joined the editorial staff of a large, new, very rich Petrograd newspaper which is being founded by an entire association of capitalists and banks. I joined only after I had become convinced that the paper will have a broadly progressive tendency and after coming to an agreement with those publishing it in which I clearly defined my own independence and the influence I will have upon the character of the paper. My special business is to manage three departments—the fiction, the criticism and the theatrical material. I will have as many assistants as I like and can invite anyone I want, independent of the editors. In other words, while having an influence upon the general course of things, I will have, as it were, my own magazine within the paper, dealing with those questions which are most near and vital to me. The editor-chief is Gorelov (Gakebuch), formerly the editor of *Birzhevy (The Stock Exchange News).* The contract is for five years, the salary for administrative work and articles—36,000 a year, for fiction—75 rubles a page; they have undertaken to publish everything I give them, and they will have to pay me a hundred thousand for a breach of contract. In a word, I can earn from forty to fifty thousand on the paper without exertion. I had never even dreamed of such munificence before. At present I am already busy organizing things and inviting people. I was in Moscow, where I am getting the nucleus of my future staff. Then I came back to Petrograd for a few days to conclude and sign the contract, and on the 27th I go to Moscow again to continue my business there."

Among the first of those invited to join the staff of *Russkaya Volya* (at first it was proposed to call it *Narodnaya Volya* or *Zarya)* were such leading lights in pre-revolutionary prose as Bunin, Kuprin, Shmelev, Sologub, Sergeyev-Tsenski and Alexey Tolstoi. Bunin answered Andreyev's invitation with "Suvorovian*terseness:"

> "Dear Leonid Nikolayevich: Many thanks for the invitation, glad to work with you. Wish you all success, write when job starts.
>
> "Excuse this Suvorovian terseness, my regards to all your household including its mistress.
>
> Yours sincerely,
>
> 18/7/1916 *IV. BUNIN."*

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* Suvorov—Marshal, under the Empress Catherine, noted for his laconic manner of speech.

Just as whole-hearted, it would seem, was the answer of A. Kuprin. His letter to Andreyev on November 15 expresses sympathetic interest and great impatience for the "undertaking" to be realized as quickly as possible:

> "When, oh when, is the paper finally coming? . . . Or is it already appearing but only being read in secret by a few of the head clerks at the Ministry for Home Affairs together with the proof-reader (Syrov, I believe, is not able to read)? And neither you nor I suspect that it exists?
>
> I am joking, of course, though gloomily enough, to be sure. However, Leonid Nikolayevich, I do beg you, don't be too lazy to write we a word or two about this matter. I am at Gatchina as removed as if in the Turuhansk district and have no news of what is happening with you in the capital."

Alexey Tolstoi promised to write for the paper "not very often but not too seldom."

> "I thank you for the invitation," he wrote in answer to Andreyev on August 29, 1916. "As a matter of fact I had heard many vague rumors about this paper, but your name is enough to silence all evil tongues. My work on the *Zarya* will be complicated by my old job on *Russkye Vedomosti* and I always feel rather guilty about the latter; it is, consequently, impossible for me to leave the paper. So I will write for the *Zarya* not very often but not too seldom—three feuilletons this winter. I shall ask for one ruble per line. Please answer and let me know if you are satisfied with these terms."

"Eye-to-business" considerations were thus responsible for Alexey Tolstoi's stipulation that there should be a certain limitation to his participation on the new paper. This circumstance does not, of course, do away with, but on the contrary rather emphasizes, Alexey Tolstoi's lack of political principle in his attitude towards an organ whose appearance even in those days aroused no little suspicion.

F. K. Sologub adopted the same cynical bargaining attitude towards the editors of the new paper. In answer to the invitation to work on the paper, he expressed the desire to occupy "not a casual," but "some definite" post on it. His answer to Andreyev on November 5, 1916, reads as follows:

> "On August 19 I wrote to you saying I would like to have a post on the paper, not some casual one, involving work for the embellishment of one or two numbers only, but some definite fixed position—and at the same time A. N. Chebotarevskaya wrote you about the figure I would want to receive in token of the permanency of the post. On September 17 you wrote me that 'M. M. Gorelov had expressed himself agreed in principle—without any details or any formal contract—to my conditions.' The more time passes, the more sure do I begin to feel that Gorelov regards the prospect of my working on the paper in quite another light than you do, that he does not attach any meaning to it. Maybe in a little time he will declare that my services are not needed at all, or something of the kind. All this places me in a ticklish position which I must get out of."

We have already mentioned that Korolenko refused to co-operate on the new paper. However, the motives actuating this refusal, laying stress as they did upon questions of a private and professional character, were, politically speaking, quite worthless and frivolous. As regards the historical analogies in which Korolenko found refuge, recalling, for example, the positive part which had been played by the magnates of the Siberian gold industry in the development of the extreme oppositional press, when, he alleged, "private capital came into the press without any thought of its own special interests, came to the sanctuary of literature, science and art"—these words, we must re-

member, did not sound so naive in those days—"not as capital, but as a fellow-feeling for knowledge and love of freedom"—all these "well-founded" statements, which will not of course bear critical examination, would have been much in place on the platform of the agents of the International Bank than in the pages of an organ of the "socialist Narodniki" which was protesting against the transactions of Protopopov.

Not Korolenko alone, but with him also Ivan Shmelev showed himself incapable of raising the question of his relation to the new paper to a high level of principle. The philistine narrow-mindedness of the latter's ideas showed itself in the motives he gave for declining to join the staff of the *Russkaya Volya* in even sharper relief than did the cynical consent to join the paper given by Grigoriy Alexinski and A. I. Kuprin.

> "I am not one of these wretched party men, as you know," he wrote in answer to Andreyev's invitation on July 24, 1916. "I am not badly acquainted with the theory and practice of finance and with political economy and, of course, *I cannot reject the bank as it is a natural and necessary institution of the present day,* but I am far from being ready to enter the police service. Prisons, too, are necessary—but I am not going to become a prison warder."

It was no other than S. Sergeyev-Tsenski who, in giving his views on the new paper, characterized the position taken by Shmelev as one of "high-minded snivelling." In his letter to Andreyev on August 26, 1916, Tsenski tries to destroy the latter's doubts as to the moral and political honesty of the banking sharks participating in the new publication. We quote this highly characteristic letter below:

> "You are letting yourself be worried uselessly, it seems to me, by the fact that *Zarya* will be a 'banking' paper. Whether it is a banking paper or not, is not that all the same for printed material? Is it not all the same whether it is published by Zakharka Zhdanov or Vaska Churiling or Vanka Kain or Grishka Otrepyev? That newspapers are founded for political, narrow capitalist and other aims, having no relation whatsoever to pure art—this is common knowledge. That no high-minded pauper can start publishing a newspaper unless he is crazy, is surely understandable enough. What then is the matter and what is all the fuss about? All the snivellers in Russia are busily occupied in doing one thing—sorrowfully discovering the presence of rogues everywhere. These snivellers are drowning head over ears in their own high-minded snivelling and who is to fish them out, poor things?"

And so S. Sergeyev-Tsenski, together with the entire bourgeois wing of Russian litterary "public opinion," settled the question of "who is to fish them out, poor things" by backing the *Russkaya Volya.* In the economic-political sphere, this admirably suited both the managing clique of stock exchange sharks and their petty-bourgeois agency with Protopopov as Minister of Home Affairs.

> "The appointment of Protopopov has opened an avenue of approach, not of course to Russian public opinion, but to Russian industry of the extreme Right wing," wrote I. V. Zhilkin in a leading article of the *Russkoye Slovo* on September 21, 1916, remarking with satisfaction that "the Moscow stock exchange reacted to this appointment by a rise in the price quotations, especially in metallurgy and oil. . . . If power is to forsake the bureaucracy and incline towards the bourgeoisie, then in the person of Protopopov we may envisage the first forced motion in this direction. And perhaps it will be no idle occupation for Russian industry to prepare further candidates for power."

This and similar views on the part of politicians of the petty-bourgeois camp greatly assisted the backers of *Russkaya Volya* to impinge upon the territory of the so-called progressive press.

The question of the final formation of an editorial nucleus for the *Russkaya Volya* and of the whole staff of its workers does not come within the compass of this article, designed as it is to throw light merely on one or two factors in the actual coming into being of the *Russkaya Volya,* which, according to Lenin's definition was "one of the most odious" of bourgeois papers, "founded upon pre-arranged funds" and "serving the worst of the capitalists."

Leonid Andreyev, Bunin, Kuprin, Alexey Tolstoi, F. K. Sologub, A. V. Amphiteatrov and V. G. Tan were easily drawn into the *Russkaya Volya's* sphere of interests. Through N. A. Gredeskul, F. F. Zelinski and E. D. Grimm the main figures in the bourgeois professorial world were secured for the publication; while through the medium of G. A. Alexinski, Protopopov counted on maintaining connections with Plekhanov and with the "non-aggressive" social-democratic and Right social revolutionary groups in both capitals and also abroad.

The February Revolution helped to turn the provocational knot which had been tied in the *Russkaya Volya,* into a noose. Protopopov's connections vanished, but the entire mass of share-holders of the International Bank and the Discount Bank retained their position on the paper even during the Kerensky period. More than that, the Utins, Vyshnegradskis, Shaikeviches and Manuses, now freed from various obligations connected with the carrying out of instructions from court and bureaucratic circles, became welded even more closely, under the circumstances of widely developing class struggles, with their agencies in the literary world; and after the October Revolution they led the latter over almost in their entirety into the ranks of the counter-revolutionary emigrés and into the work of whiteguard agitation and propaganda on all fronts of the Civil War.

Translated from the Russian by H. Scott

TWO LETTERS BY K. S. STANISLAVSKY

PEOPLE'S ARTIST OF THE REPUBLIC, TO THE *LITERARY GAZETTE* OF MOSCOW

"We, artists of the stage, have been placed in creative conditions such as the Western directors can only dream of."

The editors of the *Literary Gazette* had written the celebrated artist K. S. Stanislavsky on certain questions, and his replies are printed below.

The advent of the new theatre-goer I consider to be one of the most important facts in our theatrical life. We now have to deal with a spectator who is eager, receptive, directly and easily responsive to the performance. The duties now incumbent on the theatre in regard to the spectators are greater. Like all the other arts, the theatre must deepen his consciousness, refine his sentiments, elevate his culture. The spectator, on returning from the performance, must look on contemporary life more profoundly than before he went to the theatre. Therefore, the theatre has no right to treat the spectator's expectations flippantly or superficially, or to be merely flattered by his applause and approval: the spectator is now grateful for any hint of true art. Yet, the theatre frequently beclouds one great theme or another by either sophisticated theatrical acting or by superficial imitation of life. The problem of theatrical art is in unraveling the theme of the play by means of living, deeply impregnated, truthful images. Then, while following the course of the regeneration or decay of the image, the spectator will more clearly understand the profoundest problems of culture. The theatre should not act as a "tutor," but should draw the spectator by means of images, leading him on through the images to the idea of the play. In our country the theatre has no right to lie—it must be intrinsically truthful. And this imposes tremendous obligations upon the actor and makes equally tremendous demands upon his craftsmanship. The most difficult thing today is to show contemporary images in truthful, profound traits. Therefore, the attention of the Moscow Academic Art Theatre is at present concentrated most of all on developing and raising the craftsmanship of the actor.

In this sense we consider also classicism to be highly important on the stage. It introduces the spectator to the cycle of the basic values and thoughts of the past. It also constitutes a splendid school for the actor.

K. STANISLAVSKY

Dec. 19, 1932.

I believe that the European theatre, despite the existence of great individual artistic talents, does not move forward. The view of the theatre from the commercial standpoint as of an enterprise that has to bring in profits has exercized a catastrophic effect upon the condition of the theatres. There is no possibility for doing anything like profound work on a given play. European directors look with envy upon the scores of rehearsals that we are able to carry out with our actors in preparation for the production of a play. The best known Western actors are engaged on moving pictures. They are able to attend only a few rehearsals. Some of the theatres are on the eve of closing down. This happens because in the West they do not give sufficient attention, affection, and confidence to the theatre and to its workers, as is the case in this country. Notwithstanding the necessity for profound economizing, we, artists of the stage, have been placed in creative conditions such as the western directors can only dream of.

K. STANISLAVSKY

Dec. 20, 1932.

LETTERS FROM WRITERS

AMERICA

I am very busy working on *The Stoic*—the third volume of *A Trilogy of Desire*, which will complete the story of Cowperwood.

I think you have been a little misled about my present position in revolutionary writing. Because of my work on *The Stoic,* I have been compelled to eliminate much detail, although I still do, of course, whatever I can in the more important issues, and I have by no means the less sympathy for the worker and farmer. However, I see some things now which I did not see anywhere near as clearly when I was in the midst of it last year, and one is the enormous significance of the machine in any equitable form of society, and the need of the technician as a part of a newer kind of state. The technician, the chemist, the physicist, the mathematician, the inventor, and the economic student and expert are not quite the same as the factory hand or the farmer, but the introduction of the working formula which is to remedy their troubles is not quite clear. I am thinking about it, and one thing I am thinking is that the intelligent worker and farmer and white collar man should be most thoroughly informed as to what technology could be made to mean, and then, with some sense of that knowledge, be urged to do something about it.

Theodore Dreiser

Oct. 11, 1932

I hoped I would come to Russia this winter, but some events in my personal life make my visit impossible at this very moment.

It would be extremely desirable that Soviet writers could see better what life in America is like now. If it happened I am sure that you and we would recognize that life has become more complicated.

At the beginning it seemed that America had much to propose to the world. But having promised much, we did not fulfil our promises. We as a people became very rich in one respect and very poor in another. There are many circumstances that make American problems in the eyes of Americans especially difficult.

First of all we as a people don't know each other well enough, don't become intimate in our relations, and I myself as a writer would most of all want this very intimacy. I wanted that Americans, living in the civilization they are obliged to live in, to know each other better.

I am almost sure that the simple stories of human beings caught in the vise of modern civilization are the best material for the final revolution, which must inevitably take place in this country.

With greetings

Sherwood Anderson

October 10, 1932

I am aware of the difficulties which the writer has had to face in Russia, especially during these transition years in which the Soviet Union is fighting for its life against the world—and fighting, indeed, for the life of man. But I am able to place these difficulties, more or less transitory, in their right context. And as to comparing the position of the literary artist in Russia with that position in the capitalistic countries, if I made such a comparison, the difficulties and restrictions and deadly dangers which *we* must face are infinitely greater. I have made this plain in my critical books; I would not have my comrades in Russia believe that I lack perspective in judging their problems.... You ask what I am writing at present: a novel—a long novel in which my social position will be forever clear.

Waldo Frank

October 9, 1932

FRANCE

During the period July 15 to September 1, I travelled with an international brigade of writers to see the new construction in the Urals. As a result of this journey, two books have appeared, of equal size; one, a book of verse, the other, a book of essays and facts.

I want to have them both published in French, simultaneously, with two forewords setting off the contents of one book against those of the other.

My creative principle is that I never combine lyrical poetry with facts in one book; but the simultaneous appearance of these two books gives the reader a great advantage. Reading the book of prose, entitled *The Urals Respond to Comrade Stalin,* and then the book of verse *Hurrah! The Urals* the reader is able to appreciate the impression produced on the travellers by the great spectacle of socialist construction. Conversely, too, readers of the verse will be able to satisfy themselves, after subsequently reading the book of prose, that all which they have absorbed from the lyrical poetry and fantasies, is firmly established by actual facts. However astonishing the fantasies of the writer, they are facts in Soviet Russia.

Nothing, to my mind, serves better to popularise socialist construction and to refute the lies of the enemies of the USSR than to provide facilities for writers of merit to see for themselves the tremendous work going on in the Soviet Union. It is with great satisfaction, also, that I am able to inform you, according to two letters which I have just received, that Romain Rolland expects to visit Moscow next summer and that André Gide will visit Soviet Turkestan in the spring of 1933.

Louis Aragon

January 1, 1933

GERMANY

Unfortunately—like the majority of Germans—I do not know Soviet literature as well as I do the pre-revolutionary Russian writers. What I have read always charmed me by its freshness while at the same time it frightened me by a certain naivete in artistic and psychological respects. I have envied the young authors who are able to write in such a manner, although, being sincere, I do not wish to be such an author. The strongest artistic impressions of New Russia came to me through its films.

Klaus Mann

Oct. 14, 1932

I have to thank Soviet literature—insofar as I have been able to study it in translations—for great impressions and numerous impulses. As my attitude in this respect is purely based on art, no political or social antagonisms carry any weight in this matter... I am working on a book—forming part of the cycle of *Etzel Novels*—which deals in the broadest sense with the problems of individualism and belief in God.

