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by LOUIS LOZOWICK

NATIVE VOLUNTEERS OF THE RED ARMY (Tadjikistan)

This drawing and others in this issue are from a series of lithographs completed from sketches made by an American artist on a trip to Tadjikistan with a Writers Brigade organized by the IURW and including Otto Luihn (Norway), Paul Vaillant-Couturier (France), Bruno Jasienski (Poland), E. E. Kisch (Germany) and Louis Lozowick and Joshua Kunitz (America).

Charles Ashleigh

Spring in Moscow

It is Spring in Moscow, a Spring morning. It has broken at last and the last snows have gone. The grey waters of the dead snows have drained away from the cobbled ways.

Through the double windows a bird can be heard. I hear it as I lie in bed, the heavy cover on the floor. I don't know much about birds; I'm not strong on the nature stuff. But this means Spring!

Out of bed, you slothful one! Throw open the creaking windows, for the first time since Autumn. There's the sun outside, and a bird singing. And Spring!

The milk-girls at the foot of the stairs laugh like the devil at my Russian words—the same words I use every morning. Because it's spring!

There are no sledges on the street. Everything now runs on wheels. And the green and golden spires are fresh washed in the morning light. They sing together, the spires of Moscow, under the new sky.

To match the pink and green houses and the golden domes, there are pink shirts, green blouses, blue blouses. And the little green shoots on the black lace of the boulevard trees.

The workers pass through the boulevard, coats open, drinking sweet new air. There is laughter.

Here come soldiers. Ho, brothers, no need for ear-flaps! Tie them up on top of your caps ,above the great red star on your foreheads, which guides you straight.

The grass shows. The snow is gone. The white invader is driven out by the scarlet armies of Spring.

Our comrade, the sun, is working hard today. He shines on the polished guns of the Kremlin, and on the fat tractor waddling down the street, with its train of harvesters, threshers, ploughs and reapers. The machinery breathes in the sun to strengthen it for contest with black mould and gold grain.

He shines on the broad square, blessing the dead who lie there. He paints anew the great flag over the high place of the Tsars, a crimson audacity, thrown against the sky.

The river licks up the sun in a million little kisses of light. Down to the bank ride cavalrymen. Off with your clothes and the horses' gear! Now, again on the horses' backs, and into the river, splashing a lusty thanks for Spring. Joking with the wise-eyed housewives, pounding the family washing at the water's rim.

Thunder on the drums, girls and boys! Marching, laughing, up the Moscow streets to greet the Spring! Sing, for it's Spring! The dark earth is springing into green. The dark mass, stirring around the world, is blossoming into red! Let the drums roar, as sturdy male comrades of Spring! Let all your voices be one voice, for in Moscow now it's Spring!

N. Ognyov

The Childhood of My Hero

From the New Soviet Novel "Three Dimensions"

On the 20th of March, 1918, the staff of the Blue House was greatly disturbed by an unusual occurrence. At six o'clock that morning it was discovered that the keys of all the school buildings and store-rooms were missing. The only keys remaining were those of the entrance, which were always kept by the caretaker. Those of the class-rooms, the cupboards, of the rooms where the school appliances and the theatrical costumes were kept, had completely disappeared. Up to that moment these keys had always been in possession of the school-cleaners.

The caretaker, who was regarded as the head of all the employees, called a meeting in the teachers' room. After long discussion it was resolved to inform the Education Department of the District Council of the loss of the keys. Objections were made to this on the grounds that it was doubtful what attitude the new government would take. The caretaker argued that although the staff had voted for the Constituent Assembly—for List Number 3—that is to say, for the Social Revolutionaries, the Bolsheviks would not likely be hard on them since the staff had not gone on strike and had even kept the Blue House in order during the strikes.

The outcome of the meeting was that a report was sent to the District Education Department. It read as follows:

"The watchman, cleaners, and caretaker of the Blue House desire to inform you that the keys are missing and that although everything is locked up, still it will be very difficult to look after it, since it is not known who took the keys and why, and there is a lot of paper and exercise books and stuffed animals in the cupboards, besides globes and other contents, and neither the old nor the new teachers show up, so there is nobody to see about things. And we voted for List Number 3 simply because we had no idea of the program of the Bolshevik Party."

In the evening of the same day the Commissar of the District Militia was passing by the Blue House. It was a mild, wet spring and the transparent blue sky was melting away in the east. But the Commissar was in no mood for admiring the beauties of nature—he was dead tired and hurrying the first time in a week.

All of a sudden the door of the Blue House burst open and a queer sort of human ball rolled out of it. The Commissar soon made out an elderly woman and a little boy. The latter kept throwing himself on the ground and wriggling from side to side and obviously meant to tear himself out of the woman's grasp. She had, however, a good grip of him and evidently unwilling to let go, rolled about with him over the asphalt. The Commissar knew nothing of the loss of the keys, but decided to put an end to this disorderly conduct in the streets. He took good aim, caught the boy's shoulder in an iron grip and set him on his feet.

"The crook!" screamed the woman, breathlessly. "The damned little thief—I was going for my floor-cloth and there he was standing behind the door! 'What are you doing here?' I asked him—and he was off like an arrow through the door! I could hardly get hold of him!"

"But this is a school, isn't it?" asked the Commissar.

"That's right, Comrade Commissar, it's a school. It's called the Blue House—ooh, the little rogue!"

The boy made a last desperate attempt to get out of the Commissar's grip. He did get away, in fact, but the Commissar flung down his brief-case and at one bound caught him again.

"Comrade Commissar, would you be so obliging as to cross-examine him," the woman went on breathlessly. "The whole school's been robbed. The keys have been taken, and now I found him behind the door! I was just going along with my duster and there he was standing, crouched up, as if he wasn't taking any notice of anything!"

"Well, what about it? Cross-examine him, indeed!" growled the Commissar. "Only a ragamuffin after all, just playing about."

"What d'you say?" returned the woman, bewildered for a moment, and then bawled—"It's just these ragamuffins that are doing all the harm. How can we get rid of 'em? Neither peace nor comfort with them! Do us a good turn, Comrade Commissar, cross-examine him a bit! What was he doing behind the door? Standing there crouched up to the wall as if he wasn't doing anything! What were you doing behind the door, you filthy brat? Come on now, tell us!"

"Maybe he'd just come to school as usual?" asked the Commissar, looking steadily at the boy. The latter stared stupidly before him and said nothing. Occasionally tears rolled down his sunburnt face.

"And what would he come to school for, if he's not a regular pupil there? What's he got to do in a school, and this one's God knows who, a bandit from God knows where!"

"Then you aren't a pupil?" the Commissar asked. "Well, why don't you speak?—behaving as if you'd been choked. Nobody's going to beat you. What's your name? Where d'you live? Are you dumb? Well, if you don't want to answer me here in the street, come into the house!"

All of a sudden the boy threw himself down on the pavement, clasped the Commissar's legs convulsively and began to wail in a thin voice. This made the Commissar angry.

"What's this, you dirty little pup, making a scene here. Do as you're told, march! Go on, now!"

The Commissar took the boy by the collar and carried him into the Blue House. The cleaner led the way to the teachers' room. The rest of the cleaners joined the procession. In agitated whispers they exchanged information about the criminal.

"Well, what are we going to do now?" said the Commissar, sitting down in the teachers' room with the boy before him. "Going to play at being dumb, are we? Answer me, now! I won't let you go till you do. What's your name?"

"Yan," replied the brat suddenly in a hollow voice.

"Well, Yan, that's your first name, then? What's your last name?" To this there was no reply. "Don't any of you know him?" said the Commissar, turning to the cleaners.

"We never set eyes on him before—we know all the school children by sight, but not this one," all the cleaners spoke at once.

"Well, it's Yan, anyhow," the Commissar drummed on the table and went on gazing out of the window a while. "We'll take it he's called Yan. And where do you live, Yan?"

"Number 45 Little Ivanovskaya Street," the child blurted out, "with my folks."

"With your folks? What sort of folks? What are they, workers or what? What are they called?" questioned the Commissar rapidly. "Saburovski," the boy blurted out and shut up as suddenly.

"Well," said the Commissar turning to the cleaners, "Is there anybody here who can go to Little Ivanovskaya Street? We've got to find out if there are any Saburovskis

living there and what they're doing. And if there are, tell them to come over here. Tell them the District Commissar says they are to come."

"The caretaker'll go," said the cleaners. The servile countenance of the Mordvinian caretaker appeared from behind them. "You go, Moses, go as quick as your legs'll take you, say the Commissar wants them."

The caretaker vanished.

"Kids playing about, that's all it is," the Commissar mused aloud. "And here I am, worn out, haven't slept for a week, and I've got to start and mess about with your business and these childrens' tricks!"

But just at that moment a heart-rending wail vibrated in the corridor. The cleaners followed by the Commissar, rushed to the spot. A little woman in a velvet hat whom the Commissar recognized as one of the new teachers, was dragging a tiny boy along the corridor. The child was struggling, biting, squealing, but the teacher steadily dragged him along.

"Now what's this?" asked the Commissar. "Where'd you get this one?"