Jacob Wassermann

Oct. 19, 1932

In order to be able to judge Soviet literature, one ought to have read more, and above all, newer works than we in Germany have been able to. What I know of Soviet literature has influenced me tremendously, yet not nearly so strongly as the Soviet films.... The novel which I have just completed, *Abel with the Mouth Organ,* attempts to portray four young men who in various ways got on board a sailing boat, wandered away from the world of adults and endeavored to find "truth", the reason for their existence and their tasks in life without arriving at any result. Eventually they lose themselves in the simple sentiments of friendship and love, and although presenting fine specimens of sixteen and seventeen year old humanity, sooner or later they fall into the trodden path.

Dr. Manfred Hausmann

Oct. 20, 1932

I follow Soviet literature with great interest and appreciate most those authors in whom the specific Russian character that is independent of the time situation blends itself with the present experiences. This blending I see in writers like Babel, Ehrenburg, Gladkov, Ivanov, Katayev, Leonov, Mayakovsky, Pilnyak, Zamyatin..... I have just completed a new book which will soon come off the press: a biography of Spinoza, in which I endeavor to understand this personality both per se and in the light of his time. I now resume work on a large contemporary novel which I have had in mind for many years.

Rudolf Kayser

Oct. 18, 1932

I have no precise attitude towards Soviet literature. For this my knowledge of its works is not comprehensive enough. However, I know and love some writers of New Russia, above all the genius Maxim Gorki who is one of the greatest writers in world literature. Next, the excellent novelist Babel, the splendid writers Gladkov and Pilnyak whose works *Cement* and *Volga Falls to the Caspian Sea* have strongly impressed me, and lastly, Tarasov-Rodionov, Alexander Neverov, Serafimovitch, Vsevolod Ivanov, Sholokhov... I have lately completed a drama of the German Revolution entitled *The Battle of Kolbenau* which was produced in Berlin. The drama portrays the tragedy of the immature and abortive German Revolution of 1918 and the attitude of the little Spartacus band which pointed to the future. The murder of Rosa Luxemburg is part of the play. At present I am working on a popular comedy *Cow Trade,* in which the central point is the petty dealing of looking for 'fair weather' in all directions.

Gerhart Pohl

Oct. 18, 1932

..."Soviet literature, by its form and content, not only represents a "contrast" to bourgeois literature, but also since it portrays the struggle of the exploiters against an order of society in which the human being is of less value than the beast, it is imbued with intrinsic truth and compelling force. It is, however, bound to lose some of its force to the extent that the world proletariat will liberate the Russian Revolution from the capitalist encirclement, or that the Soviet State will be compelled to make ever wider compromises with world capitalism and the compromise policy will necessarily be reflected also in literature. I am of the opinion that Soviet literature should not be considered as a Russian question; it is rather a question of how the proletarian writers will avail themselves of the sources of strength opened up by the October Revolution in order to carry on also by artistic means the fight against capitalism. Proletarian literature must not confine itself to the mere consolidation of what has been achieved, if it does not want

to forfeit its own right of existence. It must be on the offensive. This has been realized in but slight degree by proletarian writers outside of Russia, in the sense of applying the new forms and possibilities opened by the October Revolution upon their own battle front... I have just completed a large novel of peasant life which is to be published by Agis in November 1932. I take it that you regularly receive my books.... The enclosed article contains a few more remarks on the question. I consent to have it published in the *Literary Gazette*. It was written by me for a publication which no longer appears. The article has not yet been published. I should be grateful for a copy containing my article.

Adam Scharrer

Oct. 22, 1932

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

Sergei Tretyakov

January 1920. The Golden Horn, on the Bay of Vladivostok. Innumerable battleships and cruisers. Troop-ships with bulging sides swallowing up soldiers in their holds. Flags of all sorts hanging from mast-heads. All this means that Kolchak and Co. have collapsed ,that troop-trains are at a stand-still on miles and miles of Siberian railway lines, that the ranks of the interventionists, grown indifferent both to their white-guard protegés and to each other, mutually showering reproaches and contumely, are fleeing along the narrow passage of the railway line, on either side of which the marshy plain of Siberia is alive with Red partisan risings.

The first to leave are the English, the French, the Czechs. The Japanese—closer neighbours—merely shuffle up and down the road, to look as if they too were leaving. But they have no intention of going away. On the contrary, the departure of their allies and rivals will leave them with a freer hand.

The metal of the white armies is turning red in the forge of the civil war.

The Red partisans, in their goat-skin jackets and their high caps adorned with red ribbons, entered Vladivostok on the 31st of January in the best of spirits. Behind them are the forests through which they roamed with only a few cartridges to each rifle, and not a drop of medicine, behind them the nipping Siberian frosts, wich bit at their toes through the holes in their boots.

Their commander is the 20 year old bolshevik Lazo, who organized disgruntled peasants, angry gold-seekers, miners stranded in the Siberian swamps, a scattered folk, feeling more than they understand, and very often recognising no will but their own, into the Red Army.

The citizens of Vladivostok hid behind drawn blinds, peeping out timidly from the cracks in them at the partisan ranks filing through the principal street. They feared bloodshed.

But no blood was shed. Instead, work began. The true masters of the districts drew up inventories of houses, streets and stores. Human will, energy and creative power—everything was reckoned up. The faces of the dockers continually holding meetings in the port of Egersheld wore real smiles for the first time in many weeks. Everybody felt in these days a resuscitation of the early days of the revolution.

At first power remained in the hands of the municipality. But factory and mine contingents were already beginning to show signs of life, village was beginning to call to village. Preparations were on foot for election to the Soviets. Meetings were continually held. The poets wrote songs for the workers. The Military Soviet, under Lazo, organized barracks, food, clothing and instruction for the troops.

But we were not alone in Vladivostok. Stumpy little sentries in greenish khaki coats, with epaulettes sunk in their shoulders stood at gates of warehouses. They patrolled the streets, white muslin cones on their mouths—"anti-influenza," not anti-gas masks.

And then there are the members of their consulates, bright-eyed and smiling. They are clothed in sober kimonos, but the hieroglyphic monograms of their exalted names are woven into the sober kimonos. They are Samurai, knight-errants, the representatives of ancient splendour, which entails upon them the duty of protecting the weak and the sick, of holding to their word, of being just.

Of an evening geishas from the Japanese tea-rooms sing plaintive melodies, reminding the officers of their rainy native land and of the flowering cherry-trees. Japanese hair-dressers look after the toilet of the soldiers. Japanese watch-makers in the corner shops see that time is accurately measured by their clients' watches, and perhaps keep their eyes open for a few other things too.

But why do their soldiers swarm over the town around the flattened remains of what were once the forts of Vladivostok, why do they surround these forts with barbed wire? Why do their sentries approach so close to our barracks? Why are barricades of sand-bags rising at the principal cross-roads, while machine-guns peep out from behind them, and the subtle, acrid rumour spreads: "We fear attack?"

How can they fear attack while their battleship the *Hizen* lies at anchor, a huge grey hulk, and their troop-trains scour the railways?

On the evening of April 4, a few poets, including Aseyev (whose song of Budenny is sung throughout the Soviet Union), go down to the town by Tiger Hill, which hangs over the port of Egersheld, the station, and the network of streets.

The streets are empty. The town lies in a pit of darkness. And suddenly the searchlight of a battle-ship is flung over it. And suddenly a machine-gun raps out. Once for a beginning, then three times, then again and again.

A file of Japanese soldiers goes by at a run. Others a the side begin calling to each other

the moment the machine-gun barks. In the rear, shots are heard, and answering shots from "Rotten Corner" can just be made out in the stillness and darkness of the pause. This is where our biggest barracks are situated.

Thus began the famous Japanese attack of April 4, 1920.

All night they threw bombs at the Red Army barracks. All night, with strange fury, they peppered the empty building of the government headquarters with machine-guns. They fired on Red partisans on their way back to Manchuria to the fight which had been going on for two-and-a-half years and was not yet over. The military Soviet, with Lazo at its head, was seized and thrown into dungeons.

But the severest punishment was meted out to the Koreans suspected of revolutionary activities. Looking like surgical-assistants in their white gowns, these silent soldiers were subjected to merciless treatment. A line of them was pressed against the wall, bare-footed on the iron grating of the station floor. Their relations squatted on their heels on the other side of the road and watched them being tortured. Loathing gleamed in the eyes of the tortured men. I have been told that a Korean whose arms were bound spat out the food put in his mouth by a pitying Japanese sentry .....

And then they were taken on to a ship. And after that the people of Vladivostok were for long chary of eating meat sold on the crab-market.

The whole Japanese population of Vladivostok surged into the streets on the fifth of April. Laundry-men, hair-dressers, watch-makers, and street-walkers by the hundred, poured into the streets like herrings at spawning-time. The houses of the demonstrators were adorned with yellow flags like poached eggs—white with a yellow disk in the middle.

The demonstrators carried similar flags. For that day they were the lords of the town.

The American consul went in person to congratulate General O-oi in command of Japanese troops, "on the occasion of the adherence of Vladivostok to Japan" much to the worthy General's astonishment.

"But of course!" said the American, "There are Japanese flags all over the town!"

The embarrassed O-oi explained that it was a misunderstanding, and ordered the flags to be taken down.

Chinese had to be hired to take down the flags.

In these days of rage and impotency the authority of the bolsheviks grew to enormous dimensions. Many a die-hard enemy of the Soviets was taught that day by the Japanese a lesson of loyalty to his own country. The Japanese could not find even among the most hardened political intriguers any one to take over power in the shattered city.

Vladivostok remained without any ruling authority for three days.

We poets wrote poems which were like vows. On the evening of April fifth I took my poem to a newspaper-office which had only survived by accident of being situated in a remote yard. The paper continued to appear from sheer habit.

In my poem I wrote that behind the clenched teeth of the Vladivostok workers who had been driven to the wall, there were accumulated names for the tyrants, in comparison with which "blackguard" and "scoundrel" would sound as fragant as lilies of the valley.

I wrote that the Japanese machine-guns were sewing-machines, sewing the red shirts of the future, for a Japan as yet only in embryo.

I wrote that we would find within ourselves the will-power and self-control to turn the sharp points of hatred in our burning eyes into the sharp points of bayonets.

This was my first poem after I went into the street with a rage distorted face on the day of the great wrath. From it dates my reckoning as a poet-revolutionary.

Before I left for China I had begun to work in the theater with Eisenstein, the well-known film-producer. Together we organized performances of great expressive and propaganda quality. Eisenstein's productions of *The Sage,* and *Can You Hear, Moscow?,* and Meyerhold's *Magnificent Cuckold,* and *World Upside-Down* (my work, this last), gave rise to the "Blue Blouse" troupes, which afterwards provided material for the German propaganda theatre-groups.

But in China under the influence of journalistic propaganda in *Pravda,* I changed the very principle on which I wrote my plays. This was no deliberate plan for propaganda-influence, such as, for instance, I drew up for my play *Can You Hear, Moscow?,* which was sheer invention from beginning to end. No I began to use actual occurences in daily life, and seek a base for propaganda in the class-struggle itself.

Thus it was that *Roar China!* came into being. It is of interest to note that among those to brand this play as "mere" propaganda—and there were such—was the newspaper-article.

The enemy scented the true nature of the play.

Mere reporting, in the form of isolated articles, is not enough. Facts demand more profound treatment, more all-round treatment, in their dialectical and their dynamic aspects.

This necessity gave birth to the idea of the bio-interview, to a long work which really amounted to a biographical novel, written by the journalist with the aid of the interview-method.

Dissatisfied with the inventions of authors and their cut and-dried types drawn up on the basis of many individuals, according to individual observation, I endeavoured to look for a personality representing in itself class, social-background and epoch.

An actual human being became the theme of my book—my student-pupil with whom I was on the friendliest terms.

I mobilized all the information on China which I had accumulated, and began on this

basis, conversations spread over six months with the man who became for me at the same time collaborator and chief character in my book.

The result justified the means. The type was correctly chosen, his biography carried features which turned out to be typical for all his contemporaries.

Thus it was that a book came about which was at the same time fiction and research work.

The bio-interview method turned out to be very fruitful and I am told books are at present being written on these lines in Germany.

Myself, I am progessing from it. With the collaboration of the German writer Otwald, I am writing *The Director,* a double bio-interview in which one character is interviewed in the Soviet Union and the other in Germany. Both characters are of the same age and occupy analagous situations, and these analogies should bring out with special relief the distinctions (arising from the mutually opposing social-economic systems in which they move and have their being) between them.

I am working by the bio-interview method on the history of a veritable tangle of human lives, interviewing a whole brigade, composed of the most various types, and following the course of these separate human rivulets as they are crossed by the horizon of the years, meeting according to the will of historical law, in order finally to become the brigade of a single, revolutionary shock-action.

While far from imagining that I am creating a literature which will place me in the select company of those gifted with the "divine spark", I do believe that the interview method, with such handy and simple sources as diaries, minutes, newspaper-interviews and letters, is accessible to many.

Our actuality is more marvellous than the wildest fantasy. The changing of human-beings and their background is the more striking the deeper these processes go into our life and become an idiom which can be used on paper; the greater the development of these processes, the richer we shall be in knowledge of our daily life and, consequently the better-armed in the struggle for the morrow.

But to return to the business of writing .

Ever since my visit to China the travel-essay has predominated in my work. I have travelled through the Caucasus, crossed Mongolia and Siberia, made winter journeys on aero-sledges, and all this broadened my outlook and helped me to accumulate a great mass of knowledge. But here again began that same process, which in my Chinese essays led me to the bio-interview —the need to deepen my knowledge so that it should lead to a veritable and unified world-outlook.

Just at that time great controversy was going on among Soviet writers on the question: is it enough for a writer to be merely a writer, or does he need some other profession? It has now become obvious that as soon as the material he has accumulated is exhausted the man at the desk needs to plunge himself into some sort of definite activity in order to renew the supply of raw-material from which his literary works are constructed.

Sergei Tretyakov

Just at this time books written not by professional-writers, but by research-workers, scientists, and public personages were attracting special attention. It even looked as if such books were putting so-called pure fiction in the shade.

At the very moment the first fruits of that remarkable phenomenon in Soviet literature, to be formulated a year or two later under the life-giving influence of the five-year-plan, began to show themselves.

I mean the challenge made to literature by the shock-workers.

The shock-worker's book was the book of the real worker, the worker who had not abandoned the factory bench. Its theme was the real every-day life of our factories, its heroes the author, his comrades and all the living human-beings around him.

These books were no mere diaries or memoirs, they summed up working-class experience, more, they showed how the process of socialist construction is forging out a worker for voluntary, communist labour.

And in these books the errors of the superficial reporter—the tourist, the amateur taking in everything in five minutes—are not to be found. In every line the author is responsible for his biography and his paragraphs do not require that he look at something, or ask somebody some-

thing—the information in each paragraph has been obtained with the author's muscles, with his own energy, his own progress.

Such is the general basis for the intensifying of the study of actuality—interest in real, live people—and this it was that led me to become a reporter-activist, a participant in construction over a considerable period, responsible for each stage in it, instead of a mere reporter-observer.

In this way my two kolkhoz books, *The Challenge* and *A Month in the Country,* afterwards published in Germany under the common title *Feld-Herren (Masters of the Fields)* were constructed.

In these essays I combined prolonged observation and characteristic phenomena of reconstruction in the countryside and among the peasantry at the most important moments in their life—the period of collectivisation and the liquidation of those village vultures, the kulaks, as a class.

At the same time they are informative essays of a newspaperman acting as sentry at an important moment in construction.

Finally these essays are the record of the organizational work and the summary of concrete proposals, by one kolkhoz worker to the whole kolkhoz cultural front.

Here, working on collective farms in this our marvellous epoch of the five-year-plan, I developed the idea of continuous cinema and photographic observation, for people and things change with such rapidity that by noting down these changes on the celluloid, it should be possible in two or three years to construct a true first-hand picture of the historic bound now being made by our country "from the realm of compulsion to the realm of freedom."

It was with the greatest delight that I heard from Comrade Mezhericher, a Soviet cinemaman, that my proposal for continuous photographic observation had been the spiritual father of a series of cinema "topicals."

I sometimes remember how, scribbling verses in my school-days, I felt the lack of themes, of something to write about. This feeling of emptiness was in complete accordance with the hopelessness of outlook of the "intellectual" under capitalism.

And now all I complain is that there are only twenty-four hours in a day and night, and not a hundred-and-twenty-four, and that I cannot work simultaneously in Dnieprostroi, Magnitostroi and Kuzbas, that I cannot climb the Pamir with Krilenko, search the Hibin with Ferman, circle the polar shores with Schmidt, dig in the Donbas with Liebhart and Kartashev, and dam the Volga with Alexandrov. It is here that we feel how great and splendid real life is, and how inadequate is isolated human energy.

This is why subsequent notes for my books will be for works requiring the joint forces of many people.

One such is a *Hand-book to Socialism* in Moscow and other towns, another is *Itineraries,* a new sort of guide-book, telling the traveller what it is that he sees through the window of the train, thus making the journey itself as instructive as a university course.

Before me, with song and machinery, kolkhoz workers pass over the fields of this seething land. Young communists are assembling at shock-rates the biggest blast furnaces in the world.

Workers at their lathes are investigating hitherto unknown fields of geology, at the frontier stand Red Army men, the streets of the towns are traversed by Soviet citizens, and from the sight of each of them my writing-zeal increases, for each of these people is a veritable unwritten book, and only the revolution can put the pen into their hands, and teach them to write this book and still better than all books of print and paper made by the efforts of these people, directed by the bolshevik will of the working class, is the most wonderful book of all—our every-day socialist life.

Boris Andreyevich Pilnyak

I was born on October 14, 1894 in Mozhaisk. My father was descended from the German Colonists of the Volga and my mother was a Russian. Both father who was a veterinary surgeon and mother had received a University education. My father's practice was in the country towns of the Moscow *Zemstvo.*

Boris Pilnyak

After leaving secondary school I studied in the administrative-financial department of the Moscow Commercial Institute.

I first got into print as a boy of thirteen, and began to earn my living by literary pursuits when I was 20 years of age. If it is at all possible to define such a point in time, I should say that I have been consciously practicing the writers' craft since I was twenty-five, when I wrote the *Naked Year.* That was in 1920.

Besides the Soviet Union I have been in Esthonia and Germany (1922) in England (1923) in Spitzbergen in the Arctic Ocean (1924), in Turkey, Greece and Palestine (1925), in Japan, China and Mongolia (1926), and later I was forbidden to land in England after which I sailed to the USA (1931). I am writing this in June 1932 from Japan.. My stories and books have been translated into the languages of the Soviet Union, into Polish, Finnish, Esthonian, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Catalonian, Norwegian, Swedish, French, English, Japanese, Chinese and German. My writings have received attention from the Press abroad.

In 1922-23 I was chairman of the editorial board of the "Krug" publishing artel. In 1929 I was president of the All Russian Writers Union.. On three different occasions (1923 *English Sketches, 1926 The Unquenched Moon, 1929 Mahagony)* the newspapers and public opinion in the Soviet Union attacked me for infringing on Soviet social and literary traditions.

I came to the revolution and Soviet literature with a decided anarchistic streak due chiefly to the complete ignorance of political matters I then suffered from. Not the revolution itself, not the Communist Party received my main attention, but rather the collision produced in my mind between the revolution and all manner of "sturdy" national traditions together with the nonsensical teachings of Rosanov and Soloviev I had stuffed my brains with. During these years it was only the instinct of Justice that connected me with the Revolution, for with Rosanov's equipment I failed to understand the meaning of the new ways. All these Soviet years and my travels round the world, however, have taught me better. Not ravings about national traditions, but rather the world of living men, and communism, which is destined to rebuild the world, sweeping away the remnants of medievalism and capitalist plunder, the communism that even now is building the world anew, because it is one with justice, and also our Soviet Union now engage my attention, while the business of my life is to work with the men and women who are building communism.

V. Kirshon

I was born in 1902 into a social-democrat menshevik family. I reached the sixth class of the intermediate school. In 1917 during the February Revolution I took part in the revolution-

V. Kirshon

ary students organizations. In 1918 I joined the Young Communist League and went to the revolutionary front. After that I worked in the party.

I graduated from the Sverdlov Communist University. Here I wrote my first literary works —propaganda pieces; a song called *Our Carmaniola* and the plays *How they End? A United Front,* etc. I also wrote songs about political events and campaigns which were going on at that time in Moscow.

After leaving the University I carried out party and propaganda work in the Northern Caucasus (Rostov-on-Don) and at the same time continued to write. I was one of the organizers and leaders of the Rostov and North Caucasian Association of Proletarian Writers.

From 1923 I was on the board of the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers and also a member of the *Napostovstsy* group. At the end of 1925 I came to Moscow where I worked at different times as secretary of VAPP, secretary of MAPP, editor of the magazine *Rost (Growth)* and as a member of the board of editors of *Na Literaturnom Postu (In the Front Lines of Literature) Molodaya Gvardia (The Young Guard), Sovietski Teatr (Soviet Theatre)* and other magazines. I have taken a leading part in the *Vseroskomdrama* (The organization for Russian Communist Drama) and the Association of Revolutionary Cinema workers. At the present time I am on the organization committee of the Union of Soviet Writers. I have written a number of pamphlets on literature and the cinema.

In the course of my work I have written a large number of articles in magazines and newspapers such as *Pravda, (Truth) Komsomolskaya Pravda, (Young Communist Truth) Molodaya Gvardia, (Young Guard) Na Literaturnom Postu* and *Oktiabr (October).*

In 1926, in collaboration with A. Uspenski I wrote the play *Constantin Terekhin.* Later I wrote *The Rails are Humming,* the *City of Winds,* and *Bread.* My last play, written after making a trip abroad was *The Trial.*

Fedor Vasilievich Gladkov

Up to the age of eight I lived in a village, surrounded by woods and open spaces. Memories of my childhood burn in my mind—the memories of sunny spring, spring waters rushing through the streets, Easter bells, and twilight choruses.

My mother was forced into marriage at the age of 15 and from frequent beatings and hard and unremitting work in a large family, she fell victim to a nervous disease. I remember how in one of her fits of madness, she ran away naked to the churchyard. When she was caught they tied her up and beat her.

The village has left memories of pensive songs sung by my mother and grandmother, who was a serf, memories of inhuman treatment of woman, and fresh is the memory of the round brilliant sun over the green fields, of fierce fights, of the short "justice" dealt by the bailiff to the peasants (by means of fist and the whip), of blood-stained faces of the peasants during the reallotment of land, the unforgettable pope who in his struggle with the old believers (I was born in an orthodox family) had accused me of "insulting the holy," for which I was beaten by the bailiff. Then the escape with my mother in the dead of night to the Caucasus where my father was.

F. Gladkov

Between the ages of seven and eight I roamed about among gangs of fishermen on the Volga and the Caspian, (this phase of my life has been depicted in the play *The Gang).* Then the village again, village school. At 12 I fell under the spell of the poetry of Lermontov, Pushkin and Nekrasov.

From the age of 12 I lived at Ekaterinodar, in Kuban. Father became a proletarian and severed all ties with the village. I attended school and read voraciously. By the time I was 14 I had read Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Gogol, Turgenev, Goncharov, A. K. Tolstoy; some of Shchedrin, Dickens, Hugo, Balzac, Zola and Byron.

For the first time I experienced the pride of authorship—wrote poetry and began to keep a diary. Financial circumstances prevented me from attending school and I was placed in a pharmacy. But I ran away from there. Worked in a print shop but fell ill with rheumatism and was kept in bed for a long time.

Father lost his job at the factory, and remained unemployed for about a year. We made shoe brushes and brooms at home, then sold them on the market. Ate in cheap little restaurants. Hit the depths of poverty. Made friends with thieves and prostitutes and learned that they are kindly, intelligent people, rich in experience.

At the age of 16 wrote a story "The World," about a girl who is striving to get away from a humdrum, joyless existence. Then followed "After Working Hours," a story of the everyday life of workers. "Maksutka,' a story about a tramp was written under the influence of Gorki. From here I firmly embarked upon a literary career.

Two little books by Gorki which I read enchanted me and for a long time I could not read anything but his works which I read over and over again, committing them to memory. Something grew in me, pined and strove for expression and only through Gorki did I find an outlet.

The Gang was written under his influence and sent to him. He answered promptly and kindly, promising to publish it in a big magazine *God's World.*

Father was again unemployed. I earned from ten to fifteen rubles a month by giving private lessons. This kept us from starving. Another year and I was to be a village teacher. But by the end of winter I got acute appendicitis. After the operation I was confined to the hospital for some time.

Between 1902-1905 I lived in Trans-Baikal teaching, writing for the newspaper *Trans-Baikal.* Gorki's influence remained with me. At that time I was connected with Chitinski illegal political workers. Published a number of stories and sketches dealing with penal servitude, with the life of exiles, the Chaldoni and the Buryati.

In the spring of 1905 I worked for the local Social-Democrat organization. In the summer went to Tiflis where I worked in the student Bolshevik circles. The following year passed an extension examination to a teacher's institute, then went to Kuban, where I worked hard and arduously in the underground Social-Democrat organization which at that time was under the leadership of Ivan Sanzhur (Ilya) with whom I became close friends in Tiflis.

Trans-Baikal once again. Got arrested two months later, stayed six months in jail, then exiled to Lena (this period of my life is depicted in the *Old Code* and *Izgai*. Spent three years in exile, reading a great deal. Wrote two stories and some sketches dealing with the political jail and the train for convicts.

On returning from exile in 1910 went to Novorosiisk. Taught in the primary school there. Wrote the story *Izgai* which was later published in the magazine *Zavety*.

In 1916 I sent to Gorki the story *The Only Son* (now known as *Puchina.)* He wrote me a nice letter and in closing said: "You are a persistent man. Continue to work hard and do not spare your energy." He had the story published in *Letopys*.

From the year 1917 on I went heart and soul into the revolution. Reestablished broken connections with the Bolsheviks. The play *The Storm Breaker* which I wrote while doing illegal political work, was produced by Meyerhold in Novorosiisk in 1920.

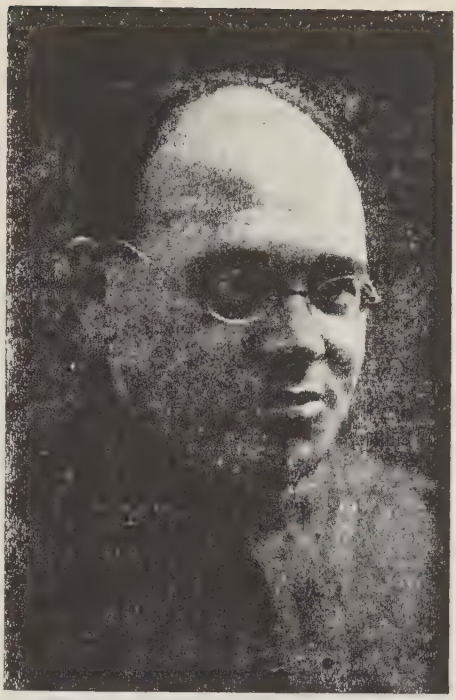
Beginning with 1920 did responsible work. Did my bit in vanquishing Wrangel's troops. Worked in the political department of the 14th brigade of the 9th army.

Have been living in Moscow since 1921. Joined the Association of Proletarian Writers. Starved, lived in basement, and seized with the ardor of creative energy, wrote *The Gang, The Fiery Horse; Verdure* and *Cement*.

Isaac Emanuilovich Babel

I was born in Odessa, on the Moldavanka. My father, a Jewish business man, made me study Yiddish, the Bible and the Talmud from the age of sixteen. I had to study many branches of learning from morning to night. I would rest from this at school. The school I attended was called the Nicholas I Commercial College. It was a jolly, noisy, dissolute and polyglot establishment, attended by the sons of foreign merchants, the children of Jewish brokers, Poles of noble extraction, old-believers and a host of over-grown billiard players. During vacations we would spend our time at the harbor or playing billiards in Greek cafes, or else drinking cheap Bessarabian beer on the Moldavanka.

French was taught best of all. The teacher was a native of Brittony and like all Frenchmen had a gift for literature. From him I learned the classics by heart. I came in close touch with the French colony and at the age of 15 began to write stories in French.



I. Babel

After leaving school I was sent to Kiev. In 1915 I settled down in Petersburg. Here I had a tough time for like all Jews I did not have the "right of residence." I dodged the police and lived on Pushkin street, in a cellar along with a waiter who was always drunk. In 1916 I started making the rounds of editorial offices but was always turned away with the advice to become a shop assistant to which I paid no heed. In 1916 I met Gorki. I owe everything to this meeting. Gorki printed my first stories in the November 1916 number of his *Annals,* (for which I was arrested) and taught me a number of important things. It turned out that these tolerable youthful essays owed their success merely to good luck. My further attempts met with failure and in general my writing was surprisingly bad. Alexei Maximovich then sent me out among living people. From 1917 to 1924 it was my fortune to learn a lot. I was a soldier on the Rumanian front, afterwards worked in the Cheka and in the Commisariat for Education, served in the Northern Army against Yudenich and in the Ist Cavalry Army, worked in the Odessa Provincial Committee, as a reporter in Petersburg and Tiflis, and in an Odessa printing shop. And only by 1923 did I learn to express my thoughts clearly and concisely. I therefore set 1924 as the beginning of my literary career. That year the magazine *Left* published my stories: *Salt, The Letter, Dolgushov's Death, The King* and others. Two years later I wrote my *Cavalry* and *Odessa*

Stories. Then came another period of wandering, silence and gathering of forces. I stand now on the threshold of new labors.

Lydia Nikolayevna Seifulina

"I was born, I grew and was fed with a spoon. I have lived and worked and now I begin to age..." These words of Vladimir Mayakovsky apply to even the most turbulent of lives. Only the terminal dates, which are unknown to us, differ. It is difficult for one who has begun to age to write exclusively about himself, about his own "I." One writes not a self-protrait but what we call by that sad word—reminiscences.

I was born in 1889, so I am 43 years of age. My father was a Tartar, and an orthodox clergyman. The childhood of Alibalt related in my *Kami-Kabak* is the story of his childhood up to entering the Kazan Russo-Tartar teachers seminary, except that my father was born in different conditions. My mother was a peasant from the Government of Samara. Father taught her to read and write, but she wrote very badly right up to her death. She died a young woman and my memory retains only long combed chestnut hair and very pale hands and face. The daughter that cost mother her life resembled her, I am told. She followed mother to the grave. Two girls were left behind, both unlike their mother. My sister and I are dark with non-Russian features. Father always regreted this because he loved my mother while I was ashamed of my Tartar blood until I was 16. This was the influence of my Russian grandmother. My father was not ashamed of being called a non-Russian.

Lydia Seifulina

Our family was destined to unite different nationalities. The grandchildren of the orthodox clergyman Seifulin have the surname Shapiro. They were considered bastards until the revolution. My father baptised them himself in order to give them a name and the possibility to live in orthodox Russia. When I was seven the bishop of Orenburg sent father to a missionary camp in the Kustanaisky district in the Turgaisky province where he had to convert the Kirghises to the orthodox faith. He was a fervent preacher but would not agree to make converts by bribery, a common practice in that hungry year. He was replaced on account of this. My childhood passed in continual travelling from village to village. Father was often removed not only for his tolerance:—he became a heavy drinker after mother's death. For this reason we were poor. The neighbors were very sorry for us children but we grew up in a state of happy freedom.

My childhood was a happy one until my student years. My position in the social hierarchy determined my education. I studied in the Orenburg women's diosecean school, which altogether had six classes. I finished my education in the Omsk women's gymnasium. After proving a failure as a missionary my father was sent to the front as chaplain to the 52nd Dragoons. This was during the war against Japan, in 1905. My sister and I were taken to Omsk where lived an aunt of ours, with whom we stayed. My life has been a long and an exciting one. It would take a long time to relate all. Even a list of my journeys from one end of Russia to another and of the different ways I have earned my living would take up much space. I started to work when I was 17. A simple questionaire showing the place and date of all my occupations would take no small amount of labour. Our material insecurity and non-Russian family led to many an insult in my youth. But the circles I was brought up in kept me apart from those who were fighting actively for the revolution. Until 16 I was deeply religious and extremely anti-semitic. I regarded my father's religious tolerance and non-Russian origin as cruel misfortunes.

We were brought up in the arms of two illiterate Russian peasants, my grandmother Avdotia Antipevny and our servant and nurse, Anna. Their tales, their songs, their beliefs, habits and their whole way of living were our ethic and esthetic; their language was our language, their god, our god. Father was restless and melancholy; three months out of twelve he would drink himself nearly to death. We were often removed from him so he had no great influence over us in childhood. I entertained a mixed feeling of love and angry pity for him. He succeeded in implanting in us only one of his loves. That was his love for Russian literature. While in the

Kazan seminary he had dreamt of a writer's career. After graduating he did not want to become a clergyman for a long time but taught the Tartar language in various missionary schools and religious seminaries. Only after marrying did he pass the examinations required for taking holy orders. He wrote an autobiographical novel. The manuscript remained in the family a long time, almost up to the 1917 Revolution, but was afterwards lost in the course of our wanderings. Its author died in 1920. When 1917 came he had no permanent parish though he had not been unfrocked. He would be sent to various villages and farms and to fulfil the sacraments.

It is difficult for me to judge his novel objectively. I think he would have held my place in literature with every right. He did not become a writer but during his periods of sobriety he taught his children and our uncle and aunt, who lived with us, to love literature. I learned how to read and write when I was five years old. When I was seven I wrote a long story.