"In the cupboard, I caught him in the cupboard," the teacher said, panting. "I came in and saw that everything was open, I'd heard about the keys being lost and I went straight to the school museum. There I could hear something breathing. I opened the cupboard, and there, if you please, sits our visitor!"

"We've got one already!" said the Commissar, taking the child by the hand. "And this one's still smaller. Such a tiny little fellow! Now tell us about yourself and what's your name, my boy?"

"Lemme go-o!" wailed the brat, squinting through his tears at Yan, the first criminal. "Lemme go, I won't do it any more—I'll bite you if you don't let me go!"

"Don't tell lies, you won't bite at all! What's your name, tell us. Come on, you bit of a chicken's son, else I'll put you in a dark room and make you sit there and give you nothing to eat."

"They call me Lay-Way,' said the child, opening his grey eyes wide in astonishment.

"What?"

"Lay-Way."

"What are you? Aren't you a Russian then?"

"No, I'm not a Russian, I'm French."

"Now, don't you try to fool me, my lad. There aren't any such names. Lay-Away what? You're just lying. And do you know this fellow, Yan?"

"No, don't know him."

"Excuse me, Comrade Commissar, but that's not the way to begin," exclaimed the teacher. "You'll get nothing that way!"

"Well, what shall I do then?" the Commissar was a little offended. "What do you suggest? Examine them yourself."

"If you'll allow me?" rejoined the teacher. "In any case—"

She went up determinedly to Yan, skulking in the corner, turned him to the light and dived into his pocket. Yan was startled and pushed the teacher in the chest, but she was already triumphantly shaking a huge bunch of keys.

"The keys!" exclaimed the astonished cleaners. "Lord! That's where they were! What a little thief! What a devil of a crook. And we at our wits' ends, not knowing where to look for the keys!"

"Sh-sh, that's enough, girls!" ordered the Commissar in an important tone. "Stop yowling there. Well, now tell us, Yan, where'd you get the keys?"

"And that isn't the right way, either, Comrade Commissar," put in the teacher again. "You must first of all separate them, or else you won't be able to get any good of them."

"Of course, you know best," rejoined the Commissar, frowning. "We don't know how to manage children! It's not our job! You do it in your own way!"

"Well, and I will do it, then," replied the teacher in a challenging tone. It was obvious that she was offended now. "We must first of all separate them." She was quite right, Yan was doing desperate things with his hands pressing his palm to his lips, showing his fist to the smaller brat, and for some reason or other slapping his own brow; the smaller boy was nodding sympathetically in reply. The teacher seized him by the arm and swiftly before he had even time to resist dragged him out of the room.

Yan made a dash to get out of the room as well, but fell into the able hands of the cleaners. Then he stamped his feet, and went blue in the face down on the floor.

"Lemme go-o!" he wailed through his nose. "If you don't let me go, I'll burn the house down on you, you bitches!"

The Commissar chuckled and was just going to say something, when the caretaker appeared in the doorway. He came up to the table, bowed respectfully and announced:

"It's like this, Comrade Commissar, there isn't a house number 45 in Little Ivanovskaya Street at all."

"Maybe there's a 43?"

"No, it ends at 31, Comrade Commissar."

"So it's all nonsense?" exclaimed the Commissar bewildered. "As if there was not enough trouble with the S.R.'s (Social-Revolutionaries) without this!"

"So you were lying all the time, were you?" he bent over Yan. "Maybe you're not Yan at all? Speak out you damned little S.R., what's your real name?"

"I'm not for the S.R.'s," grumbled the boy hoarsely. "I'm for number Five."

"If you're for number Five, you should answer straight off. Now then, who are you, say?"

"I won't tell you!"

"But why won't you tell us? You must, you're supposed to if you're for the Bolsheviks!"

"I won't, all the same."

"Bah!" burst out the Commissar and added a couple of words that made some of the cleaners splutter, some turn away, and some clear out of the room. "There's a damned nuisance for you. What shall I do with him? There's no regulation for putting a kid like that under lock and key. Could turn him over to his parents but the brat won't say who they are, curse him!"

"Better let me go," the small boy advised, eyeing the cleaners resentfully.

"Let you go?" the Commissar was silent for a moment in surprise. "You're too clever, my lad, that's clear enough. There's no regulation for letting thieves go."

"I'm not a thief!"

"Not a thief? Just listen to that! And what are you then, if not a thief?"

"I'm an 'Underground Leaguer'."

"An 'Underground Leaguer'? Is it something new to eat? What do you eat it with! Is it a political party? Never heard of such a party, you should tell us what's its program."

"Ever heard of the 'Crust-eaters' Union'?"

"The 'Crust-eaters'? No, I can't say that I have."

"What's the use of talking to you, then?" and the boy shook his head disgustedly. "What sort of a Commissar of Militia are you, anyway? When the Kerensky Government was in, the Commissars knew all about the 'Crust-eaters' Union'."

"What are you trying to make a fool of me for, you little son of a bitch, you!" the Commissar flew into a rage suddenly. "The Kerensky Government indeed! Under that government they would have ground you to powder as soon as look at you, before

you'd have time to turn round! As soon as they caught a thief, they lynched him! And nowadays people talk to you properly, as if you were a decent human being. Where d'you live? Without any lies, now! Well?"

"You can see the house from the window."

"Where? Show us where it is," the Commissar continued fiercely, going to the window and opening it wide. "Well?"

"Bend down lower, there behind that roof, no, not that one, behind the other, the one with the tall chimney."

"That red one? Eh, where are you going?"

But the boy had twisted out of his grasp like a snake, jumped down to the pavement, fell his whole length, scrambled to his feet, and taking in the situation at a glance, dashed to one side and disappeared.

"Can't see hide nor hair of him now!" croaked one of the cleaners. "Like a damned snake," the Commissar was trying to justify himself. "Such a slippery customer! Just you try to hold him!"

"Well, he's confessed now!" said the teacher triumphantly, coming into the room at that moment. "He's called Vasska, and the older boy is Kostka and they both live with their parents, he doesn't know their surnames, at number 45 Little Ivanovskaya Street."

"Forty-five, did you say?" asked the Commissar.

"Yes, and where's the elder one?"

"There's no such number as 45 in Little Ivanovskaya. The caretaker's just been there, and I can remember now, myself," said the Commissar gloomily.

"Then he was lying?" the teacher seemed astonished. "Come and examine him yourself, he talks quite a lot and . . ."

"And where's he gone to?" asked the Commissar, as he opened the classroom door.

"I don't know!" the teacher rushed to the desks. "He's not under the desks anywhere. But I only just left him this very moment. Where could he have gone?"

"Yes, that's it, where could he have gone?" repeated the Commissar furiously. "Slippery as eels, they are, the little brats."

"Lord! He must have got through the top of that window!" exclaimed the teacher, glancing upwards. "That's what it is, the window's open!"

"So they let the other one go as well?" said one of the cleaners, poking her head into the classroom. "Good thing they had time to find the keys and get them off him."

"Why, that's just—I don't know what to call it!" the teacher spread out her hands in despair. "A regular gang of some kind!"

"And you say his name was Vasska?" the Commissar asked spitefully. "Well, go and find your Vasska."

2

On the first of April, 1918, Victor Gontsov, the scoutmaster, came over on his bicycle to attend the meeting of the "Bear" and "Skunk" patrols. It was held in one of the deserted country villas in Ivanovsky Park, alongside the Khropovsky Hillocks. The villa had been selected and engaged by the scout detachment in winter. It was a little mean house with winter stoves. The scouts put in electric fittings, connected it with the town system without waiting to get permission, set up an electric stove and for some reason or other, a huge electric fan, which they placed on a separate table.

If one of the scouts felt too hot, he would put on the fan and hold his face right in the fiercest blast. And it was often too hot, because the place was heated to the point of suffocation, the whole of the vast Ivanovsky Park, with its hundreds of trees, being at the disposal of anyone who wanted it.

The scout-master was broad shouldered, red cheeked and very self confident. His assurance subdued even the patrol leaders, not to speak of the rank and file. For all that Gontsov could maintain himself on an equal footing with the boys. This created an atmosphere of awe and devotion around him.

He jumped off his bike, wiped the wheels carefully with a cloth and wheeled it into the vestibule. He straightened his hat, like an actor before coming on the stage, and was about to touch the door knob when the door flew open of itself and the scouts rushed out to meet him.

"Did you come on your bike?" came the admiring and envious exclamations. "That's fine! Wasn't it muddy? Victor, can we have a ride?"

"It was rather muddy," Victor replied, saluting them all. "And I'm not going to let anyone ride, I wouldn't even let my own father if he'd ask me. A bike is a delicate sort of machine and you can't trust it with anyone. Last year I let someone ride it and it was stolen from him. After that I swore I'd never lend it to anyone again."

This speech Victor delivered in weighty tones, and with such consciousness of his own dignity, that the scouts quietened down considerably as they went indoors. Victor took off his hat and looked round.

"Well, that's nice," he said after a short silence. "You've not fixed it up badly at all. But the place is overheated. A scout should make himself hardy, get used to the cold."