There were often periods when we had little to eat and we were dressed so that the neighboring priest's wife took pity on us but I can't remember the time when father would not buy us books or subscribe to magazines for us. Whenever he brightened up and could talk he read aloud for us. From listening to him I learned by heart poems by Pushkin and Nekrassov, and parts of Zhukovsky's "Water-Nymph;" and I remember very clearly Dostoyevsky's description of how Netochka Nesvanova's stepfather played the violin for the last time. Father wanted very much that I become a writer but did not live to see this come about. Since my girlhood I have earned my living by brain work, and have worked as teacher, actress and office clerk, but only in 1922 did I become a writer. The reason is not that I did not like this profession. How could I not like it? I knew nothing about its thorns and from childhood a writer seemed greater than any lord.

But before the revolution my desire to write had to content with a kind of inner unconscious antagonism. This does not mean that I was a hundred per cent revolutionary, that even in the recesses of conciousness I had no affinity with the old Russia, now tumbled down. I am not writing about the work I did in revolutionary circles in 1905 because all that was superficial. And my atheism, that at 16 gave way to a rapturous belief in God, sprang from my indifference to God rather than from political consciousness. I had simply no stake in the old Russia but I also felt no hatred for it. I had nothing to write about then. One can always write stories, novels and plays about birth and death, about hunger and love and hate, when you clearly recognize whose love, whose birth and growth strengthen your own life, whose death destroys your personal world of longings and achievements. The class, whose happiness or misfortune connoted my own happiness or misfortune was then alien to me. I am neither peasant, noblewoman nor landowner—I belong to the lower toiling intelligentsia. I had yet to learn from life as does a peasant or a worker; I had yet to be in terror of losing a job. I always worked for others but my labor was cheap and could easily be replaced; it was hardly noticed by the privileged classes but seemed light and genteel to the workers and peasants of tsarist Russia. I belonged to no definite social class.

I tried my hand at writing a story about theatrical life, "The Death of an Actress," which I sent to *Vestnik Evropi* in November or December 1916. A stray copy of *Vestnik Evropi* was the only magazine in the village libraries of the district I was living in then, which had no schools and where the "intellegentsia" consisted of the chief constable, the clergyman, and a drunken doctor from the Zemstvo hospital. I was 150 versts from the nearest station and 180 versts from the nearest country town. None of us subcribed to magazines or ordered books. I sent my very badly written story to the distant and important magazine. I had written it with great ease and satisfaction and it proved to be worthless. The editors sent a nice answer, trying in the manner of the intelligentsia not to offend me: the story was well written and showed that the author understood her subject, but it could not be published. It was too sentimental and extremely drawn out: I should re-write it and send it a second time. One critic, V. Pravdukhin read the manuscript and gave a less equivocal estimate, "I can hardly believe it's so bad."

I tore up my story without any feeling of disenchantment. One experiences the joys and pains of creation only when conscious of responsibility. And I wrote irresponsibly because I did not feel my story had a social mission to fulfil.

In 1922 I felt quite otherwise. The magazine *Sibirskie Ogny* was published not far away. All the employees, including the writers worked overtime in order to get out the first number before the Party Congress. They felt responsible for the magazine. The writers argued with me claiming my sentences were too short, that there were too many full stops. I knew what I wanted to say, what I was defending, against what I wanted to arouse hatred. I wrote with difficulty, going without sleep and losing my appetite.

When my first story was accepted it seemed I would surely have died had it been rejected. My joy was such when *Four Chapters* was published that for the next number of *Sibirskie Ogny* I wrote in light hearted mood, all at one sitting. I never wrote like that again and never shall. This was *Breakers of the Law.* It seemed to write itself like one sings when one just wants to sing. I consider it the most valuable thing in my little contribution to Soviet literature. This story was well met both by the reading public and the critics and was soon afterwards translated into other languages. It made me the bondsman of literature for life. I have nothing further to say about myself. I shall try to become worthy of this honorable bondage.

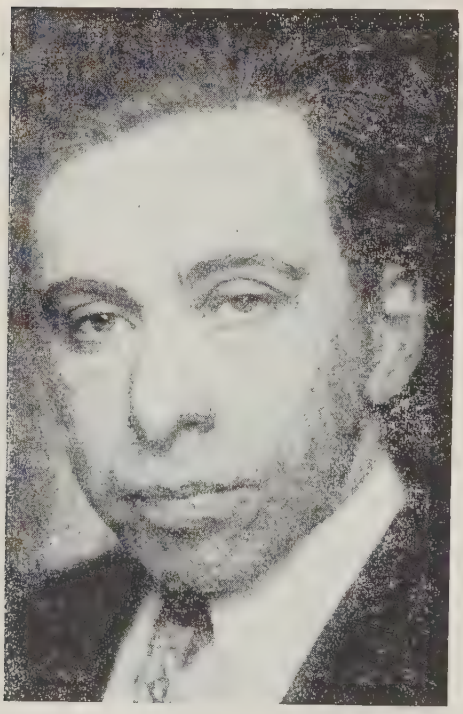
I was born and bred in a bygone world with its own morals and its own values. I was 28 when the October Revolution came. I made a free choice whether to stay in the past or become a citizen of the new Russia. I not only chose Soviet Russia. When I was 32, a still more responsible age, I began to write for Soviet magazines, among whom none stand apart from politics. Thereby I determined once and for all the ideological groundwork of my writings.

Though I am regarded as a "Fellow-traveller" I consider myself a proletarian writer as I represent, no matter in how small a measure, the culture of the class which makes this country's laws. No inner contraditions in the domain of literature itself can make me feel without responsibility not only for Soviet literature but also for the political structure of the country whose citizenship I adopted. This conviction determined the content of the books I wrote during the past decade and of these I am writing now.

Ilya Grigorevich Ehrenburg

I was born in Kiev on January 27th, 1891. My parents moved to Moscow when I was five years old. I studied in the Moscow Gymnasium, and was expelled from the sixth class.

In 1906 I became interested in revolutionary ideas and soon after joined the Bolshevik Party. I worked in the Zamoscvoretsky branch and also in the students' organization. In 1908 I was arrested on a charge of breaking the 102nd statute. I awaited trial first in the police station and later in the Butirsky prison but was released before the trial. I then went to Paris, where I lived some 8 years, returning to Russia only after the revolution. The first two years I shared the views of the *oborontsi** and patriots, writing counter-revolutionary poems and feuilletons.



Ilya Ehrenburg

In 1919 I happened to be in the Crimea, to be exact in Koktebel, then in the hands of the whites. I worked there in a children's playground. It was here that I grasped the real meaning of the revolution. I escaped from the Crimea on a coal boat and after many difficulties made my way to Moscow.

I worked with V. Meyerhold in the Theatrical Union.

In 1921 I went abroad. On arriving in France I was immediately deported. I settled down in a little Belgian village where I wrote my first prose work *Julio Jurenito*. Up to this I had written only poems and those newspaper articles, which were published in book form as *The Face of the War*.

I belong to a period of transition and many things I can accomplish only with difficulty. The relativism and extreme individualism I inherited from the last century often prevent me from getting face to face with the new age. Much that I consider right (and, for all I know may be right if not for the past, then for the future), afterwards turns out to be wrong. I suppose I am not alone in these mistakes.

My nomadic way of living finds its expression in the work I do. I don't know how one should write. I am not enamoured of "fashionable genres," but there is not a single literary form bequeathed from the past about which I don't have doubts. For a long time I struggled with the novel. Books about motors and the kino and what I call "chronicle of our time." They resemble moving pictures, but the "photography" and "mounting" are far from being the work of a mere cameraman. But I don't know whether one should write like that. Not long ago I wrote a novel, an ordinary common or garden variety novel. The old forms still hold sway over me, just like the old ways of feeling.

I seem to be best as a satirist. This probably is why I am so fond of foreign material. I should like to think that a few of my books could help, no matter how little, to destroy the society I hate.

Despite everything I consider myself a Russian and a Soviet writer. A Russian writer because of my language and all that binds one to the country that gave him life and first helped to form him. I am a Soviet writer if only because the Soviet Revolution permitted me to see with new eyes the old world I know so well. No doubt I am a bad "builder"—I some-

* A group of Russian "socialists' who advocated "national defense' during the Great War.

how haven't the knack of driving in nails. I can't sing lively songs either. But I do what I can. Maybe that, too, is necessary.

N. Ognyov (Mikhail Grigorevich Rosanov)

To write about oneself is most difficult. And yet there was one period of my life when my literary ventures were concerned almost exclusively with my own personality. This was between the ages of 8 and 13. I was then editor of our family journal *Success* and I was obliged to contribute pages upon pages of written matter every week. The result is that this literary inheritance is crammed with documents outlining my doings during these years, that is, up to my gymnasium days. At the age of 14 or so I would adorn the pages of *Success* with translations from the French and German. I must have been 17 when I wrote my first "original" story.

In 1905 I was a lad of 17. I couldn't count the number of typewriter ribbons I used up on political poems and feuilletons, all for my own —underground!—little magazine. Possibly my connection with such an underground press explains my predilection for literary hoaxes. In 1906 I brought the then well known Gregory Petrov, editor of *Divine Truth,* a literary production entitled "From the Song of Truth—a Norwegian legend." M. Petrov afterwards sent for me. I can remember how I quaked and shivered and how my heart beat—was I not for the first time in a real honest-to-goodness editorial office? M. Petrov asked me where I took the legend from. "I wrote it myself" I wanted to say, but my tongue pronounced "Translated it from the Norwegian." "Do you konw Norwegian?" "A little." "And so you really translated it?" I got confused. "Well, I didn't exactly translate it, I had to adapt it... make it conform to the spirit of the Russian language, you know," (lying had by this time developed into literary hyperbole).

"Aha, well, very good" said Petrov. "Here's an order to the cashier. Go on translating."

These poems appeared—the first to really appear in print—in Petrov's newspaper on January 26, 1906. What a triumph! A threefold triumph I might say—I had the joy of seeing myself in print, I had earned the sum of two rubles 80 kopecks and thanks to such a simple trick I managed to put one over on an old newspaper wolf. I didn't put in a second appearance at *Divine Truth,* though justice, however, demands the admission that my literary hoaxing has since developed into a recognized literary form, partly under the influence of Prospere Merime, that master hoaxer.

(It might appear that I had a happy childhood and youth, that I had no material worries, and that all I had to do was to go into literature like a knife cuts butter. But such is not the case. I would need to write separately about my abominable family life, my pubringing, the gymnasium, about my poverty-stricken childhood and contaminated youth. I first felt myself a human being in prison—as a member of a prison commune).

N. Ognyov

It was on account of literature, publishing the magazine *Red Banner,* that I landed in prison. The prisoners published two magazines *The Bars* and *Polizmeister.* It was here I first became aware of the power of journalism. One highly strung S.R., was driven desperate by my cartoons about his sexual life and pretended to commit suicide by hanging himself on a rotten rope. The rope broke, the S.R. was badly hurt and the commune strongly advised me to draw no more cartoons of him.

While in solitary confinement in the Butirsky Prison, I published, along with N.S. Karzhansky a journal we called *The Hooter.* The two editors were unable to see each other,—I was in cell No. 9 and Karzhansky in No. 89, two storeys above. Once, however, we chanced to meet in the prison yard during our morning walk...

On my release from prison in 1909 I sent a series of poems, "Prison Bells" to the magazine *Spring,* which printed them. Later a writers' circle was formed which we called "Spring." Its membership included Asseyev, Bobrov, Lidin and I. It soon fell through.

In 1912 I started working on newspapers, chiefly in the *Metropolian News* which some-

times published my stories. I remember one evening Hokhrin, a typesetter, brought along a young student to my place. This student managed to fill countless reams of paper with writing though at that time he seldom appeared in print. His name was Boris Vogau. He came often from his home in Koloma to see me. We became good friends and spent many evenings together reading and talking. I remember how I used to criticize him bitterly for the kaleidoscopic quality of his writings. There was one long novel *Pilnyak* which never saw the light though it gave birth to its author's pseudonym Boris Pilnyak. It is difficult to say which of us most influenced the other, but in any case we agreed that the old cannonical prose should be discarded for good and all. I then was flaying the old cannons in my literary work. Pilnyak began it later, in his post-revolutionary stories.

In one article I wrote in 1924 I said: "...Pilnyak's outlook is foreign to me," but it was not till considerably later, in 1929, that our different outlook separated us.

(What I find unacceptable in Pilnyak's philosophy is his admiration, I might say his veneration for bygone culture and his fetishism. It would seem that this writer's outlook has improved substantially under the influence of the Europe and America of recent years. This is what his *O.K.* leads me to think.)

When the Great War broke out I gave up writing: it appeared so senseless. I started again in 1920, when I wrote children's plays which were produced in the Moscow Children's Theater run by Natalia Satz. Afterwards I got interested in the work of "Krug" and of Voronsky in *Krasny Nov,* where I sent my stories *"Republic Shkid"* and *Eurasia.* I thus became drawn into the literary world. My work with children during the years of revolution demanded expression—hence my stories and *The Diary of a Communist Schoolboy,* etc.

My social roots—bourgeois-intellectual—make themselves felt from time to time even now. My most recent attempts to break with them is my novel *Three Dimensions.*

I have every right to consider myself an artist of the revolution and socialist construction —my social roots notwithstanding. I am well aware what enormous responsibilities these rights confer on me and try to prove myself worthy of them by my whole work.

SOVIET WRITERS MEET

CONFERENCE OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN UNION OF SOVIET WRITERS

The Conference of the Organizational Committee of the All-Russian Union of Soviet authors, held in Moscow from October 29 to November 3, 1932, was attended by 129 delegates including 105 representatives from the provinces. Authors were present from:—The Russian, Ukranian, White Russian, Transcaucasian and Tartar Socialist Soviet Republics; from Turkestan, Crimea, Uzbekistan, Moldavia, Tadjikistan, Kirghisistan, Siberia, etc. About 500 guests, consisting of authors and members of literary circles were also present.

I. M. Gronski was chairman. Maxim Gorki elected honorary chairman amid great applause. After the opening speech by Comrade Groński pointing out the great importance of the present session in consolidating all the power of the pen around one union of Soviet writers, V.Kirpotin spoke on "Soviet Literature in the Fifteenth Year of the October Revolution." Part of his speech is published below.

The official agenda was brought to a close with L. Subotski's speech on "The Realization of the April 23rd Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union." Following this a discussion was held in which more than a hundred speakers participated.

A brief summary of some of these speeches is also given belov.

On the 31st of October a delegation of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers, consisting of 13 foreign revolutionary writers, visited the session and were received with prolonged applause. Comrade Katsumoto of Japan conveyed greetings to the session on behalf of the IURW and spoke of the inspiration that the literature of the Soviet Union was to the revolutionary writers in all countries.

On the 1st of November the revolutionary Japanese director Seki Sano and the famous German playwright, Friedrich Wolf, attended. They brought greetings on behalf of the Secretariat of the International Union of Revolutionary Theaters.

The Conference closed on the evening of November 3rd, after electing an Executive Council.

FIFTEEN YEARS OF SOVIET LITERATURE

Report Given on October, 29, 1932, by

V. KIRPOTIN

Soviet literature has travelled far in the 15 years of its existence. Before the victory of the October Revolution the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois writer held sway in literature. Only a few writers were sufficiently alive to historical truth to meet the revolution in a sympathetic spirit. Alexander Blok's *Twelve,* for all its spirit of romantic prophecy, bears within it the seeds of inevitable misunderstandings of the revolution and recoils from actualities, and Brusov, who died a communist, was burdened with a mass of bourgeois culture which he was never able to shake off altogether, or even to approach critically. Proletarian poetry and literature got over those diseases of adolescence—sectarianism, extremism and "party-snobbery" during the period of military communism and the early years of NEP. Futurism, which was so conspicuous during the years of military communism proved too anarcho-individualistic, too petty-bourgeois in its ultra-radicalism, although the figure of Mayakovsky was an outstanding one even then. Centers of non-party Soviet writers such as the "Serapion Brothers," prided themselves on being non-political, and declared art to be sufficient unto itself. Trotsky, applying to literature his theory of the impossibility of setting up socialism in one country only, denied the very possibility of the existence of proletarian literature, and Voronsky's criticism was based upon the same theory.

Since then we have travelled far. As pointed out in the resolution of the Central Committee, literature has grown both as to quality and quantity. Now, at the fifteenth anniversary of the revolution, we are entitled to speak of the world-signifiicance of Soviet literature. It is first in the world both in its ideological and artistic capacity, and all that is healthy and living in the literature of all other countries, both in the west and east, feels its attraction.

The literature of the fraternal nations composing the USSR, the literature of the allied republics, is going through a period of unprecedented growth. A literature is springing up among them which is national in form and socialist in content. The work of our plenary session has been organized to enable representatives of delegations from the allied republics to give us summaries of the achievements and descriptions of

the problems confronting the literature of other races in the Soviet Union. I should like to emphasize the fact that the quantitative and qualitative growth of Soviet literature mentioned in the Central Committee resolution, applies to the literature of the *whole* Soviet Union.