"We can get used to that at home," returned the patrol master, Kurtz, a strongly built, well-nourished lad of about fourteen. "The Bolsheviks aren't giving any wood, you know."

"Alright. And where d'you get this?" asked Gontsov, indicating the fan.

The scouts laughed and glanced at each other.

"That's not the only thing we've got, scout master. We've something else besides," Kurtz replied in a self satisfied tone.

"Fine!" said Gontsov admiringly. "Did Kurtz really do all this?"

"It wasn't only me, scout master," Kurtz returned modestly, from the stage — "They all took part in the work."

"Oh, did they? Where did the stuff come from? The paints, the stuff, the lamps?"

"We'll give an account of this at the meeting of the patrol."

"Better let's have it now, why make a mystery out of it?" Gontsov advised them. "Everybody knows about it, all the same."

"Well, it was like this," began Kurtz, "there was a hospital not far off, but there weren't any sick people in it."

"Only Polish legionaires," put in another scout.

"Don't interrupt! A Polish Legion was stationed there, waiting to be drafted home. Well we went over there. And there were simply piles of underclothes, enough for, I should think, two hundred thousand people. We said 'Give us a few suits of underclothes, we've nothing to wear!' And they said, 'Who are you?' 'Boy scouts,' we said. 'You'll have to get a stamp first from the medical department, and then we'll give it to you.' We hustled around and got hold of the stamp and they gave us the linen. And out of that we made the curtain and the back drop."

"And did you get the electric fan with the stamp, too?" asked Gontsov.

"Oh, never mind that!" Kurtz began carelessly and then grew confused.

"We simply took the fan," explained the tallest of the scouts, a pimply, gloomy looking fellow, whom the rest called Karachun. "We could see it was just standing there idle. I looked about, there was no one around, so I put it under my arm and went out."

"Swiped it!" a very small boy cried admiringly, but shut up immediately and looked shyly at Gontsov.

"And the lamps?" the latter went on in a casual tone.

"And the lamps as well," Kurtz affirmed.

"So that's that," drawled Gontsov, looking at the scouts solemnly. He knew that the boys were hanging on his words—would he approve or disapprove. "Speaking generally, a scout is not supposed to touch anyone else's property. Thieving is a disgusting thing in itself. (Gontsov was conscious that he was taking this out of the book, but in this case it was necessary to have the weight and the unassailable authority of someone else.) There are cases, of course. . .," here the scouts pricked up their ears, "there are cases when stealing is not really stealing but simply the safe-guarding of public property. Let's consider the case of the electric fan. This fan would, in the hands of the Bolsheviks, have undoubtedly been either ruined or lost. What did Karachun do? He took the fan from the Bolsheviks under his own protection and isolated it." (At this point Gontsov felt that his eight years at the High School were of some use after all.) "The same with the lamps. As regards the underclothes they would in any case have either rotted or been stolen. And here in the form of a backdrop they are undoubtedly of assistance in cultural and educational work."

"That's it cultural and educational!" cried Kurtz enthusiastically. "And we're going to give shows for all the scout organizations. By the way, scout master, which should you say—scoutism or scouting, in English?"

"The birthplace of the scout movement is England," replied Gontsov in an important tone, "therefore the right word would be scouting. Well you've fixed up everything very cleverly, I must say—I hardly expected it. Well, shall we have a game now?"

The games were noisy and jolly, as all games were that Gontsov participated in. The room was hot, the scouts' ties straggled to one side, the collars of their well ironed shirts got crumpled, the scouts themselves were red and breathless.

"Now let's have a rest and I'll tell you a story in the meantime," announced Gontsov, sitting down by the blazing stove. "Put out the lights, so it will look more like a campfire."

The light was turned out and the effect of a campfire in the forest was achieved. The faces were lit from below. Behind them in the vast darkness, the presence of something strange and perhaps, hostile, could be felt.

"Well," began Gontsov in a low voice, "it all happened about three months ago in the Cossack settlement of Yasinovata. The Bolsheviks had occupied it, and the Cossacks wanted to regain it no matter what happened. Fortunately, there were some scouts in the settlement. They established a connection with the Cossacks and at the critical moment. . . ."

But the tale had to be left untold, for at that moment a powerful blow struck the window and shattered it, and a large stone rolled over the floor.

"What's that?" shouted Gontsov in a threatening tone. "Who dared to do this?"

"It's the 'Underground Leagers'," Kurtz replied, agitatedly, jumping up. "Get your sticks, boys, and let's go for them."

"But they've got stones," objected several voices. "They'll knock our heads off. They've got a big fellow with them and he has a strap with an iron weight on the end of it."

"What are these 'Underground Leaguers'? Don't make such a noise!" shouted Gontsov. "We've got to do things in order, disorder is unworthy of a good scout!"

"They're boys from the caves in the Khropovsky Hillocks," Karachun explained gloomily. "They don't like us overmuch, because we wear ties."

"Why caves?" asked Gontsov, "what do they do in the caves?"

"They live there," Karachun was beginning again, when a cry out of the darkness interrupted him.

"Ooh! Got a stone right in my chest! They're throwing them through the broken window!"

"This has got to be stopped," said Gontsov and went up to the window. "Hey, you there, whoever you are, I'll take you to the militia. You can't play jokes like that with me!"

At that moment there was a sound of something rattling in the corridor and a metallic ring.

"My bike!" cried Gontsov, rushing to the vestibule. "Give me a light, boys, I want to see—what's happened to it."

The vestibule was lit up immediately. The bicycle was no longer there and the outside door was wide open.

"What the hell!" said Gontsov in a very unscoutlike way. "Where are your Khropovsky Hillocks? This is just robbery, a downright bandit raid! What sort of a damn hole is this? Bikes being stolen right out of the vestibule! All be ready to go after them!"

"Our staffs, we must take our staffs," Kurtz was fussing about. "Quick, boys!"

"I'm not going," Karachun announced mournfully.

Gontsov turned on him furiously—

"Why not?"

"It's silly to go like this in the dark, you'll never find the bike tonight."

"So what, I've got to let it go, do I?"

"I don't know."

"Fool!" shouted Gontsov angrily. "Are you ready, boys?"

"Always ready!" sang out the boys cheerily.

Gontsov set out helpless with rage; the heavy darkness wrapped them around; the windy, warm spring night had already fallen.

"Be careful, scoutmaster," Kurtz's stealthy tones came from behind. "There's a ditch just here, you can easily slip. . . ."

"The hell with the whole house and the theatre with it!" Gontsov replied. "If there are raids on it and bycicles get stolen. That's the third bike I've lost in two years!"

"A perfectly new one, too, that's a pity," Kurtz murmured sympathetically. "Hold your staffs ready, scouts!"

Coming straight out of the electric light into the pitch darkness, the boys could only grope their way blindly. They crawled along in single file, calling to each other every minute. The murky night took them hospitably into its embrace as if it wanted to weigh down their eyelids, penetrate into their consciousness, their brains. Now and again a whistle sounded ahead of them.

"After all, Karachun was right, maybe it would be better to turn back," flashed through Gontsov's mind. "But I can't now, the boys will think I am afraid."

Just then something whizzed past his temple and hit him in the eye.

"O-o-h!" Gontsov screamed. The pain was unbearable.

"To hell with the Kerensky guys!" the enemy shouted, roared and whistled in the darkness. "At the collar and tie kids! Go for 'em! Give 'em hell!"

"Home, boys!" shouted Gontsov, overcoming his pain for a moment. He turned and ran to the house. A long stick hit him across the legs. He stumbled and fell. The scouts, pale and bewildered, were already crowding in the brightly lighted vestibule. Some had had their ties torn off, and the shirts of the others were ripped to bits. The majority were without their staffs which had either been lost in the struggle or torn out of their hands by the "Undergrounders."

Gontsov was followed into the vestibule by Kurtz: blood was running down his cheek.

"Shut the doors, and the windows, block them up with anything you can find," he shouted breathlessly. "They're coming again now!"

"I told you, you shouldn't go out," Karachun remarked as gloomily as ever, looking from side to side. "What can you do in the dark?"

"Hold your tongue!" barked Gontsov. He had lost all control of himself, and was behaving like the headmaster of the High School. "I told you! I told you! You've got to do something, not just talk. Imbecile!"

"Why am I an imbecile!" Karachun objected. "I don't believe anyone even knows what an imbecile is?"

"An imbecile is an ass, like you," replied Gontsov, who was getting himself in hand little by little. "An ass squared, that's what an imbecile is. Now tell us, Kurtz, who are these bandits, these 'Undergrounders'! eh?"

"It's like this, scoutmaster,the 'Undergrounders' are—well, they live under the ground. In the summer they dug caves in the Khropovsky Hillocks and settled down there. Their leader is a fellow they call Yershist. He's read up these Nat Pinkerton detective stories and books about the caves of Leichtweiss and he imagines he's the robber chief. All the lads are in rags and barefoot. Some of them are quite decent kids that they took up, but even the decent ones go in dirt and rags, they daren't do otherwise because if anybody's well dressed it means he's a Kerensky man."

"I still don't understand what sort of a gang it is," repeated Gontsov. "Are they thieves or what? What do they live on?"

"Nearly all of them have fathers and mothers, but their people have no time to look after them, and the schools in our district are hardly ever open. They really steal a lot. Formerly they called themselves the 'Crust-eaters' Union,' because they used to raid the bread carts and break off the crusts. Then this Yershist came on the scene, he's their chief organizer, and now they call themselves the 'Underground League'!"

"But if they're thieves why doesn't the militia deal with them?" Gontsov could not get over his indignation. "Where's the militia? I'll go straight to the militia this minute!"

The District Militia, it appeared, was situated at the entrance to Ivanovsky Park. Gontsov bandaged up his eye and went off to complain.

"What have you got to say, citizen?" was the question with which Gontsov was greeted by the Commissar at the table.

"Those lads living in the caves in the Khropovsky Hillocks have stolen my bicycle."

"Took your bicycle, did they? Hm... and who are you? Have you any document with you?"

Gontsov showed his papers.

"Well, it'll have to be tomorrow," said the Commissar, examining the papers. "It wouldn't be any good looking for any bicycle tonight, you understand that yourself. Who do you suspect?"

"I told you already: some gangs of lads, who live in the caves of the Khropovsky Hillocks. They call themselves the 'Underground Leaguers'."

"What did you say—the 'Underground Leaguers'? Oh, I know something about that. They're kids, one smaller than the other."

"I never saw them. Somebody called Yershist, I've heard is their leader."

"Yer-shi-ist?"

"That's what I was told."

"What's he look like?"

"That I don't know, it was pitch dark when it all happened."

"Well, citizen, I've taken down your statement, now you can go."

"What about my bike then?"

"Oh, your bicycle? I've nobody here to send out just now. There are folks being killed round here—a bicycle's nothing. Call in about a week's time."

"What do you mean, a week's time?" shouted Gonstov, losing control of himself. "What are you sitting here for, then, if you can't get an ordinary bicycle from a few kids?"

"Don't you get so excited, citizen," the Commissar advised, looking up with a frown. "The workers have their hands full strengthening the government they've set up, it's a big job, and you come with your bicycle! You should have looked after it yourself. You should have kept your eyes skinned in your ugly fat mug. Go on, now, clear out, or I'll start asking why your eye's tied up! And you've got a Kerensky cap on, too!"

This last shot he fired at the rapidly retiring figure of Gontsov.

3

The Commissar of the District Militia, Stepan Ivanitch Yershov was a middle aged man, of little education but great determination. It was extremely difficult to keep down crime, not only in this district but throughout the whole town. Besides the local offenders, gangs of visiting Warsaw, Odessa and international crooks committed the most ghastly murders and robberies. All these nightbirds, however, went in real dread of Commissar Yershov, since he always got on their track immediately after the crime was committed. To his credit be it spoken, Yershov succeeded in stamping out banditry almost entirely from that district. There remained only petty thieves, bootleggers, and pickpockets. These would have to be weeded out gradually from the moss grown conservatism of the old existence. It is interesting to observe that the sale of illegal liquor and the keeping of low drink-shops was, in that district, chiefly in the hands of former Tsarist police officials. The latter were, of course, experts in the technique of covering their tracks and were connected on account of their former employment with the whole of the underworld. The struggle with these, then, was particularly difficult, since the whole of this vast district had to be administered by the Commissar himself, his assistant and eight militiamen. In addition to all this, lynching, a foul reminder of the days of Kerensky, had to be dealt with. Stepan Ivanitch lived in this district. He had worked here as a fitter in the factory, he had also worked here for the Party and had been arrested more than once. Now he was almost never at home.

After Gontsov's visit Stepan Ivanitch was called out three times; twice to fires and once in answer to a special call from the headquarters of the Criminal Investigation Department, to examine the spot where two sacks containing a corpse cut into pieces, had been found. So that he could only doze in the merest snatches. Real sleep was, of course, out of the question.

In spite of this, when morning came the Commissar went to the store-room, picked out an old, peaked cap and a torn Russian jacket, put them on and went off to Ivanovsky Park.

The snow had already melted away and a profusion of last year's oak and maple leaves rustled underfoot. The Commissar's footsteps startled the crows in the treetops and with croaks of alarm they flew about between the trees.

"They don't need to leave anyone on guard here," thought Stepan Ivanitch. "Now they'll all run away, I suppose, little devils, and there'll be no catching them."

The Commissar stopped and thought for a moment. Then he pulled his cap well down over his eyes, fished a bottle out of his pocket, took a draught from it and, leaning against a tree, droned out in a drunken voice:

The path is now o'ergrown with weeds—
Where once thy de-ear fe-et trod—

To all appearances this tree was an insufficient support, for he started to seek another: some strange force drew him on. The crows, disturbed by this song, croaked and fussed about in the branches still more noisily. Stumbling and swearing, the Commissar went further and further into the depth of the park. Once he almost fell into the pond but caught at an over-hanging branch of maple and saved himself. Sometimes he stopped singing and swearing. This usually happened at the crossings of the paths: then from all four directions he could be seen taking a drink from the bottle, his long legs set wide apart. After these stops the song rang out still louder and more piercingly.

At a little distance from the Khropovsky Hillocks the Commissar was met by a small boy. He stared at Stepan Ivanitch in astonishment for some time, burst out laughing and dived into the thick, bare bushes. In a couple of minutes the Commissar was spattered with a shower of light but uncommonly sharp arrows.

"Who's that throwing sticks?" he roared in a drunken, threatening tone. "They wouldn't come out to fight man to man but they chuck sticks at you from behind the bushes, damn young imps!"

The shooting ceased and a deep voice called out—

"And would you fight?"

"My name's not Simonov the glass-blower, if I don't," boasted the Commissar. "Spit my death! I'll clean you all up! Come on out of there!"

"It's Simonov, the glass-blower," someone called behind the bushes. "Come on, kids, it's alright."

"But he's drunk," the reply came from the other side, "I saw him myself, taking swigs at the bottle. Let Kostka start with him."

And before the Commissar stood a dirty lad of ten with bristling hair. He looked the Commissar up and down in a businesslike way, swung his fist and landed it in the man's side.

"Oho!" exclaimed Stepan Ivanitch good-naturedly. "And aren't you afraid to fight with grown-ups then? You little son of a bitch!"

"Go on, Kostka, go at him, it's alright!" came the cries of encouragement, and the Commissar got a sudden whack in the back.

"What'd you do that for?" the Commissar turned round to find himself surrounded by a whole regiment of children, among whom were some big boys of fourteen.

"You oughtn't to come here to Khropovsky Hillocks," answered one of the youths.

"Wha-wha's that?" the Commissar's drunken voice went on. "It's not written up anywhere, is it, that I shouldn't come here! If I want to come, I'll come!"

The path is no-ow o'ergrown with weeds!

"Well, why don't you fight us man to man?" the first of the lads demanded cheekily. "Come on, fight, you asked for it?"

"I can, too, and very easy," replied the Commissar. He swung his arm, but struck the air, overbalanced and fell with his nose in the bushes.

"Wise-guy!" they mocked. "You better fight with the wall, old man."

"I can do that, too," boomed the Commissar, rising with some difficulty from the ground. "Why should I have to fight the little fellows? Gimme a big one, I'm not going to fight with little ones, give me the biggest you got, I'll land him one with my left that'll . . ."

"Try me," said one of the youths with a wink to the rest as he came out on the path. "Don't think you'll get the better of me, though, old man. I'm like Macist, the Italian boxer I am, that they show in the movies.."

"I won't lick you?" shouted the Commissar.

"You won't!"

"Me?"

"You!"

"Oh, if it's like that," croaked Stepan Ivanitch starting forwards, "hold tight."

The youth received a blow in the side that sent him flying.

"Go for him, kids," they shouted from all sides. "The damned old hog—comes here drunk and beats us!"

They fell on the Commissar, and he had to beat them off. They twisted and turned like eels and there was no holding them. It evidently gave them great satisfaction to see that the man had such trouble with them.

"What's all this?" a stern, cold voice inquired. A longlimbed youth with a queer yellowish face was standing in the bushes.

"There's a drunken man here," the children began to explain, "singing and wanting to fight. He's a card! Come on, you fight him, Yershist."

Yershist strode up the path. The Commissar turned away, shrinking.

"What do you want around here?" demanded Yershist in an important tone. "Don't come round here. This part is under the Soviet of the Underground League. You'll get smacked on the head if you don't look out!"

"I'll get one over the head?" roared the Commissar.

"Yes, you of course, who do you think? Get out of here! What do you want?"

"I want you!" the Commissar replied, suddenly, coming forward quite soberly and seizing Yershist's arm. Yershist bent to the ground, dragging Stepan Ivanitch with him, but the man caught him by the other arm and just in time, for a knife gleamed in his hand.

"Undergrounders! Help!" croaked Yershist with an effort, striving to wriggle free of the Commissar's hands. One of the boys seized the Commissars' arm, but the latter gave a swift jerk of the foot, and the boy went flying into the bushes. An iron weight on the end of a strap came whistling through the air and the Commissar's cap flew off.