Literature has never gone through such an intensive process of reorganization in the Soviet Union as it has during the period directly preceding the fifteenth anniversary of the revolution. And this is no mere reorganization of the forms of literary opinion—organizational reconstruction is merely the outcome of profound and significant processes in literature itself, brought about in its turn by profound and significant processes in economics and politics. In his preface to *A Critique of Political Economy* Marx says that the political reorganization ensuing upon revolution is in its turn followed by the gradual levelling up upon a changing basis of other social forms of expression. Our literature is at present passing the highest point of this levelling process. And the levelling up is spontaneous, not automatic. This process is going on under the influence and by means of the class struggle and with the powerful assistance of politics. The levelling up process of which I am now speaking owes its success to the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as a consequence of the inevitability, now apparent to all, of the downfall of capitalism throughout the world, through the class struggle and the advance in class consciousness in literature itself. The definite successes scored in the socialist reconstruction of our literature have been achieved by means of a turn towards the Soviet Power of the majority of the best Soviet writers, and the growing up of the proletariat's own generation of writers. All these points are mentioned in the Central Committee resolution of April 23rd on the reconstruction of literary and artistic organizations.

This turn towards the Soviet Power of the overwhelming majority of the best Soviet writers, all these advances in literature, and the reorganization of literary organizations, could never have been achieved but for bodies of writers from the ranks of the working class and to a certain extent the collective farm peasantry, but for the ideologically leading part taken by proletarian literature, in connection with which the first name that occurs to us is that of Maxim Gorki.

Gorki—artist and fighter against tsarism and capitalism—is the artist of the proletariat. He has contributed new images, a new and powerful idiom to literature. The inexhaustible fountain of his talent still springs up irrepressibly, his influence, generous, helpful, necessary, continues. The new generation of proletarian literature, profiting by the experience of Gorki, have contributed a real innovation, and one that is the most difficult of all to achieve—an innovation in outlook, content, comprehension and the artistic reflection of real life from the point of view of working-class ideology. When I speak of the significance of the new content of modern literature, I do not ignore problems of form, and shall touch upon them later, but I wish to emphasize the fact that the innovation which is the most difficult to achieve and the most fruitful when achieved, is the new content in literature.

The artistic assimilation of our struggles and daily life has made of them inspirations for writers and artists; the formulation of the great proletarian revolution in artistic images has facilitated that turn towards the Soviet Power on the part of non-party Soviet writers which was mentioned in the Central Committee decision for the reconstruction of literary organizations, which has been brought about by the successes of socialist construction, the correct Leninist policy of our party, into which a previous speaker went in detail.

The motive power of this turn towards the Soviets has been the class struggle, the class advances achieved in our country.

Stalin's speech, "New Conditions, New Tasks" gave an eloquent and convincing picture of this turn on the part of the whole *intelligentsia,* and explained the causes of it, while confronting us with the problem of reorganizing forms of work in *our* sphere also —the sphere of literature.

The new and complex atmosphere created by this Soviet-ward turn of the majority of writers, the increase of bodies of proletarian and collective-farm writers, the appearance on the scene of new young writers, (an atmosphere in which the ratio of class forces in literature is in our favour) makes the old forms of literary life unsuitable. The necessity for leadership of the growing and multiplying literary movement demands the reorganization of the forms of literary life, the creation of a single union of Soviet writers. Nine or ten years ago, when proletarian literature was still in the early stages of its growth, when it required outside aid, special attention from the party, RAPP (Association of Proletarian Writers) was created. The growth of proletarian literature, the growth of its influence, its ideologically leading role in Soviet literature as a whole, achieved with the help of the party and through the RAPP are the best justification of the support at one time afforded by the party to the RAPP. And this increase could never have been brought about but for the struggle waged under the leadership of the party and the RAPP against the various hostile anti-Marxian, anti-Leninist tendencies in the sphere of literature.

But what was once fruitful and reasonable has outlived its justification. It is now almost two years since the danger of divorce from the political problems of our day, the danger of the wilful isolation of the principal bodies of Soviet writers, began to show itself in the work of the RAPP. This danger was intensified by the monopolist position of the group known as "On Sentry Duty," which sapped at the forces of the RAPP itself, and led to the ignoring of Party and comradely criticism, while setting up all sorts of anomalies all over the place. This break-

ing up into groups, together with the monopolist position of the "On Sentry Duty" group, was already slowing down literary creation. Group loyalties led to the inflation of the reputations of certain writers, and the silencing of others.

Reconstruction became a necessity towards the end of the existence of the RAPP. This was recognised by the RAPP itself.

On the publication of the speech by Stalin which I have already mentioned, the secretariat of the RAPP passed a special resolution on "Comrade Stalin's Speech and Problems before the RAPP."

"Every instruction issued by Comrade Stalin" is undoubtedly "a worthy theme for a work of art," but all this could only be seen in the proper light after the conclusions had been drawn from Comrade Stalin's description of the processes going on among the old Soviet intelligentsia, the working-class and the new intelligentsia, after the demand of Comrade Stalin for a veritable leadership of literature had been applied to the specific conditions of literature.

World Outlook and Method

We have now arrived at the stage of organising a single union of Soviet writers. The creation of a single union of Soviet writers by no means diminishes the ideologically-leading role of proletarian and Communist writers; on the contrary, the suppression of administrative control, the renunciation of command, will create real conditions for this ideologically-leading role, will create an atmosphere of confidence among the majority of the Soviet writers in the communist wing of Soviet literature.

It is our duty to keep a sharp lookout to see that there is no relapse into the group spirit, that no new groupings are formed. We must resist all such tendencies, for they inevitably bring in their train a divorce from the political problems of our day, inevitably belittle the great educative significance of Soviet literature in the process of creating a non-class society. But this requires first and foremost the correction of the errors of the monopolist group.

In Soviet conditions, in the socialist state, we may at last be able to fulfill the ideal of art, of which Engels wrote to Lassalle: "The complete fusion of true ideological depths with a deliberate historical content . . ."

But we must not render literature primitive in order to achieve this "complete fusion." Literature must be approached as literature; as well as discovering its social significance and ideological content, we must look after its artistic qualities, its composition, mastery of form and the like. We are mature enough for this. In the words of Lenin: "Our people deserve not mere entertainment, but true art, rich in content and beautiful in form."

The letter on the development of creative discussion in the RAPP was based upon the slogan of "the dialectical-materialistic method in proletarian literature." In this letter it was stated that the "On Sentry Duty" group "was the first to raise the question of the dialectical-materialist method in proletarian literature," and goes on to say that "all its other slogans were mere steps towards the mastery of the dialectical-materialist method in proletarian literature."

And yet this very slogan tends towards making literature a primitive undertaking. Why is this? Does it mean that we, the organising committee, are opposed to dialectical-materialism? Certainly not, for only that criticism which is guided by the method of dialectical-materialism, and, like all our social sciences, is both Marxist and Leninist, can be fruitful. We have always resisted and always will resist any modification of this principle.

Further. The deeper, the more faithfully an author absorbs in his work significant aspects of reality, the aims and prospects of a given tendency, the greater will be the proportion of dialectical and materialist elements to be found in his work. It has always been so: from the works of Goethe and Shakespeare we might draw rich material to illustrate a theory of what the dialectical method is. The artist depends upon his world outlook, which is that of a group or class, in definite historical conditions, and never merely that of an indvidiual. And yet, although we are in favour of dialectical materialism in art, we consider the slogan a mistaken one, for it is too simple, it converts the elaborate connection between artistic creation and ideological significance, the dependence of artistic creation upon ideological significance, the complex dependence of the artist upon the world outlook of his class, into a cut-and-dried, mechanically functioning law.

I repeat that the artist sometimes arrives at true and instructive conclusions in art, despite his world-outlook, through the very struggle with it. There is no getting away from this, and it cannot be ignored. To forget it leads to administrative "compulsion," when what is needed is to enable the writer himself to travel the only path along which he can develop while all that the Marxist critic does is to afford him ideological guidance.

We must turn to the actualities of literature if we would discover the path along which our literature must travel for the best results, the path which will guarantee it the best conditions for development. After all we *have* spoken of the ideological supremacy of proletarian literature, we *have* mentioned the Soviet-ward turn, the successes scored by Soviet literature as a whole, and it cannot be that these successes were achieved by taking a wrong path. A glance at the books themselves will show us the path along which success has been scored, will help us to realize what this path is, will show us which path to take if we would speed up the healthy development of Soviet literature. I will now give a few examples.

Fadeyev's *Destruction* is a story of a partisan batallion in Siberia when the Red partisans were broken up by the whites. The author gives a

faithful picture of the Red partisans with their strength and their weaknesses, their good and bad qualities. A disciple of Tolstoi, Fadeyev can describe psychological life with crystal clearness. The psychology of his characters is good in the sense that there is in it nothing illogical, confused or inaccessible to observation or the understanding. Fadeyev uses his technique to show how the bolshevik will overcome weaknesses, and fuses hybrid elements into a single belligerent unit, how defeat cannot suppress the will to victory. Describing an actual occurence, the defeat of a partisan batallion, Fadeyev nevertheless leaves us confident in ultimate victory, and holds out prospects of the final victory of the revolution. This way of depicting our revolution, our life, is quite legitimate.

Let us take another example, *Girders* by Panferov. Panferov is notable for his love of describing the social group, for his endeavours to embody in verbal images the economic conditions prevailing in the group he is describing. It is on this basis that he describes the psychology of his characters, and his descriptions are infinitely less finical than Fadeyev's. His interest is mainly focussed upon the difficulties to be met with in the formation and development of a collective farm, the lines along which it develops, along which the victories of the kolkhoz (collective farm) movement are scored, along which the private property instinct and habits are overcome, and the labouring peasantry drawn through the kolkhoz movement into socialist construction.

We will now turn to *Skutarevsky* by Leonov. If Fadeyev's work is written under the influence of Tolstoi, that of Dostoyevski may be discerned in the works of Leonov. It is obvious from the vein of irony underlying this writer's descriptions of Soviet life, with its many difficulties, that he has not carried his understanding of Soviet actuality to the end. But Leonov is sound in the main, in his descriptions of the tendencies towards development in contemporary life, of its victorious aspects. This is what enables him to portray Skutarevsky with such sympathy.

Vsevolod Ivanov's *Travels to a Country as yet Non-existent* either received less attention than it deserved, or was unfairly criticized.

The explanation of this would appear to be the author's fondness for exploring the darker regions of human nature, his fondness for the illogical, for describing actions which would seem to be based upon no rational motives. His *Mystery of Mysteries* was written on these lines and was justly subjected to severe criticism. But in *Travels to a Country as yet Non-existent* this peculiarity of Vsevolod Ivanov's work is used to demonstrate the struggle for the growth of the productive forces of our country, to show the class struggle as it unfolds in the process of looking for new sources of oil, and to show, through the victory of the communists and workers, how oil fields are drawn into socialist economy.

War by Tikhonov gives a vivid picture of isolated, but at the same time extremely important, aspects of the imperialist war, and the preparations for a new war. This work fosters in the reader hatred for imperialism, and displays, if inadequately, the prospect of the revolutionary issue of war. Tikhonov is not yet strong in the description of the masses, in describing the dynamics of the conflict and the crossing of social forces, but he nevertheless describes certain aspects of imperialism in high relief and in a lively and convincing manner.

I have given only isolated examples. There are plenty more contributions to Soviet literature which might be quoted with equal if not greater justification, especially the works of Sholokhov, but what interests me is not so much a catalogue of the best Soviet works, as that in all the works which I have quoted, by writers having individually little in common, is to be found, to a greater or lesser extent, with more or less varying defects, with more or less faithfulness, a description of Soviet life, and to a certain extent that of the imperialist world, with its positive and negative sides, a description in greater or lesser degree, of the development of tendencies, prospects of victory for the revolution and socialism, even when, as in the case of Fadeyev's *Destruction* and Leonov's *Skutarevski,* the end is superficially "unhappy."

Socialist Realism and Revolutionary Romanticism

We are fully entitled to call such faithful descriptions of the richness and complexities of life in all its aspects, and the victorious socialist principles of its development, socialist realism. We consider that socialist realism is the most fertile form that the development of our Soviet literature can assume. We are not applying it through administration and shall take no administrative measures whatsoever to get it carried out, but we believe that it is precisely on the basis of socialist realism, whether conscious or not, that Soviet literature has achieved its best results. We believe that it is precisely along these lines that Soviet literature will improve and develop in the future.

There has been plenty of violent discussion among us as to the way in which personality should be described, the legitimacy or not of the psychological method. The "Literary Front' maintained that it was not legitimate. This is of course wrong. We must not present a living, actual figure as if it were a kind of human machine.

On the other hand, while certain leading members of the RAPP gave a just appraisal of this principle, others, Auerbach to a certain extent, and Ermilov and Libedinski much more, fell into the opposite error of converting the demand for realism into the demand for subjective idealism. Both Libedinski and Ermilov, in the formula they advanced at the very beginning, as "psychological realism," maintain that all the processes of the cultural revolution, the whole gamut of the class struggle, from wrecking to

shirking, must be given through the psychology of one and the same individual. Such a demand is of course erroneous, leading to substitution in art which leads to mistakes such as Libedinski's of subjective idealism for socialist realism, like his *Birth of a Hero,* a work with which all interested in Soviet literature are familiar.

Literary creation is many-sided. The slogan of socialist realism must not be made as a panacea of universal application. Different artists may approach it in different ways. The degree of nearness to it will be different with different authors. The degree to which opposing tendencies are reconciled will vary according to the temperament of the artist.

Valentin Kataev for instance has undoubtedly embarked upon a path which is capable of leading him to socialist realism. He has achieved a brilliant style for the easy and rapid description of movement, but tends to regard such descriptions as an end in themselves, ignoring the power of class pressure, the social weight of the working-class, and its struggle for the industrialization of the Soviet Union. He has described the competitive spirit which perhaps accompanies some aspects of socialist competition, but has not dealt exhaustively with socialist competition and its enormous significance. Valentin Kataev understands well enough the meaning of the quality of preparations for the successful process of work. He has an excellent sense of changing seasons, the dynamics of events, he has a light touch for the paradox of coincidence, his similes are apt and new. He frequently constructs his narrative upon unexpected antitheses, he is fond of mixing up his material, but his innovations are limited to form and style, and do not extend to content. I do not wish to accuse Valentin Kataev of making a cult of the competitive spirit, but the path he has taken, his efforts after novelty, merely prove the importance for novelty of content, on which basis alone can innovations in style develop and be of value.

It must be remembered that modernity of plot does not in itself make socialist realism. The central figure in Selvinsky's *Pao-Pao,* for instance is an orang-outang, which has had a human brain grafted upon its own. This is a false image, and its falseness is the result of a false idea of the humanizing of animals. The play is abstract in the extreme. All the criticism of capitalism proffered by Selvinsky in this play is marked by abstract sketchiness and is false to history. In reality Selvinsky is once more endeavouring to persuade his readers of what they already knew perfectly well—that money can do anything in capitalist conditions. We find in the work of Selvinsky no feature of the historical actuality of modern capitalism as expressed in the capitalist world. He describes the class-struggle against capitalism with equally abstract sketchiness. There is no development of events in his work, but merely an arbitrary rushing from capitalist to socialist actuality, in leaps and bounds and not through the logic of action. Nor is there any conviction, any sense of life in his work. If the play is interesting it is merely in a superficial, trivial manner. It consists in effective tricks leading away from the path of socialist realism, and this is a pity, for Selvinsky is a master of style and could use his splendid technique for better, deeper ends.

When we speak of socialist realism we do not mean to imply that revolutionary romanticism is in any way at loggerheads with it. We are living in a heroic age. Never before has the future in its basic features come so vividly before humanity. This future is actually among us, it stands amid its scaffolding, it is about to be born. Never before has humanity showed so much heroism, never before have such advances been made for the realization of the best socialist future. We are confronted by the embodiment of that realistic dream of which Lenin wrote in "What's to be done?" when he was forming the first batallions of our great communist party. The heroism, the exploits, the selfless devotion to the revolution, the fulfilment of our realistic dream, all these are characteristic and essential features of our age, of our days. The artist is performing a useful, a necessary task, in magnifying these features, even when, leaving out insignificant aspects, every day life, unimportant details he idealises them, so long as he shows the integrity of life, its huge scope, towards which the whole of our construction is leading. Red revolutionary romanticism is a legitimate and valuable principle, showing how vast is the field for the most varied phenomena, so long as it fulfils the demand for the faithful description of life, of socialist realism. But as soon as we speak of Red revolutionary romanticism we come up against the question of perfection of form and literary skill.

By socialist realism we mean the reflection in art of the external world, not only in its superficial details, or even in all its essential details, but in all its essential circumstances and with the aid of essential and typical characterisation. We mean the faithful description of life in all its aspects, with the victorious principle of the forces of the socialist revolution, we mean the anti-private property, anti-capitalist nature of our work fostering in the reader the spirit of the struggle for the better future of mankind, the strengthening and guarantee of the dictatorship of the proletariat. We set socialist realism against idealism, subjectivism, the literature of illusion in any form whatsoever, as an untrue and distorted reflection of reality. We set socialist realism against the reactionary, hostile reflection of our actuality, against sympathy with the past, capitulation to bourgeois individualism.

The incomplete acceptance of the revolution, insistence upon unessential details, superficiality, empty eloquence and sketchiness prevent completeness of social realism. Only along the path of socialist realism shall we achieve that ideal of art described by Engels: the combination of historical consciousness with the liveliness and power of characterisation of a Shakespeare. The assimilation of the advanced ideas of the age, the

assimilation of the outlook of the working class, of Marxist-Leninism, will help us to fulfil the ideal; and the utmost attention must be paid to skill, talent and technique. The experience of our dictatorship is already wide and fruitful. Its significance has long ago gone beyond the limits of our own country. It is our task, on the basis of the most healthy tendencies which have already made themselves apparent in our literature, to help to speed up its development, to struggle for its greater ideological enrichment, and artistic merits.

When we speak of the cultural role of Soviet literature we must bear in mind the words spoken regarding the enormous importance for us of plays and the theatre. For the theatre is the most democratic of the arts, the most accessible to the masses. Plays go direct to their audiences, touch them directly, leave in their mind traces of re-education, much more easily than can books. The readers of books run into hundreds of thousands, but plays through the vast network of the theatres and clubs, reach the millions. It is noteworthy that, on coming into power, the bourgeoisie used the medium of the drama freely, and has always done its utmost to get theatre audiences within the orbit of its influence.

We appeal to all our writers to devote still more attention to the creation of a rich and artistic dramatic repertoire.

It only remains for us to strive to make our literature still more class-conscious, a still mightier weapon in the great struggle for the creation of a non-class society, and for the re-education of mankind to this end. It has already achieved much along this path, and won the confidence of the proletariat and all workers, and is entitled to regard itself with pride as a force in the creation of a new world, of free communist labour.

Discussion

M. CHUMANDRIN

(author of: Rablé Factory, Ex-Hero, White Stone etc.)

Comrade Chumandrin dwelt on the question of the tendency to form groups. He said that his speech would be devoted to a survey of this tendency and would be his contribution to the campaign against what was left of it wherever it showed itself.

In view of the intensification of the class struggle, and the ever more complex problems confronting Soviet literature, the question of struggle with the group tendency must be raised.

What have the six months following the Central Committee resolution brought forth? It must be said that we, the leaders of the RAPP group, we, who have been called "The Sentries," have done nothing but act as a brake on the carrying out of the resolution. Comrade Fadeyev, if he raised this question rather late in the day nevertheless realized this before the rest of us. I say the rest of us, having in mind "The Sentries," the leading group in the RAPP. It should be frankly admitted that Comrade Fadeyev's declaration did not meet with a courageous and truly bolshevik response on our part.

What does it mean to have impeded for the period of six months the carrying out of the Central Committee resolution?

Does it mean nothing but passive disagreement with the Central Committee, or opposition to it, whether covert or frank, as certain people fond of providing simple explanations for everything have said?

That is not the point. None of us went in for such opposition. The point is that we try to keep everything within the old framework, within the old forms. Even when we spoke of breaking up old groupings what we meant was not the destruction, but the injection into them of fresh blood in the guise of well tried persons— "fellow-travelers"—to inject fresh blood and set up a new and still stronger group. This is a fact and there's no getting away from it. *(Hear, hear!)* Group-criticism has left its mark on the work which was to have re-educated the writer and drawn him nearer to the working class. This is a fact not to be glossed over.

In evaluating a writer we frequently sum him up according to the place in the group, the cell in the organism he occupies and not according to the value of a given book for a given stage of literary development, a given stage of the class-struggle.

In Leningrad ,as well as in Moscow, we stuck to the form of our group. We insisted that such a group ought to exist. On August 19 I declared that "The Sentries" had been, would be and ought to be, a creative group, and that there was no external force which could prevent our existence. How was it we could not understand that when the Central Committee resolution made the breaking up of group-methods of work its chief aim, a group such as "The Sentries" was the Magnitostroi of all group tendencies *(cheers; laughter)?* How was it we could not carry this idea to its logical conclusion? How was it that we did not realize that the very existence of such a group would immediately evoke reactions; expressing themselves in the appearance of new groups to counter ours?

At a meeting of our plenary session in the end of September in Leningrad I said that nobody could break up our group. This was true in one sense, but actually it was far from being the whole truth. Formally speaking no crime was commited, but actually the failure to understand the Central Committee resolution was exposed.

It is no mere chance that this resolution contains the phrase: "To attract writers desirous of taking part in socialist construction." Desirous. Here we have the basic psychological moment—a

writer may write one bad book after another, but if he is trying to do good work he must be helped to the utmost. There has been no attempt whatever to apply the method of socialist competition to our literature. What is socialist competition if it is not to come to the aid of our comrades? If the brigade falls behind, all efforts must be expanded to help it on. But was there a sufficiently profound desire to help one another, to render aid, real aid and not mere panicky excitement, in our leading groups. I repeat that there was not enough of this. Is it not a fact that we have experienced satisfaction in the failure of a writer not belonging to our own group?

I have worked in the RAPP a long time. I am not inclined to forget that on the whole the RAPP carried out the party-line well enough, and issued a challenge for shock-work in literature, even if it was unable to give it a backing. The RAPP has been the chief center of political literary life. It beat off all anti-party groupings with determination, in the bolshevik manner, without fear or favor. This only makes our problem still more important, the obligation of every RAPP member to fight the group tendency in all aspects, and wherever it rears its head *(cheers)*.

VSEVOLOD IVANOV

(author of Armored Train 14-69, The Mystery of Mysteries, Tales of a Brigadier etc.)

I should like to say that the great epoch of great wars and great constructions could not but influence the psychology of each individual desirous of regarding the world from an impartial standpoint and of participating in the new order arising in this new world.

I will not dwell upon the achievements of the Soviet Power in the creation of a new human being and new conditions for him to live in. It will be sufficient to remember how the streets of Moscow looked ten years ago, what was going on in literature ten years ago, when such a congress, attracting such enormous public interest, would have appeared simply impossible, when all the work went on in small groups and circles.

I will not dwell on the fact that the writers who belong to this new world must change their psychology, their understanding of life and their world outlook. But many writers find themselves up against extremely complex problems. I am speaking of myself and of the small group of writers I have been able to observe.

I have been roundly abused for *The Mystery of Mysteries*. But what *is The Mystery of Mysteries*, after all? As I then understood it, it was the inability to overcome my own incomprehension of the world, the inability to find my way in the changed circumstances. When I wrote my first books I had a vast field, a great store of knowledge, empirically absorbed. My chief defect was the inability to find where I was standing and it was this that robbed the characters in my book of true consciousness.

I should like the organizational committee of writers to think about the necessity of the struggle for form. It is extremely important to struggle for form. There is an overpowering *dinginess* in the pages of our journals, comrades. We have had any amount of Tolstois and Dostoyevskis in the worst sense of the word. Of course it is very nice to have Tolstois and Dostoyevskis, but it would be better to have writers using new forms in their work, and escaping from the influence of the old classics. We have got to get over the forms of the old classics and this can be done.

N. TIKHONOV

(author of The Nomads, Desert, War, etc.)

Very small quotations sometimes grow into long works. Take for instance these two lines from Pushkin:

"Let us talk about bygone days in the Caucasus,
"About Schiller, glory and love."

I would apply these lines to to-day's meeting as follows: Comrade Sandro Eyuli has just made us a speech on "bygone days in the Caucasus," in which he told us about "fellow-travellers" in the Caucasus and the situation there on April 23rd. Fadeyev talked to us about Schiller *(laughter)*. Kozakov, told us of the glory-shop, where glory is handed over the counter for ration cards.

And so there is nothing left for me to talk about but love *(cheers, laughter)*.

I will try to speak about love, about the great love for our great epoch, for our literature, not yet great, or at any rate not in line with the great epoch.

You all know how the face of our country has been changed, and is still changing. If you travel about the country enormous changes will be seen even in the remotest corners.

The whole country has become a kind of gigantic conveyor. Things, people and characters are in a state of flux. It must be admitted that it is a grateful task to live and to write in such an epoch.

LEV NIKULIN

(author of Notes of a Fellow Traveller, Time Space Movement, etc.)

I should like to speak on three basic questions: the theatre and its repertoire, socialist realism, and the relations between the party members and non-party members.

What we have seen in the theater, especially in the light of Gorki's wonderful play *Egor Bulichev* shows that most of our plays are constructed according to a familiar theatrical pattern, and that very little attention is paid to that very veracity and socialist realism which we are now discussing. Even the best plays of last season and other seasons cannot be compared in quality to the scope of those who

perform them, the workers of the theater. We note that dialogue is primitive in the extreme, that if for example a Kolkhoz worker utters the most ordinary remark, to say that his comrade is a rotten worker, the theater makes it sound elaborate, by introducing all sorts of oratory in a way that is never done in real life.

I will turn to the question of socialist realism. Literature does not work merely for a day; those who come after us will turn to the literature of our day for an understanding of our times. The people of the future, are our grandchildren and great grandchildren. What is the literature that may hope to go down to posterity?

When we turn to the past we note the same thing that Engels noted in his letter on Balzac; what Balzac wrote about the revolution of 1848, two years after the event, has survived because Balzac illustrated the epoch of the bourgeois revolution.

The slogan of socialist realism, however essentially true, may, like the slogan of dialectical materialism, find somewhat strange application. The RAPP critics were wrong when instead of seeking for the elements of dialectical materialism in literary works they tried to make all books fit into their conception of dialectical materialism. Herein lay their error.

I cannot help feeling dubious; won't the same thing happen with the slogan of socialist realism? People will begin to fit things into their conception of socialist realism instead of seeking for the elements of socialist realism in things. *(Hear, hear.)*

Further: Somebody has said that a non-party member is really one who is not quite clear in his mind, in whose outlook there exists a certain confusion. If, however, we turn to those non-party members, honest non-party members, who have been on the side of the party ever since the beginning of the revolution, we see that this confusion is being overcome.

The epoch of socialist construction has begun. The non-party intellectual, the non-party writer, has been through many extremely complicated situations and experiences. The non-party writer has been the witness of attacks on the party by its foes; he has gradually educated himself, and changed his views, and has already achieved an attitude to things which would never have reached his consciousness, say ten years ago. This re-education (I can only speak for myself) has gradually reached a stage when, in working at a book I no longer feel any pressure from all these circumstances. I write just as I feel, but when I read my own book from beginning to end, I note with delight that there is nothing in it contradictory to the Marxian point of view, and it seems to me that I am writing a book for the Party and the question of the party in my book has already become perfectly clear.

Finally I should like to speak about national literature and our colleagues in the West, and about revolutionary literature. I do not agree with Comrade Kirpotin, who said that Pilnyak's *O. K.* gives an idea of America. If I want to find out what America is like I read Dos Passos, I read his *42nd Parallel*, I read *1919 (hear, hear)*. So we cannot ignore Western revolutionary literature. We cannot ignore our own national literature either. I should be very glad to see connections between the literature of various nations strengthened and developed, and to have our next plenary session held at Kharkov *(cheers)*.

M. SLONIMSKI

(author of The Lavrovs, The Middle Road, Foma Cleshnav, etc.)

I should like to dwell upon the influence of Soviet and proletarian literature on each other. Comrade Kirpotin mentioned this in his report. It seems to me that the following circumstances should be borne in mind: Soviet literature, which began, or rather had its infancy, in 1920, has had a good influence on proletarian literature. It is worth while mentioning this. Proletarian literature has been built up upon the foundation of the errors and achievements of the pioneers of Soviet literature, such pioneers as Vsevolod Ivanov, Malishkin and others. When the influence of the RAPP on the "Fellow-Travellers" was spoken of, this aspect was ignored, and yet it is important, for it is precisely here that we come to the discovery of this mutual influence. It is not merely a matter of the initial stages of literature. It is a matter of continued mutual influence, and this is worth while bearing in mind.

Now we come to the last question—that of the literary background, the literary atmosphere. There was a time when it was almost conspiritorial to mention technique, when literary form was discussed in a whisper. Such an atmosphere did nothing for the development of literary skill. On the contrary, it frequently facilitated bad workmanship. Now, when the question of technique is really being faced, when the writer has to answer for his books, real work has begun. While not forgetting the past, and realizing all that has been erroneous in what was done after our plenary session, we are entitled to examine the future boldly *(cheers)*.

VERA INBER

(author of Place under the Sun, and a number of volumes of verse and short stories)

Vera Inber began by accusing Comrade Auerbach for what she described as his inability to adopt a critical attitude to his past mistakes.

Summarizing the situation with regard to criticism, Vera Inber said:

Much has been said of criticism, but so far no one has mentioned the reader, on whom all

this criticism reacts. I see that our reader is endowed with an excellent memory, and is a person of no small sagacity.

What sort of correspondence do we receive? This is extraordinarily interesting, especially in the provinces. My colleagues and I have an enormous correspondence, most of which amounts to the question: "Tell us the story of your life." I see nothing wrong in this, so long as the curiosity has not been dictated by the desire once more to assure themselves of our petty-bourgeois tendencies *(laughter)*, of which so much has been written. This curiosity is then quite permissible and legitimate.

Other correspondents ask us to tell them: "All about your mistakes" *(cheers)*. And on this point the reader displays a staggering erudition. "What did the *Komsomolka* scold you for in such-and-such a year?" "Is it true that so-and-so said this and that about you?" "Is it true that Bagritski is a biologist, Boris Levin a Trotskyist, and you are a constructivist?"

Comrades, who has fostered this exaggerated and unhealthy interest in our mistakes, among our readers? We don't conceal them, but why should attention be focused precisely on our mistakes? Why is there so little interest in what we actually *write?*

It seems to me that extremely important work must be done in this respect by our criticism.

Let us assume that Bagritski has been called a biologist over and over again, and that, just once, somebody said he was not a biologist. Comrades, is this one time enough to neutralize all the vast work done to inculcate in the minds of the masses the idea that Bagritski is a biologist?

This is absurd comrades, but it is at the same time rather sad. Who will help us, if not the critic, to emerge from the weight of what has been written about us (or still worse of what has not been written, for worst of all is when nothing is said about us)? I do not know whether it is the thing here to speak of personal matters, but literature is really the private business of each one of us. Each one of us speaks of where the shoe pinches him.

This is a remarkable plenary session, if only because of the participation of writers like Andrey Byeli. After all, Auerbach himself has never seen Andrey Byeli in the flesh *(laughter, cheers)*. What then shall we say of young writers, just beginning, members of literary circles —they need to look at writers whose development and formation is quite different. For these reasons the speech of Prishvin, still more that of Andrey Byeli, has been of the greatest interest. For Andrey Byeli is an original figure, an original type of writer. The member of a literary circle needs to realize, first and foremost, that Byeli ("White" in Russian) is not so white as he had thought. He will have his eyes opened. He will see what sort of writing this is, and how it is formed, and this is of the greatest importance.

I should like to see the closest attention paid to criticism, which should amend with zeal and perseverance that which it has with so much zeal and perseverance done. *(Laughter)*

A certain French writer collected old epitaphs. One of these, on a dancer, was extremely interesting: "I danced and gave pleasure." I have evidence that I give pleasure to my reader, but since the critics fail to give me any directions in this regard I begin to be afraid that I am serving the wrong people with my pen, or corrupting those whom I would serve. I should like to have a nice epitaph, but not like the one on the dancer of antiquity. I want to know *why* I give pleasure. And perhaps I *don't* give pleasure, and if this is so I would rather die without any epitaph at all than get one I have not merited.

This is my passionate desire as one who has been working in literature so long. *(prolonged cheers)*.

J. LIBEDINSKI

(author of A Week, To-Morrow, Commissars, The Turn, The Birth of a Hero, etc.)

The fact that we are in the same room with Andrey Byeli and Mikhail Prishvin increases our feeling of responsibilty, and points to true technical criterions. Fadeyev has, however, rightly pointed out that technical criterions, criterions of talent, have only just been set up. Different answers would be given at the present moment to the question: what is technique and what is talent? It is one of the defects of RAPP criticism and methodology that we have to a considerable extent evaded this most important question. I think that this evasiveness is a thing of the past and that we shall now take up these problems. Marxian criticism, Marxian methodology, will solve these questions.

We must step back from existing literary practice, from the elements already existing in Soviet literature, in order the better to analyse and observe their tendencies.