"It's the Commissar of the Militia!" came a frightened shout and in a moment the path was deserted. Only two figures remained: those of the Commissar and Yershist. Between them lay the knife that had fallen from Yershist's hand.

"Think of that now," said the Commissar with a smile. "Where did you manage to grow up into a bandit?"

"And you're not drunk, after all?" remarked Yershist, gloomily, looking the Commissar up and down.

"No, I'm not drunk, that's certain."

"So you were just pretending?"

"One would have to pretend to be hell knows what with the lot of you, and not just drunken. What have you been doing, got a whole gang together, have you?"

"Well, what's it got to do with you?"

"Vanka-a!"

"What about it? I've been called Vanka for fourteen years now."

"Oh well, if you're going to answer your own father like that, march along to the militia. And don't you try to get away, either!"

"I won't, dad, I won't now," said Yershist with a smirk that greatly resembled Stepan Ivanitch's smile.

4

"You must understand, at home I'm your father and here, I'm the chief of the militia," announced Stepan Ivanitch, importantly, sitting down and placing the boy in front of him.

"Here you're just a crook I've caught."

"I'm not a crook," muttered Yershist, gloomily.

"And what are you then, if you pinch bicycles? Eh? Just tell me that? Didn't you collect a gang and make raids, then? Aren't you a crook? Answer me!"

"In the summer we played at Cossack robbers, and the militia never bothered about us."

"That was play, and if there's play and a teacher to look after you, nobody's going to bother you. And now what? Yes, you get me this bicycle, by the way—in two shakes, else I'll — —"

"What'll you do?"

"You'll see what I'll do. I'll send you to the Rukavishnikov Home."

"Well, send me, then!"

The Commissar was silent. It would not, of course, be difficult to send the boy to the Home, but would it be any use? He would only run away from it and then go into the bandit business for good. And lock him up? That would be enough to make a cat laugh, to put a fourteen year old kid behind prison bars. The Commissar rang up the District Soviet and asked them to put him through to the chief of the Education Department. The chief was an old friend of Yershov's and a worker with a long record of Party work. He replied:

"Send him to me."

"What for?" asked the Commissar.

"I know what I'll do, send him over."

"Listen, Yershov! Don't beat him on any account!" advised the director.

"Why not?"

"You mustn't beat him. You'll only root his bandit inclinations deeper in him that way."

"Root them deeper?"

"Yes, root them deeper. You'd better try and win him over by kindness. Beating isn't allowed in the Soviet Republic. You see, that's just a relic of slavery."

The Commissar put back the receiver. And he had been intending to drive all this nonsense out of Vanka in the manner of his fathers, with a strap. At home, of course, not in the office of the militia. And now it appeared, beating was regarded as "a relic of slavery."

What was to be done then? He must to show his authority as a father, otherwise the boy would get out of hand altogether. And there was a whole gang behind him!

"Vanka!"

"What now?"

"Don't you dare answer your father like that, you brat! You should ask me, 'What would you be pleased to say, father?' Now, then, what have you got to do in these Khropovsky Hillocks ? It's your business to live at home, and not in the Khropovsky caves."

"And what have I got to do at home?"

"What do you mean? Every son should live with his parents. You must go to school and prepare your lessons."

"You're never at home for weeks at a time, and mother's out all day, standing in queues. And the school's been closed since autumn."

"Alright, now. It's closed, well—" the Commissar muttered, conscious that there was a good deal of truth in what Yershist was saying. "These are difficult times just now. There's a social revolution going on, and all the bourgeoisie is putting obstacles in our way, starting strikes to interrupt the school courses. We haven't had time yet to set up a new management. But that doesn't mean that you're to be allowed to make

robbers of yourselves. Where's that bike?" shouted the Commissar in a sudden fury, jumping up from his chair. "Answer me, you brat, where've you hidden the bicycle?"

"We didn't take it."

"What d'you mean, you didn't take it. A fellow has been here and told me all about it."

"We never took it, all the same. The boys just wheeled it out and into the pond."

"Why into the pond?"

"Because it's a bourgeois bike, that's why."

"The bike is?"

"Yes."

"So that means you've got to destroy it."

"They're all well off and go about in ties and with sticks and turn up their noses at the likes of us. And then they've taken a whole house and got electric light and everything, and we've got to live in caves like dogs."

"Who do you mean, 'they'?"

"They call themselves 'boy scouts' and they're really Kerensky men, by right."

"Eh, you're comical kids, though!" the Commissar exclaimed almost tenderly. "You've started a war against the counter-revolutionaries, then? Well, now, just think, is it your business, the business of snuffling little brats like you to fight counter-revolution? Counter-revolution is a snake with about a dozen heads and your duty is to report to the right place where this snake lives and what way it shows itself. And not to steal and rob."

"I helped the Red Guards."

"I know you helped them, because you're a son of the proletariat, after all, and you were bound to help. But in this case you are at fault, you know."

The Commissar rose, and paced the room with a feeling of satisfaction. It was, after all, a good thing that he would not have to beat the boy. Yes, and on the whole the affair had turned out quite differently to what it had seemed at first.

"Oh, yes!" he recollected suddenly. "And the school—the one in the Blue House! Was it you who sent the kids to rob it?"

"It wasn't robbed at all," replied Yershist. "What do we want with robbing a school? But our kids had no exercise books or pencils. And anyway nobody's using the school. Why should the exercise books go to waste?"

"But you could have come and asked for them, you silly!"

"Oh, yes, you go and try to ask! Those old women would give you such a whack over the head with the floorcloth and scald you maybe you'd forget what to ask for. You needn't expect anything from them but to be called 'hooligan.' And the teacher only comes in once a week. She's a queer one anyhow. She goes 'children, children!' and if you do any little things sticks you in the corner. Wouldn't get any exercise books out of her."

"But what do you want them for?"

"The kids wanted them, some want to write or maybe draw something."

"And you sent them there? Who were they, anyhow, queer names they called themselves by?"

"One was Kostka, Riabtsev the tailor's son and the other was Makarichev's from the pipe-rolling mills. Yes, but don't you go telling their fathers," Yershist suddenly remembered.

"I won't. Why should I?" said the Commissar winking to his son. "But what funny kids! They stole all the keys to get hold of a few books and pencils! Well, there's freaks for you! And what are these 'undergrounders'?"

"Oh, we just made up this name because we live in caves, under the ground, see. Can I go now, dad?"

"Go! where to?" the Commissar asked in astonishment.

"I'm going back to the kids."

"Don't you want to go home to your mother?"

"I'll come in the evening."

"Look at that, now! What shall I do with you? Eh? Well, you know what you'll do just now: go to the director of the District Soviet, he wants you to go and see him. Say: Yershov, the Commissar of the Militia sent me, do you hear?"

"He'll try to frighten me with the Rukavishnikov Home again, I suppose?"

"No, he won't. He's one of us, a real good fellow. So you'll go?"

"I'll go, alright. Can I go now?"

"And get that bike out of the pond and fetch it up here. As quick as you can, d'you hear? And what about those—what did you call them?"

"Boy scouts."

"That's it, scouts, where do they meet?"

"In the Polyansky House, in Ivanovsky Park."

"Well, I'll go and look them up myself, it's not your business.... Yes, and what's more, don't you dare to play the fool any more, attacking people or robbing or anything, understand?"

"I know. Can I go now?"

"Yes, clear out, oh, but wait a minute! Why do the lads call you Yershist, when your name's Vanka Yershov? What's it mean?"

"Well-er, there was a famous strong man, Maciste, and they called me after him, because I'm stronger than any of them."

"A strong man! You are? Well, look here, Yershist, old boy, don't act the fool with me any more see!"

"I see!"

Yershist disappeared. The Commissar went over to the window and opened it. In the dazzling radiance of the spring sunshine, little boys were hopping about among the puddles on the road. There seemed to be a great many of the boys, far more than usual. A shrill whistle sounded and from various corners the boys ran to the headquarters of the militia.

In a moment they collected in a noisy crowd on the pavement with Yershist in the middle.

"Waiting for him," Stepan Ivanitch thought.

Among them he recognized the youngster he had caught with the keys in the Blue House. This boy was skipping about near Yershist and doing extraordinary jumps. Now he puffed himself out, thrust out his chest and a desperate song rang out on the spring air.

Hark! a whistle underground,
Our Yershist must be around.

Ran-tan, ran-tan, ti-ti-ti, the boys took it up as if rushing on the enemy.

Straight ahead goes our Yershist
He that's stronger than Maciste.
Everybody fears his fist.

And a terrible good footballer!

the small boy continued in his shrill pipe.

"We neglected them and they've gone and organized themselves," the Commissar thought with pride as he took up the receiver of the ever imperative telephone.

Translated from the Russian by Anthony Wixley

Lev Nikulin

At the Top of the Human Voice

A Story of the Great Soviet Poet Mayakovsky

In Paris I learned to fall asleep to the music of the motor-horns hailing one another, to the many voiced but harmonious orchestra of the street. I grew accustomed to it, as one grows accustomed to the rhythmical splashing of the waves under the window of a seaside cottage—until suddenly, one morning, the strange silence, the lull that comes in late autumn before the storms, wakes one up.

So I awoke once in Paris—from the astonishing stillness. Then I heard the clatter of heels and saw from the window sixteen clean-shaven, neat policemen with snowy starched collars. Their polished leather belts shone as they went down our quiet street.

It was the First of May.

Everything grows clear and transparent in the Paris streets. Twenty thousand yellow, grey and red taxis remained in the garages today and an army of chauffeurs with their hands in their pockets strolled about the *Courbevoix*. You could see lonely cars like solitary passers-by in the deserted street. There goes a dilapidated Peugot (Doctor Bas is making the rounds of his patients), there goes a solid, respectable Citroen (Monsieur Decase is visiting his four hosiery shops and factory), here is the Talbot sports model of the architect Degoux, an expert on the decoration of shop fronts. Its neighbour looks like an armoured car, with a silver sultan atop of the radiator; it belongs to Maurice Lebenthal, the owner of the Lido Arcade . In the meantime the police in steel helmets are marching by, on the right and on the left the national guard in white belts, with short swords and revolvers. Behind them come threatening, heavily moustached horsemen in Roman helmets. You raise your eyes to the skies and see a flying policeman. He circles above the red belt of the Paris suburbs, and from an altitude of a thousand feet views the battalions of blue uniforms, the crowds of armed men hidden in the yards of the prefecture. He also sees masses of workers moving towards the green shade of the parks to remind one another again who is the master of the land.

The spring breeze, a Mayday breeze, toys with a red handkerchief at a window in the barracks—the timid greeting of soldiers kept under lock and key. In the Park a blue square of police devides the grey-black mass of people, and the short, intense stillness is shattered by the splintering of glass.

And at that very hour, while in Paris the captain of the Republican guard, who wears a war decoration on his breast, bares his sword and, giving a sidelong glance at the gloomy, moustached soldiers, puts his horse at a gallop—in Berlin a police officer with an iron cross on his breast loosens the strap of his revolver-holster.

"— Strassen frei! Es wird geschossen!"
"— Circulez, circulez, circulez!"

Meanwhile, lunch for eight thousand is being laid in the courtyard of the Paris Prefecture of Police. A printing press is throwing off the first waste sheets—*Intransigeant* is hastening to inform the Parisians that the First of May has passed off very well in Europe.

"Monsieur le Prefect was the first to empty his glass to the health of the guardians of the peace. A luncheon for eight thousand police was laid in the open air. In Berlin a few people were killed, and some in Hamburg also. Everything passed off quietly in Paris."

By evening only the bits of broken glass and the remains of twisted iron bars remind one that Paris is the town of the barricades of '48 and of the Commune. M. Vessade, the owner of the Tyrol hotel, M. Decase, owner of a hosiery factory and four shops, M. Lebenthal, the owner of the Lido Arcade, turned over the leaf of the calendar. At midnight it would be the second of May on all the calendars of Europe.

Meanwhile, a man of about 36 was leaving the Istria hotel on Montparnasse. He was tall, broad shouldered, well proportioned. He wore decent quiet clothes, such as a ship's engineer, or a worker, might wear on holiday. He trailed a heavy stick after him. It was difficult to guess his nationality—he had the eyes of a southerner, the broad chin of an Anglo Saxon and the complexion of an American with Indian blood in him. His mouth was large. It seemed large because he had a habit of stretching it when he spoke, as if he wanted people to understand him properly. The senator De Monzie said when he first set eyes on him:

"We must show those jaws to Paris!"

He goes into a bar on the Boulevard Montparnasse, settles himself on a high stool and demands with an unconquerable Russian accent:

"A Martini."

Then he turns to me and with a beam that seems startling on this harsh countenance, asks:

"Well, how's Moscow?"

His voice is low and slightly broken but its timbre is deep and ringing. A full-bodied voice like that can suddenly acquire such power as to drown the shouts of thousands. And at another moment it can utter the warmest, friendliest words.

"How are things in Moscow. I'm going back on the 15th."

"You'll get flu after this Paris spring."

"Do you think so? And what about the literary weather?"

He speaks slowly and not at all loudly but this slowness can turn suddenly into impetuosity and lightness. Behind his apparent calm lies nervousness, an overwhelming temperament. He can be rude but when he speaks to you like a friend he can do anything he likes with you. He loves to draw people after him, to drag them about with him, bring them within the orbit of his complex, incomprehensible life. He draws them after him for no obvious reason, and refuses to let them go. And you surrender to this forcible goodwill. It is impossible to convey the ease and variety of his dialogue, the unexpectedness of the intonations, the curious alternation of gloomy concentration in his glance and the gaiety of his smile.

He drinks off the muddy-golden liquid in the frail glass. It looks strange in his big, broad hand. Being a southerner, a Caucasian born in the vineyards, he can hold a great deal without getting drunk.

"I went to bed last night at eleven. Funny? In Paris and to be in bed at eleven! Supposing you told anyone that Mayakovsky went to bed at eleven in Paris."

He begins to tap his stick on the marble.

"Don't pay. I'm paying. It doesn't matter just now. No money anyhow. Let's go."

He stops by the door for a second. A lop-eared fellow that looks like a rat keeps getting under his feet. It is a critic from a White paper. Mayakovsky stands aside, the movement is expressive of insulting courtesy and disgust.

"I've been reading the memoirs of Simanovitch, Rasputin's secretary. Charming little book. On every other page you meet with sentences like this 'I advised His Majesty long ago to form a responsible government.' Generally speaking, the history of the Russian state from the point of view of a cardsharper."

He leads me along the boulevard, from one shop window to another, from the flowershop to the billiard room and from there to station restaurants. He walks with a swing of his shoulders and surveys people as from a hight. Everyone turns round to

look at him. M. de Monzie was right—these jaws were worth showing to Paris. So he strides along, shouldering the night throng, in the quarter where artists, picture-sellers, crooks, detectives, vagabonds are to be found, sometimes uttering his thoughts aloud, sometimes muttering in a slightly nasal tone snatches of verse:

You will be pleased with yourself and your spouse,
And your bob-tail constitution.

"Who wrote that? Alexander Blok. For shame, you wrote verses yourself too! Did you like Sasha Cherny? *Pages in lacquered hoofs neigh and dig at the gravel.* Not bad. And what rubbish he writes now! And imagines himself a second Heine, too!"

Under the electric sign of the Jockey stands a round faced, short sighted fellow in a raspberry red jacket and a cap with gold braid. He takes off his cap and says in Russian:

"Good evening, Vladimir Vladimirovich!"

"How do you do! Is this what you call evening?"

The raspberry man steps back and bows again. We go in.

A saxophone, a horn that looks like a cobra with valves, sings with fulsome sweetness and sadness, with hysterical sadness and all the expressiveness of the human voice. The feverish pulsation of a drum simplifies the meaning of the melody, and a compact mass of human bodies sways in the narrow space between the tables. Everything sways, shines, breathes and whispers, obeying the persuasions of the horns and the drum. The acrid smell of wine, perfume and perspiration drifts into the nostrils. The rustle of silk against bodies, the sticky, sickly sweet melody, the feverish throbbing of the drum, like a drunkard's pulse, drifts into the ears. He hears it all—the whispering, the rustling and the music. A dreamy, pleasant excitement takes possession of the brain, a welcome state of captivity, an almost physical sensation of calm, of luxurious drowsiness, intoxication. The seasoned night club managers, the inventive keepers of these haunts, stand on the threshold with their hands behind their backs, thinking to themselves:

"How can anyone remain himself among two hundred people intoxicated by contact with each other through silk and fabric, drunken with the mingling of music and alcohol. Do you imagine, my dear guests, that it will be easy for you to shake off this clinging sticky sensation? You must not think, that this is a simple affair, easily thought out—this softly lighted dance hall, where people do nothing but dance and drink and repeat words that have only one meaning. You are people of flesh and blood. You understand no matter who you are, what desire means and what art goes into this business of wringing a melody stolen from Argentinian herd boys and sweetened by night club musicians out of a metal horn."

Can you shake off this hypnotism of rhythm suddenly and drive away the velvety dizziness that confuses your brain and become hard, attentive and sardonic?

"I'll present you with a subject for a story. Is a story any good to a venerable prosaic personage like you? Miron Markovitch!"

He turns to the round faced man in the gold braid:

"Miron Markovitch—let me introduce you—Miron Markovitch Frenkel, formerly accountant of the Asov-Don Bank in Jitomir."

The man in the raspberry jacket and gold braid bows and squeezes in between the table and the wall.

"When are you going back to Russia, Miron Markovitch?"

"Vladimir Vladimirovitch, you're joking surely."

"Are you afraid, then?"

"What do you think?"

"What are you afraid of? The O.G.P.U.?"

"No. What have I got to be afraid of? I've got my own profession."

"Then what are you afraid of?"

The man in the raspberry jacket rests on our table, rolls his short sighted blue eyes and says:

"What am I afraid of? How shall I explain myself? Well, if you want to know, the only things I'm afraid of in life are pogroms."