I do not consider it necessary to subject to criticism once again all that I have written. I have been criticized enough and to spare, and I shall endeavor, in a book, to show the conclusions I have drawn from all this criticism, in which there was been much that is of the greatest service to myself *(Cheers)*.

M. PRISHVIN

(author of Kashey's Chain, Shoes and other novels)

In my opinion a writer's job is to write, and not speak. Personally I can only speak when I find myself among friends. I will speak in the circumstances in which I at present find myself. *(Cheers.)* I will tell you my reactions to the Central Committee resolution. They

say I'm an old writer. I don't consider myself an old writer. When I begin on a new book I always look for something new, and I feel young. I'm the youngest writer of all just now, for I've only just begun on a new book *(Cheers)*.

Literature used to be the most thankless of occupations, but now I do not hesitate to call it a most grateful task. In the old days an author risked his neck every time he published anything. Now the State protects literature. I don't believe there is, anywhere in the world, such literary patronage as exists among us. I believe it is something altogether unusual. Now we have shock-tactics in literature. This is a most significant phenomenon. All my life I have dreamed that poets would emerge from the depths of the proletariat and peasantry. I thought, it is true, that we should have many more than we at present have. But however that may be, this phenomenon has moved me profoundly.

CHRONICLE

Intellectuals Go Left

USA

The huge swing of the American writers and intellectuals to the Left has one aspect of particular revolutionary interest:

For the first time in America, a large number of leading Negro intellectuals have stepped boldly to the side of the Communist movement. The swing is a recent one, most of it taking place in the last few months. It is born of the new militancy among the 14 million American Negro workers. It was crystallized by the American Communist Party. It has swept along with it prominent editors, journalists, professors and noted writers.

The swing to the left of the Negro intellectuals has gone so far that William N. Jones, managing editor of the *Baltimore Afro-American,* one of the three largest American Negro weeklies (there are no Negro dailies) could open a meeting in Harlem, the huge Negro section of New York with these words:

"I bring you the greetings of fourteen million potential colored Communists. I say this, because in my work, I am able to fathom somewhat what is going on in the minds of the Negroes in this country."

William N. Jones was organizer and chairman of the Maryland Ford-Foster Committee for Equal Rights in the recent Communist election campaign.

But the communist election campaign received a much wider support among Negro intellectuals. A statement was issued by a prominent group including in addition to Jones, Dr. Kelly Miller, Jr., the prominent Boston Negro journalist Eugene Gordon, the poet Countee Cullen and the poet and novelist Langston Hughes among others.

The statement read in part: "...While the three other parties are sacrificing the Negro for political expediency and crucifying him on a cross of prejudice, Communist leaders are blasting gaps through the lines of racial prejudice. During the past twelve years, they have won more significant victories for the Negro than any other party since the civil war."

In brief, the Negro intellectuals were swept along by the great revolutionary struggles among the tenant farmers of Alabama, the campaign for the Scottsboro boys, the communist election campaign in which Ford, a Negro worker, was candidate for vice-president; and by the struggles among the unemployed Negro workers who are hardest hit by the great crisis in America.

Two gatherings held in one evening in New York city were a clear indication of the radicalization of the American intellectuals as a whole. About 2,000 professionals, artists, writers, and scientists gathered as a public demonstration of the support of the American intellectuals to the communist candidates in the recent election.

Charles Rumford Walker, former editor of the *Atlantic Monthly,* writer and playwright, presided at one of the meetings and Sidney Hook, professor at New York Uiversity was chairman at the other.

Both meetings were held under the auspices of the Independent Committee for Foster and Ford with the co-operation of the League of Professional Groups.

Malcolm Cowley, Mathew Josephson, John Herrmann, Michael Gold and professor Scott Nearing were among the speakers.

Malcolm Cowley, literary editor of the *New Republic,* explained his reasons for acceptance of a revolutionary position: "It wasn't the depression that got me," Cowley said. "It was the boom. I saw my friends writing tripe demanded by the present order, stultified and corrupted and unable to make real use of their talents. After that I had to discover the reason for this state of affairs which comes from the very nature of a ruling class that lives by exploiting every one else."

Left to Right: Nicolai Shagorin, Turkmenian writer; Langston Hughes, American poet; Shaali Kekilov, secretary of the Turkmenian writers union: and Arthur Kestler, German journalist

John Herrmann, winner of the prize story contest held by *Scribners Magazine,* who has just returned from the middle west farm strike area, told of what he saw there:

"The only thing that thrilled me as much as the embattled farmers" Herrmann said, "was the Kharkov Conference of Revolutionary writers two years ago in the Soviet Union, when I saw what it meant to live in the free air of a workers country. The farmers are fighting with the revolutionary tactics of a mass struggle. Just listen to these farmers for ten minutes and you will hear all the slogans of the Communist Party."

Earl Browder, Communist leader, speaking at the meeting, called it a historical gathering. "No meeting like this has ever been held in the history of the country" he said. "Whole sections of our population of considerable social significance are changing their political allegiance."

The League of Professional Groups with whose cooperation this meeting was held, was organized scarcely a month before the conclusion of the election campaign, in October 1932. Following its great success, it has become a permanent organization with James Rorty, well known writer, as secretary.

Among its members are the prominent young critics Edmund Wilson, Newton Arvin and Granville Hicks; the playwrights Emjo Basshe, Sidney Howard and Elmer Rice; the artists Alfred Frueh and Adolph Dehn; the noted publicist Lincoln Steffens; Kyle S. Crichton, an editor of a leading bourgeois monthly *Scribners Magazine;* and the outstanding American writers Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, Waldo Frank and John Dos Passos, who were leading members in the organization of the National Committee for the Defense of Political prisoners which did such prominent work in the case of the Scottsboro boys and for the miners of Harlan Kentucky.

Theodore Dreiser, great novelist who was among the first outstanding American intellectuals to take a Communist position, continues his revolutionary activities. He has dropped work on his latest novel to be called *The Stoic* to rush to San Francisco to assist in the opening of a national campaign for the liberation of the class war prisoners Tom Mooney and Warren Billings. The way in which revolutionary workers have received his activities for the past two years can be judged by the fact that he was met with a demonstration in Chicago on his arrival and in San Francisco the workers greeted him with a triumphal procession thru the streets of the city.

FRANCE

"I am Going Over to the Other Side of the Barricades."

Through the initiative of the Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists a celebration of the Fifteenth Anniversary of October was held with the participation of I. Babel, J. R. Block, Marc Bernard, Vladimir Pozner, Vaillant-Couturier, and Charles Vildrac. A company from the Workers Theater presented one of Gorki's plays. The poet Charles Vildrac gave a speech of welcome to Gorki.

> "Only certain elements of the intelligentsia could expect that such a writer as Gorki, with his fame and undisputed position as a great man, would join them and share their bourgeois conformism. Of course he could have avoided scandalizing them, by justifying their hopes. Resting on the laurels of his world renown, he might have looked on from afar, from the heights, with philosophic indifference, at the truly strange phenomena of our life and could behave like an ordinary scribbler, the traditional dried-up hack.
>
> "But it was not so.
>
> "Gorki, almost alone in all Europe (I will cite our dear Romain Rolland)—in any case Gorki more violently than any one scandalized the intellectual gang by this: that he, the most brilliant representative of art and thought, a master-writer, the genius and glory of our time, has gone over to the camp of revolution and appeals to the intelligentsia of the West to stand on the other side of the barricades.
>
> "All our writers are eagerly subscribing to the words of Romain Rolland. And I in my turn am going over to the other side of the barricades and fraternally shake the hand of Comrade Gorki."

POLAND

Kordian and Ham

The radicalization of the intelligentsia appears not only in their demands for information about the USSR. Despite the suppression last year of the *Literary Monthly* whose whole staff was sent to prison, and entirely independent from that group, there has appeared the work of a young and exceptionally gifted Polish writer who obviously is trying to write from a Marxist point of view. This is the novel of Leon Kruchkowski *Kordian and Ham* (published in Cracow). Kruchkowski himself calls his novel a historical spectacle. It is based on exact historical documents and relates to the period of preparation for the Polish rising of 1830-31.

This rising, long a source of inspiration for the great Polish romanticists Mickiewicz and Slowatski, until recently remained an inviolable theme for Polish bourgeois historians and novelists; they were allowed to go into raptures, but not to touch it with the scalpel of criticism. Kruchkowski gives a merciless analysis of the social relations of Poland at that period, and trenchantly sketching the class struggle between the landlords and the oppressed masses of the Polish peasantry, explains why the Polish peasantry should have taken a hostile position toward the nobility's anti-tsarist revolt.

The scenes showing the nobles' mockery of the peasants, and those illustrating the helplessness of the aristocratic rebels against the tsarist government, how they did not possess even the baggage of bourgeois ideology corresponding to what went on earlier in France, are drawn with great talent. The author has assimilated beautifully the language of the epoch, and his execution of the horror-filled social drama is given in a sustained epic tone. This work is entirely free from pathetic exclamations. The GIKHL (State Publishing House) is preparing to publish Kruchkowski's novel in Russian.

The Polish press gives a good deal of space to the Pilsudskist organization, the "Legion of Youth." Not long ago a member of the organization, the student Dembinski, came out in Lublin with an appeal to "modern Catholics" urging them to "stand on the side of the world of labor" and go in for the "study of Marxism and Leninism."

In another appeal the "Legion of Youth" writes: "Beyond our eastern border a new life is growing... showing creative enthusiasm and constructive work, which is so lacking in Western Europe. We could learn from these Russian shock workers and Young Communists, whom the stupidity of our native publicists has christened Asiatic barbarians."

But these declarations had very sad consequences for Dembinski. In spite of the fact that students are supposed to be allowed a postponement of military service, they called him to the colors, thus forcing him to drop his studies. His place in the "Legion of Youth" has been taken by another Pilsudskist, better muzzled.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Czech Architects Greet the Five-Year-Plan

The congress of left architects held in Prague from Oct. 29 to Nov. 1 directed a fire of criticism against the capitalist system. The very program of the congress shows that the organizers and participators were seeking a way out of the crisis in their field in connection with the solution of a number of social problems. The program speaks of the conflict between technical possibilities and economic reality and of the necessity of removing the basic cause of the crisis, capitalist economic anarchy. The aim of the congress was defined in the program as a desire to think out socially the position of contemporary architecture and to give organizational form to those ideological deductions which pass the bounds of the special interests of the members of the congress.

The material of many of the reports—on the state of housing construction in Czechoslovakia, on the scientific methods of architectural work, on the economic situation of architects and so on— developed at the sessions into a demonstration and harsh criticism of the conditions of work—and unemployment—under capitalism. "There is only one way out—the removal of capitalism and formation of a socialist society which alone is able to use the potentialities of modern architecture for the benefit of all," these words of one of the speakers best characterize the orientation of the congress.

There was a special report on socialist construction in the Soviet Union. Discussion on this report concluded with the decision to send out the following greeting to the toilers of the Soviet Union:

"Architects gathered in the congress of Left Architects in Prague, congratulate all the workers, peasants and cultural workers who are joining with their labor in the construction of socialism in the Soviet Union. The congress sees in the construction of socialism the only possibility for a social basis for scientific architecture, which will serve the demands of the broadest masses. With unremitting attention we will follow the great thing which you are building, in an epoch when the whole capitalist world is passing through a deep and prolonged crisis. On the occasion of the Fifteenth Anniversary of the October Revolution we wish you complete success in finishing the first and carrying out the second Five Year Plan. We roughly reject the unheard of slanders against the Soviet Union which are being intensified to prepare an atmosphere of war, and we will do all possible to defend your cause."

Revolutionary Literature Grows

USA

One aspect of the exploitation of the Negro worker was raised by the publication of John Spivak's book *Georgia Nigger.* The book deals with the conditions of practical slavery which still exist in a large section of the United States. Although the book was written in fiction form, it is based on actual conditions and was substantiated by a large number of remarkable photographs which were published in the book.

Georgia Nigger appeared at the beginning of the national election campaign and the bourgeois press maintained a conspiracy of silence regarding it. A leading bourgeois Negro monthly refused to publish it serially. Four leading American writers joined in a protest against the conditions which the book revealed. The statements were issued by Michael Gold, author of *Jews Without Money* and one of the editors of *New Masses;* Countee Cullen, noted Negro poet; Robert Morse Lovett, an editor of the liberal weekly *The New Republic* and head of the department of English at the University of Chicago; and John Cowper Powys, novelist, lecturer and critic, author of *Wolf Solent.*

Michael Gold wrote:

"John L. Spivak has revealed the misery of millions of slaves of the road gangs, turpentine camps and plantations in his book *Georgia Nigger.* He has included photographs of tortures that would shame the Spanish Inquisition,

and photostat copies of faked death records, where venal doctors cover up the brutal murders committed on the peon farms and chain gangs of the South."

Countee Cullen wrote:

"I find it difficult, even as a Negro and thus habituated to revelations of horror, to realize that such conditions as pictured in *Georgia Nigger* do actually exist."

GERMANY

"Malik Verlag" has published a collection of stories by "Thirty German Prose Writers." These are all radical and revolutionary writers, near to us. The book is having remarkable success. Unfortunately, it is not complete—it lacks, for instance, such masters as L. Renn, A. Seghers, E. E. Kisch.

JAPAN

The publishing department of the Union of Proletarian Writers of Japan has recently issued an *Anthology of Proletarian Literature.* It includes stories and plays by 44 members of the Union, the most interesting being "Cotton," by Hajimi Sui, "Against the Attack" by Yoshio Kimura, "The Border," by Kuroshima, and "Rails" by F. Kitagawa.

"Cotton" by H. Sui gives the type of a revolutionary peasant. The action is developed against a background of social change—from the semi-feudal village to modern fierce class warfare in connection with the crisis. The author approaches the demonstration and solution of social problems from the point of view of dialectical materialism.

In "Against the Attack" Y. Kimura vividly portrays the life and underground work of a Japanese Communist.

"The Border" of Kuroshima is a tale from the life of Manchurian contrabandists, and sets the problem of the conflict between Japan and the Soviet Union in connection with the transition of the fishing settlements to the side of the Soviet Union.

The anthology indicates a great growth in skill among the writers from the bench and the plow.

Books about the USSR

GERMANY

F. Weisskopf's *Draft of the Future* has been published by Malik Verlag, Berlin.

This book is "18,000 kilometers through the Soviet Union"—Moscow, Ukraine, Volga, Magnitogorsk, Sverdlovsk, Novosibirsk, Kuzbas, Ob, Chuiski, Oiratia. It embraces a period from April to September 1932. The book speaks of our socialist construction with particular authority since the author was making his sixth trip through the Soviet Union in 10 years. He is well equipped to compare yesterday and today and the tempo of growth.

Weisskopf writes in his foreword:

> "We travelled without special invitation, according to our own plan. A former shepherd of Asia was our best friend and guide through the Altai. We saw the sacrifices of the Shamans and blooming mills from the United States. We harkened to Oirat story tellers and heard the speech of the Red Director of Magnitogorsk on the day the second blast-furnace was blown in. We got engineers, farm experts, mechanics and tractor drivers—illiterate a year or two ago —to explain to us how they obtain and work up ore and how they cross and improve wheat."

The *Neue Deutsche Verlag, Berlin,* published for the Fifteenth Anniversary of the Revolution *Fifteen Iron Steps,* a photo book on the past fifteen years. There are many documents published here for the first time; the photographs have high historical value and the whole book deserves to be reprinted. There is no such book even in the Soviet Union.

Soviet Books Abroad

USA

The Nation publishes, under the title of "Shock Brigades," excerpts translated from a children's book by S. Marshak and V. Lebedev. The translation of the poems is beautifully done by James Rorty (an American poet, secretary of the League of Professional Groups which supported the Communist Party in the last elections) and Lydia Nadezhdina. Besides the text the *Nation* also reprints a number of illustrations. The editors write in this connection:

> "The given book is a typical example of hundreds of books published yearly by the Soviet Government, most of which are remarkable for their simplicity, force and graphic merit. The best artists and writers of Russia take part in creating the growing post-revolutionary literature for children."

Simon and Shuster, (New York) are publishing S. Tretyakov's "bio-interview," *Den Shi Hua.*

ENGLAND

The Daily Worker, London, publishes a short excerpt from D. Lavrukhin's *In the Footsteps of a Hero,* in its Dec. 22 issue.

GERMANY

The "Malik" publishing house in Berlin has just put out a translation of Ilya Ehrenburg's new novel, *Moscow Does Not Believe In Tears.*

The "Literatur für Politik" publishers, Berlin, are publishing F. Gladkov's novel *Power* in German.

The "Neue Deutsche Verlag" is publishing *Homers at the Bench,* a collection of stories by Soviet shock workers who responded to a "call to literature," with a preface by S. Tretyakov.

Soviet Theater

A Hundred Years in Four Days

Cutting the grey of Leningrad fog the train comes into the station. Puffing and blowing like a sprinter who has finished his run the engine comes to a stop under the station clock. The hour is an early one. The calendar marks the 13th of September. The year is thirty two and the century the present.