And then, to the mewing of a Hawaiian ukulele he tells us—sometimes losing his breath and choking on his words:

"In 1919 I was in the—in what used to be—the Asov-Don Bank, at Jitomir. Petlura visited our town and stayed over from Friday till Saturday. There were nine of us Jews in the bank, and some of the messenger boys were afraid of getting into trouble through us. And we could hear how people were being killed right under our very windows, and we ran up the stairs like mice and climbed on to the roof—but our feet made such a noise on the iron that we were still more terrified. And we knew that the Haidamak Cossacks would come and kill us all. And we thought, maybe we'd better get out of the bank and scatter, some of us would escape, surely. I left the bank with Abe Mogilevsky—a handsome chap, as big as a house, twenty two and just married. He had a couple of children, I think. We were going quietly down the street and just at the Haymarket they saw us. They asked us who we were. And just then the market women selling poultry ran up and shouted:

"What are you gabbing with them there for? Beat 'em up, my boys—hey, you, Haidamaks! come on!"

"Abie opened his mouth to speak but someone hit him with a ramrod and blood rushed out of his ears and nose — — But maybe you're fed up listening to me?"

He blinked his shortsighted eyes and went on almost apologetically:

"And I was just looking on and couldn't say a word. And then they took off their rifles and drew their sabres. They would have killed us on the spot, but just at that moment two of the Setch Cossacks rode up and said: 'Killing in the streets isn't allowed, take them to headquarters.' And so they took us along there. There were, perhaps, two hundred or maybe three lying there, all killed, poor old folk, the young ones had all gone away with the Bolsheviks. They first started on Abe Mogilevsky. He had curly hair and full red lips and eyes like olives. I went up to him and started crying and then I kissed him on the mouth. His whole face was covered with blood—you remember—they'd hit him before that. And then a fat fellow with a beard—he was dressed in a plush jacket—ran up and drove his bayonet into Abe's side and the poor chap fell, done for. Then this fat fellow jumped on the body, took his rifle in both hands and started to jab his bayonet into Abe like they jab ice in the streets in winter. And suddenly his eye fell on me and he asked me 'And who are you? A bloody Jew too?' And I don't know why but I said 'No' and showed him a certificate: 'Miron Markovitch?' says the fellow in the plush jacket. 'Miron? and maybe he's not a Jew after all.' I gave him 50 rubles in silver (we'd been paid just before the evacuation) and he let me go. And I'll tell you this much—I've known a good many different people—mostly emigrants, of course, and some Jews, and when they begin 'Oh, the Bolsheviks are this, that and the other', I look at them and think 'you sons of bitches, you! I suffered under Denikin and Petlura, Struck and Udonvichenko and what did I see? It isn't the first year for the Bolsheviks, they've been in power for many a year now, haven't they? And tell me this—was there ever one drop of Tartar, Armenian or Jewish blood shed in a pogrom while they've been in power? Tell me that and I'll spit in your eyes, you sons of bitches!' And I tear my hair when I think that I was fool enough to listen to them and that it's all because of them I'm sitting here ruined in their damned Paris!"

He straightened himself and took off his gold braided cap adorned with the name Jockey.

"I finished the commercial school at Kamenetz Podolsk, and won the gold medal. I'm an experienced accountant, and still," he pointed to the cap again—"any prostitute has the right to send me to the druggist for preventives. The messenger-boy of the Jockey bar that's what I am! A nice state of things! Was this what my people hoped for me? *Bonjour, messieurs—dames! Au revoir, monsieur, dames—Merci, monsieur—dames.* And you ask me what I'm afraid of! I'm not afraid of anything, but I cry in my sleep every night. *Merci, monsieur—dame.*"

And he stuffed a banknote into his pocket. I thanked him for the story. It stuck in my memory. I sometimes thought of how I would fit it into a novel, this tale of the accountant of Jitomir in the Jockey bar. This chapter should be called "Mayakovsky in Paris" and I think that the story I owe to Vladimir Vladimirovitch has found a fitting place here. It is in its rightful place in spite of the sweet gurglings of the saxophones, the mewing of the banjo and all that background conflicting with Miron Markovitch's story—the background of nocturnal Montparnasse. It is natural because the one to whom I owe the story was able to find reality in what seemed unreal and artificial and tear away the gold braid from people.

We had never been friends. Mere acquaintances, greeting each other heartily in Moscow streets and at literary "evenings." Once he presented me with an early book of his own and wrote in it: "Nikulin, won't you call in, to put a glass of brandy in."

This was written for the sake of the rhyme alone since we very seldom drank together and when we did it was always sour Caucasian wine. And I would gaze at him with respectful curiosity as one would gaze at some remarkable natural phenomenon.

The poet Burluk once made up an advertisement:

"Woodworker Vladimir Mayakovsky will entertain the public."

He stood on the platform, his legs planted firmly apart, his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat, and parried the dull witticisms, the swearing and grumbling of the philistines. And suddenly he dragged out his victims, a Slavophile author, a people's poet, a hysterical critic ,and scalped them, turned them inside out and cast them, ridiculed and confounded, to the audience. It was a rare gift of fencing, a rare capacity for telling to thousands, of returning blow for blow and attacking without descending to mere angry rudeness. And last of all, after fifteen hundred people had acknowledged themselves beaten, and were silent in admiration of this powerful play of muscles, this easy way of passing from defence to attack, he stretched his arms and broke out with full force over the audience:

"I'm going to read my Verses on the Soviet Passport."

In Moscow, in Myasnitskaya Street, in Dmitrovka or in the lanes off Tverskaya that are as well known to us as our own familiar dwellings, our own rooms, and all that they contain, he seemed to us an inalienable, inseparable part of the Moscow landscape. Monumental, and at the same time a lively being of flesh and blood, he appeared in the streets like a part of Moscow itself. He passed by like a living monument of the changing epoch in literature, an impersonation of the transformation of Russian poetry, a remembrance of the fall of the Symbolists, the destruction of the Akmeists, of the struggle for utilitarian, political, militant poetry.

He was inseparable from the Moscow landscape, from the dusty summer noon and the Moscow twilight nights. And if now, two years after the 14th of April, 1930, he would suddenly appear at the corner of Staropimenovsky Alley or in Strastnaya-Pushkin Square and say, with a magnificent roll of the r's:

"Vorontsovskaya—Hendrikov," the first moment would not be one of astonishment for us, his appearance would seem to us a necessary complement of the familiar Moscow landscape. Here he was necessary, natural, right here in the streets he was more at home than in a crowded human dwelling. Only in the streets and on the stage of the Polytechnic or Trade Union House did he seem in proportion to the scale of the building.

But this was no typical legendary Russian giant knight of the Chaliapin kind, who only looked well against a Russian background. On the Brooklyn Bridge in New York and under the palms of Mexican towns the poet looked both international and native. As regards time and place he belonged equally in Paris.

Here he was the acknowledged ambassador from Moscow, the Moscow ambassador of poetry, the poetry of the International in a monument town to three revolutions. In the midst of Parisian quaintness, the five storied bourgeois houses, the gas lamps, the iron shutters, in the midst of French conservatism, of a stable, comfortable existence he went about, homeless and implacable, since his real home was the street and the platform. But he understood its charm very well, the charm of the city that had blended the bureaucratic old worldness of the Third Republic with the official Caesarism of the Napoleons and the three hundred metre leap into the future of the Eifel Tower.

He loved the women of that city with their natural taste and innate immodesty, he understood the Parisian artists with their feeling for planes, for forms, their sensual love of color, and their refinement that ran to shamelessness and self admiration.

He understood and loved the twilit Paris landscape, the heliotrope, orange and blue lights along the Seine and the flame of the smoky winter sunset over the Arc de Triomphe. The same sky and the same Paris winter as when the wooden posts of the guillotine had stood in the Place de la Concorde. Its thin, dry wooden legs are planted as firmly in history as the elephantine cubes that support the Arc de Triomphe in the Place de l'Etoile.

He loved and understood a great deal in this town where he would have liked to have died "if there had been no such land as—Moscow." But he never raised the poetic, overflowing beaker

To the music of Savoy and pines,
The benzine of the Champs Elysees,
To the rose in the Rolls-Royce coupe,
And the gleam of Parisian oils,

although he was of the same generation, the same historical epoch. He, too frequented the cellars decorated with representations of flowers and birds and tyrannized the ears of the esthetes with the crudeness of his tangible verses. He would turn away from the roses in the florist's window, and would inhale the sharp sickening smell of the urinals in the Grand Chaumiere Restaurant.

Forgive me for verses that grate on the ear
And descriptions of stinking cess pools
But it's hard for a woman in Paris who works
And easy for a harlot who doesn't.

The finest and most tragic thing about Vladimir Mayakovsky's life was the struggle with his own songs, the hourly murder of thousands of these children, the fight against the enfeebling, sterilizing note. "I want to be understood by my country and if I'm not understood, well . . . ." Few thought of what went on when he remained alone in the cramped space of his room in Lubyansky Proyezd or in the small gloomy hotel room. The fiends of loneliness and doubt would gnaw at this strong personality that hid itself behind a mask of irony. Silence would come and whisper in his ear:

And so life passes
As once
The Azores passed . . .