One hundred years before in the last century, a theater was opened in St. Petersburg in a new building, the work of the architect Rossi, and this theater was named the Alexandrinski in honor of Nicolas I's wife.

Years passed. Behind the walls of the theater, in the streets and alleys, on Vassiliev island, in the Okhta and in the Narvski quarter people were born and died, new buildings rose in St. Petersburg, large and comely, and by night the bridges on the Neva rose and parted to let ships pass one after another in single file. And the guardsmen were busy with gun and whip in palace square keeping at bay the people from the factory yards and the working class districts.

In the Imperial Alexandrinski theater, night after night the heavy curtain went up on some patriotic drama or upper class comedy; the actors met with loud applause while on gala nights the national anthem would be sung.

Years passed. Times and governments changed and with them changed the city of St. Petersburg. The four horses on the pediment of the theater looked on unconcerned at the student demonstrations, and the July uprising. It was only when the echo of the Aurora's guns reached them, bombarding the Winter Palace, that they began to tremble.

Then it was St. Petersburg was relegated to History. "Red Peter," later the City of Lenin took the theater like a whirlwind, flung open its doors and windows, tore down the imperial eagles and crowns, and as the crowds from the workers' quarters, swarmed into the seats and boxes, new words rang out and echoed from Karl Rossi's ancient walls.

But today, the 13th of September 1932, the *Red Arrow* express has brought into Oktiabrski Station Professor Paduanski of the University of Logato, the American critic Harry Dana, a number of German journalists, a Turkish actress, men prominent in the theatrical world in Moscow and workers from the Donbas—all invited to take part in the centenary of the Leningrad State Theater of Drama.

The celebrations are opened by the chairman of the Leningrad Soviet and T. Kadatzki of the centenary committee. On the platform are the Peoples' Commissar for Education comrade Bubnov, the secretary of the Central Executive Committee comrade Kiselev, representatives of party and social organizations, academicians, "Peoples, Artists" and the Alexandrinski's company of actors. After a short address of welcome the people's commissar gets up to speak.

His speech is a profound and careful analysis of the history of the theater, as determined by the economic and political development of Russia.

His speech is a challenge to make use of the rich storehouse of dramatic genius handed down from the past and to assimilate critically everything of value in our cultural heritage.

"One of the most important tasks facing the socialist theater" the commisar tells us "is to aim at a high quality of dramatic craftsmanship, to write plays which help to mobilize the workers in the struggle for a classless society."

Then he went on to trace the evolution of the theater from the days of serfdom to the days of the revolution, from *Prince Pozharski* to *Fear.*

And as one's mind is turned back on the past, living people, contemporaries, look down from the stage and one recognizes Korchagina—Alexandrovskaya and Pevtsov who as the old Bolshevik Clara and Professor Borodin had moved theater-goers.

Speakers appear on the platform one after the other. First the secretary of the Executive Committee comrade Kiselev, gives a word of welcome and then the president of the Academy of Sciences Karpinsky gets up to speak. Delegations from Moscow theaters go onto the stage one after the other and give greetings and addresses. Harry Dana speaks about artistic problems and about the Soviet Theater, "the best in the world." Amidst thundering applause actors of the Leningrad State Drama Association who have been awarded the titles of People's Artist and Emeritus Artist, also speak.

In reply to the greetings from the guests, the Peoples' Artist Pevtsov says that an artist can have no prouder part than to join with the working people to build up socialism.

The centenary celebrations of the Leningrad State Drama Association continued for four days. Four different plays were shown at the theater. These four plays from *Prince Pozharski* to *Fear* re-enacted history for the onlooker. *Prince Pozharski,* the patriotic drama in which the tsarist censor forced Lermontov to mutilate each line beyond recognition. *The Misfortune of Being Clever* which was changed by the old Alexandrinski theater into most harmless vaudeville, and *Fear* which put with such force the problem of science and communist ideology. The present and past century, the feudal, the bourgeois and the revolutionary theater—a hundred years in four days.

. . . . And there was another speech. A short speech that was not made on the actual occasion of the celebrations, but which was heard

A scene from the film "Ivan"

by a few foreign journalists who had met together under the auspices of the Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries with workers in the Soviet theater. It was the speech made by A. Y. Tairov, artist emeritus and stage manager of the Kamerny Theater replying to professor Legat and Harry Dana on behalf of the theatrical front of the Soviet Union.

He told of his last visits to the Western capitals, and his meetings with the famous dramatists of Europe, Pirandello, Piscator and others. He spoke of the decline of civilization in the West, of the cold, empty theaters, of the hungry, jobless actors and of the artists and stage managers who had been left high and dry by the economic crisis.

He spoke of the rise of socialist civilization, of the Soviet artist rejoicing in his work, of the wide horizons opening out before the arts and of the high task of disclosing the artist in every human being. And the actors and theatrical workers and foreign visitors greeted the speech of this Soviet citizen and artist with prolonged applause.

The centenary celebrations are now over. The theater has entered a new epoch. Tomorrow People's artists of the Republic Korchagina-Alexandrovskaya and Pevtsov and the young actors Babechkin and Kariakina will gather for a rehearsal, in order to join in the arduous but honorable work of building up the "magnificent edifice of Socialist Art."

New Films

Soviet cinematography celebrates the 15th anniversary of the October Revolution by releasing several jubilee films.

Guided by the Party's injunction to overcome the backwardness of the cinema Soyuzkino has reorganized its system of work to establish closer contacts with producers and scenario-writers. The result is several new films providing a graphic portrayal of the October Revolution, the building of socialism and the cultural revolution.

The new films include *Deserter, The Counter-Plan, Ivan, K'shay* Komsomol— *Patron of Electrification), Glory of the World, The 26 Commissars, The International, The Bridge, The Return of Neitan Becker* and others.

These pictures with their different subjects, styles and methods, have one common feature. As distinct from the film productions of the past they endeavor to treat subjects of epical sweep, portraying the life of the people, the heroes of the civil war, socialist construction and the Five-Year Plan.

The distinguished Soviet film producer V. Pudovkin, has completed for "Inter-Workers-Film," the sound film *Deserter.* The opening scenes show the Hamburg shipyards and depict the great capitalist town at the time of crisis when the class struggle intensifies, police terrorism grows and the government machine

Pudovkin, director of the "Deserter" talks with the workers of the Red Presnya plant

adopts fascist methods. The closing scenes show a large factory in the USSR battling against shortages.

The sound film *Counter Plan* was produced by F. Ermler and C. Yutkevitch. The picture tells vividly of the struggle for the Promfinplan (the Production Financial Plan) and deals with the older workers and their part in production. The producer contrasts the reactionary hostility of a section of the old specialists with the heroism of the proletarian intelligentsia and the better representatives of the old pre-revolutionary intellectuals. The action develops against the background of a giant engineering works. It would be a mistake to think that this background is the usual stage property kind of arrangement. The engineering works plays the part of a living actor. It is a cinematographic epic. It occured therefore to the producer, and to Comrade Esky-Dubrovsky, the talented scenic artist, that a special machine equipment should be rigged up. As a result lathes were put together all operated by electricity, to give a faithful representation of the enormous planing machines, turn-tables and power rythm of technical processes in one of our industrial giants.

Another epic production is the sound film *Ivan* produced in the Ukraine. A. Dovchenko, the producer, develops his theme in an extensive film showing in increasing degrees how Dnieprostroy—that gigantic industrial undertaking based on advanced technique—has moulded fresh strata of the workers drawn from the country districts, and how these people, the army of many millions of builders of socialism display their enthusiasm. *Ivan* is the first big dramatic sound film to be produced in the Ukraine.

The *26 Commissars* released for the jubilee, is a silent film. Because of its large scale and many scenes of mass meetings it could not be done in time if it were to be equipped with sound. But the dramatic quality of the film is in no way diminished. N. Shengalaya (author of *Eliso)* directed the film for the trust "Azer-film" (Baku), and the scenario was written by Shengalaya, Agemirov and Rcheshevsky. The film is based on the most important episodes of the Commune in Baku. To film the great mass meetings, 150,000 men were required. The scene of the execution of the 26 Baku Commissars was taken in Turkmenistan on the Kara-Kum sands. The group of operators on the film worked under the leadership of E. Schneider, chief operator, with assistant S. Kevorkov, and Adyen as artist. *The 26 Commissars* is a historical film presenting no individual heroes. The heroism of the glorious days of the Baku Commune, and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat are recorded.

Glory of the World is a sound film directed by Comrade Veinshlots; the scenario is by Comrade Brodiansky, with the collaboration of Comrade Kolleral for sound production. In striking episodes the film reveals the mechanics of the preparation of a new imperialist war by the capitalists and the heroic struggle on the part of the proletariat against the war which hangs over the fatherland of all workers, the USSR.

A representative of the Soviet documentary school of cinematography, A Shub worked on *K'Shay, Komsomol—Patron of Electrification.* The heroes of the film are the young generation on the collective farms and in the factories—the League of Communist Youth. The film leads up to the opening of the Dnieper Hydro-Electric

A scene from "Jobs and Men"

Station, up to the closing days of the 15th year of the Revolution. Large construction works, industrial plants and laboratories are featured in it. Industrial sounds are reproduced. Music for the film was composed by Comrade D. Popov.

With the same design but showing the part of the Komsomol on a wider field of socialist construction is a film being produced by "Inter-Workers-Films." This is a huge dramatic sound picture by the famous Dutch director Ivens.

Never has Soviet cinematography showed such an intense creative existence as it does now at the point of two Five Year Plans.

Its shortcomings are still evident in organization, technique etc. Unity is lacking in the industry from the trust and factory, down to the filming group. But the improvements are real. They are evident in the mastery of the technique of sound, in our display of large-scale scenes *(Path to Life, Golden Hills, Jobs and Men)* in attracting well-known writers to the cinema (M. Gorki, M. Sholokhov, I. Ehrenburg, A. Tolstoy, A. Barbusse and others), in the serious work of analyzing productions (Oklontov, Romm, L. Treyburg Kozinstev), in creating a series of jubilee and leading films (*Deserter, Counter Plan, Ivan, Glory of the World, K'shay, The 26 Commissars, Dunenkoviana, The Bridge* and others), in attracting to the cinema the better histrionic talents and composers, and in developing a large number of sound operators and camera men.

Establishment of the first two cinema film factories in the USSR, the development of four new silent and sound film cameras; the opening of more than 20 up to date large cinema theaters in the principal industrial and collective farming centers in the past year and a half all these speak of broad achievements of the Soviet cinema.

A groop of actors from the film "Deserter" visiting a Kolkhoz

The Growth of Barbarism

GERMANY

The German proletarian writer Ludwig Renn was arrested in Berlin during a raid on the Marxist workers school. He has been charged with treason to the government. The bourgeoisie has decided to keep the author of the anti-war novels *War* and *After War* out mischief for a year. The arrest has aroused a strong wave of protest throughout the world.

"A broad shouldered dumpy fellow mounted the tribune. Under thick brows his eyes were at once suspicious and smiling at the corner of the eyelid, as crooked smiles lurk in the corners of mouths.

The cigarette is lighted and stuck to his lip, the granite, heavily pockmarked face is wreathed in smoke.

He takes the cigarette from his mouth and clears his windpipe of certain coughed-up pieces of words. He coughs out words, and the audience stops coughing.

The audience waits for what the raging reporter Egon Erwin Kisch will say.

Starting with a little joking at the expenpense of the "Munzenbergers" who are sitting around the platform—the staffs of the *Berlin am Morgen* and *Welt am Abend* and the magazine *AIZ,* he explains what a sensation is according to Soviet standards.

"In the Kiev Zoo park in the presence of the cinema producer Dovzhenko a lion tore the clothes off one of the employees.

A European newspaper man asked Dovzhenko—"I guess tomorrow there'll be a big noise in the papers. In the first place, a lion, in the second, blood, in the third place, a producer of world renown."

"'What has that got to do with the Five-Year Plan?" replied Dovzhenko. "Now if a new city was lighted up with electricity or they discovered a new kind of steel or somebody wrote a good textbook, then, yes."

"Do you like the Soviet idea of sensation?" he shouts at the audience, and without waiting for an answer slips down from the tribune. "I like it."

Egon Erwin Kisch has been forbidden to enter Vienna. The revolutionary organizations of Germany are in a ferment at this arbitrary act of the Austrian Government.

Is *Bl* as well known to newspaper cartooning as to every Berlin worker who goes

in a black peak cap, who wears a red star star on his visor or in his buttonhole, who greets another by lifting his right fist? No.

I attended a proletarian concert. We had a blue blouse agitation-propaganda brigade. Busch sang, companied by Eisler who seemed to dance on the pedals. Then they set up an easel with a white square on the stage. And amidst the roar and applause of the audience a small man came out to the easel.

He quickly turned around and along the white square ran a serpent-like charcoalline. The audience guessed: Aha—it's the head of a monk, and that's his cassock. No, you're wrong. It's not a head, but a badge. And not a cassock. Where is it bending to, the back of the monk. But it's not a back—ah! a rumble of laughter runs around the hall. They have guessed. Not a monk. It's a police helmet, and under its vizor, a sloping forehead, the bridge of the nose beaks out, a familiar nose hangs on,—Zergiebel. Bravo, Bi, brávo!

Bi allows them a sekond to look at the caricature. He tears off the sheet, and again the charcoal runs making contours—. . . aha . . .white puffs. . . what could that be. . .aha, hair . . . . aha, beard! Oho! Scheidemann . . . Bravo, Bi. . .

Again and again. As soon as he finishes, he tears off sheet after sheet—the charcoal of Bi mocks with silent ridicule all dignitaries, the skinny and the fat, all equally hateful.

The last page—four strokes of the charcoal and the hands of the audience are lifted and clenched in just such a fist as was outlined on the last sheet.

Bi!—Bravo! Smart fellow, our Bi.

In connection with the pledges of Von Schleicher's program speech, to intensify the struggle against Communists, a number of foreigners permanently residing in Berlin who sympathize with the revolutionary movement have received orders from the police to leave Germany. Among those banished are the famous Austrian caricaturist Binter, pseudonym "Bi," working on the Communist-sympathizing newspaper *Berlin am Morgen;* and the court reporter of the same newspaper, Popper, a Czech. New banishments are impending according to bourgeois newspapers.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

After the dissolution of the International Red Aid, the Young Communists and a number of other workers' organizations the next victim turned out to be the Society of Friends of the Soviet Union. The society was dissolved during its preparations for celebrating the Fifteenth Anniversary of October. The official pretext for its dissolution was a charge of breaking the statutes. The order for dissolution came from the police chief. But it is clear that the seven "Socialist" ministers who have entered the Czech cabinet can not avoid responsibility for such behavior by the administration.

The proletarian public of Czechoslovakia and leading groups of proletarian intellectuals have answered the disbanding of the society with mass resolutions of protest.

CHINA

The League of Left Writers of China is constantly suffering from repressive acts by imperialism and its agent the Kuomintang. Since March 1932 seven members of the League have been arrested. They were sentenced to more than seven years of prison. Recently efforts have been intensified to apprehend the editor of *The Great Bear* (one of the two monthly magazines of the League of Left Writers), the authoress Din-Lin. Comrade Din Lin is the wife of Comrade Hu Ei-Pika who was shot last winter with four other members of the League. She has been arrested. Under the force of repression the League has been driven underground.

The League of the Left Theater gave a public performance in Hankow for which two members were arrested. Their fate is still unknown.

From one section 15 members of the League of Left Artists were arrested. They have been sentenced to two, five and seven years of imprisonment.

Enemies

FRANCE

Guilbeaux

Henri Guilbeaux, author of the well known book on V. I. Lenin, who was condemned to death by French bourgeois justice for "communication with the enemy" during the world war, gave himself up to justice in August 1932, to try after 17 years of persecution for a revision of his case.

On the threshold of the prison he gave an interview to a reporter from the police gazette *Detective.* After telling him of "the beginning of his troubles," on the magazine *Demain,* whose staff was composed of such writers as Brizon and Romain Rolland, and which occupied an important place in the struggle against the war, Guilbeaux speaks of his visit to Russia.

> "Not for long was I in agreement with the cognoscenti of Moscow. I consoled myself only by writing poems in which I defended my ideals. After the death of Lenin, my close friend, I settled in Berlin, where I remained until recently. I earned my way by literary and magazine work. But for a long time I have

dreamed of returning to France and I spoke of my yearning for the homeland to Dujardin, Jirandoux and Kessel. But all their attempts to facilitate my return to France were vain. Then I decided to give myself up to justice. Seventeen years of persecution have not changed my ideals. I believe in the justice of my country, just as in the feelings of friends who have never betrayed me."

A short and simple admission whose only merit is that it clarifies for once and all Guilbeaux's place in the camp of the enemies of the proletariat.

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C O N T E N T S

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