And life passes and even "one's beloved wearies one sometimes" like a play to which three months of superhuman labor have been given. And the fiends of loneliness take possession of hearth and verse and dictate: "I want to be understood by my country, but if I'm not understood—oh, well,— —"

Accursed doubt rends the heart, the superhuman struggle of the lyrical poet with the political poet, of a poet who knew the secret of direct, hypnotizing, lyrical effect and refused to use it. He could, if he liked, have lulled and softened his readers with whispers and nightingale's timid sighs. But he conquered himself, held his tongue, wrote about the public baths, about baths for workers' flats and demanded of other poets that they should wash pots in the spring of life. He wanted to turn poetry into a true servant of life.

There was a great deal that irritated and puzzled people in his audacious, desperate attacks on what we had called great and eternal, but now, after the space of years we have lived through his figure has receded into time and seems irreproachable. It seems irreproachable to us just because this man was sincere and honest in his mistakes and his excesses. For him there was an insult, a challenge to the Soviet Union in the fact that cockroaches were not to be seen in Germany, that small-pox is unknown in France and that there had not been a case of hydrophobia in England for a hundred and fifty years. The Parisian carter's kindness to his horse, the politeness met with in the underground railway, good table manners, meant for him that level of external culture for which we should fight in our own country, so that we might at last get rid of the vile heritage of centuries.

When he died, leaving many people still insulted, many who had not said their last word, who had not finished their squabble with him, a kind of spell, an embarrassment reigned for a moment in literature and poetry—such a whirlpool of passions and argument had this man stirred up around himself. A moment's lull ensued in poetry while the lyrical nightingales gurgled still louder. There was no one at whom to hurl newspaper articles and catchwords, no one to cross swords with for the "beautiful white lady" of poetry. It seemed as if only this broad chest had been worthy of real blows.

I am writing these lines in a hotel by the sea. Two phonographs are vying with each other in grinding out an imported record about "banana-lemon Singapore," and a deep voice announces:

"It's Vertinsky's greatest song." The phonographs go on chewing and spitting out the sugary tune.

"I collected a hundred records in three years."

I go on writing—I am trying to go on—where was I, though?—I cannot go on because this rotten, sugary nonsense keeps dinning in my ears. Where are you, Mayakovsky? You acted like a disinfectant, killing the microbes of banality, the bacteria of self satisfaction, the petty bourgeois sleepy sickness; you attacked the life of over refinement and smashed it to pieces, the rotten sentiments of the Vertinsky lovers, the gilded, decorative bindings of the Academia editions, the illuminated letters and vignettes and all this gramaphonic pseudoculture that the petty bourgeois craves for.

You were the best of your generation. Three wars and three revolutions gave you life and reared you. You learned how to live in the street, and on the platform and in the editorial offices of newspapers, but you never learned to live among shelves of books like Massucci's novelettes and *Moll Flanders* and among His Master's Voice phonograph records.

He never pretended to be academic, a classic, the recognized head of a new school. Critics tried to serve him up cut and dried, to number him, turn him into an exhibit, a relic, but he would not give in to it, would not be cramped into card indices and portfolios.

In the winter of 1929, Marinetti arrived in Paris. We remembered him for the Petersburg winter of 1913 when he whistled, sang, exploded, thundered and painted the town red—a savage and a Futurist in evening dress and a boiled shirt. Now he had come to Paris as a member of the Academy. The Italian ambassador, and various officials from the ministry of foreign affairs and education were present at the official receptions given for Marinetti. He whistled, exploded and thundered but these were cold, damp chamber squibs. He did not even burn his fingers. His surroundings and his time had been beaten. But time retreated before Mayakovsky and he remained what he had been during those Petersburg winters—the restless, implacable harbinger of a new age.

Towards the end of his life an exhibition summing up his work seemed to have arisen by itself. And a literary evening devoted to his poetry in the Writers' Club. Not one of the officially "important people" in literature was present, and there were no writers. And in the interval Mayakovsky said with bitterness and contempt:

"So not one of our brother-writers came." "What do you mean?" said Lily Yurievna Brick, "Here's—" and she pointed to me. "But he's a friend!"

And people quite unknown to him—students, young workers—listened for the last time in strained and attentive silence to "At the Top of the Human Voice."

I entered the room of the Istria Hotel in Montparnasse. It was dark with cherry red wall paper and brown furniture. A suitcase stood open on two chairs. Linen fresh from the laundry lay on the table. Shoes from Weston's (I shall have more to say about them at the end of this story) occupied a prominent position in the centre of the room. Then there were newspapers, books and writing pads. It was a place for sleeping and writing in but not for living in. The room in Lubyansky Proyezd was just such a place, with its mean couch and writing table. He lived like the proletariat, he did not set up for himself any genteel residences with a decorative library, engravings and water colors amid a thicket of Karelian birchwood furniture. He never flattered and never intrigued and never trifled with bourgeois journalists, never gave himself out as Russian folklore for export, a tinfoil Russian psychologist, a peasant craft doll for the foreign purchaser. He was neither a calf waiting to be petted, nor a coquettish malcontent, nor by any means a soulless system, a construction, a poster, a cardboard man in a cap.

Mayakovsky had tremendous resources of strength, and unflagging energy. They sufficed for superhuman work, for literary disputes and quarrels and still there was a great deal left that had no outlet. Then the engine went working aimlessly at the card and billiard tables and even at roulette in Monaco. The canting pharisees sneezed, were indignant, reproachful, not realizing that this was not a passion for gambling, not greed, but simply the necessity for expending surplus energy. The important thing for him was to defeat his opponent, to force him to give in, it was the mobility of thought that he could show here at the card table, that was important for him, and he was tireless and virtually unconquerable at play. At five o'clock in the morning when the faces of players turn green and weariness grips their temples like a vice and for every white ivory ball on the green tables they see two—he had kept his freshness and liveliness and the desire to carry the fight to a finish. There was not a shadow of greed in the way he gathered in and paid out the carelessly crumpled notes. They were not money to him, not a measure of value of life's blessings, but

a collection of tokens lost and won, conventional counters in the game. And if a partner had not enough of these he would play for a forfeit. The loser, a puzzled melancholy artist, had to get under the billiard table and read with expression (expression was a compulsory condition) "God's Little Birdie."

One more trait of this complex character: a cleanliness that was almost a mania, cleanliness of the highest type, of the ideas, a spiritual fastidiousness that led him to avoid light conversations about women. It was this peculiar cleanliness kept him, a master of humor, from listening to anecdotes against the Soviet Government. The political jibes that came into fashion then and that even tried revolutionaries permitted themselves at times, filled him with disgust. I am speaking of his character.

The smoky, grimy Gare du Nord in Paris. The Paris Negoreloye train. A few Paris friends, a casual "seeing-off" party—not for a long journey. For Mayakovsky, a man who strode across frontiers, continents and oceans the distance between Moscow and Paris could be crossed at one leap. It was the eighth (or was it the seventh) time that Mayakovsky had left Paris. Why should he not return next spring say, in April, 1930? But on April 14th he lay dead on the floor of his room in Lubyansky Proyezd.

In the courtyard of the Writers' Club in Povarskaya the last farewell went on three days. Literary legend links it up with Rostov's War and Peace but it really belonged to the Sologub family. It was first Cheka house in 1918, and then became the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. Later it became the Palace of Art and the District Income Tax Offices and then again a literary club and the last resting place of the poet.

The people who came to look at the poet moved in an endless spiral. The dead poet lay in his coffin and Moscow drifted by him and through the courtyard to Povarskaya.

The coffin was placed on a motor-lorry, that rolled along, sometimes mingling and sometimes separating from the human mass cramped by the walls of the houses. Whenever the coffin detached itself from the crowd, the mass of people rushed after with such force that it broke through the chains of clasped human hands almost sweeping away the coffin itself. It was as if the people could not bear to give up to the flames what had belonged to them and to the town. Moscow tore through the gates of the crematorium to the closed doors. The horses of the militia reared. They looked like statues of bronze. It was a magnificent and at the same time a terrible sight—this farewell to the poet, to one of the remarkable men of our times, to the living monument of a literary epoch. His loss left a sad void in the town and the whole country, a place that could never be filled. Some could remember him as a youth in a yellow jacket, others knew him as a mature poet and orator holding an audience of thousands in the hall of the Polytechnic Museum or a factory club. Everyone knew him by sight—the cabbies, chauffeurs, charwomen, billiard markers, washerwomen and ushers. They had come to see him for the last time—he who even in his appearance had been the symbol of life, struggle, and indomitable strength.

There he lay, his heels pressing against the edge of the coffin. The soles of his boots were covered with steel studs. They were strong, hard wearing, comfortable shoes made by Weston in the Boulevard Malshérbes.

"Everlasting shoes!" he showed them to me in Paris. "Just look at that—everlasting wear!" and he tapped the steel studs with respect. He loved sound, well made things.

My eye fell now on these first of all. The "everlasting" steel studs were almost unworn. They had proved more durable than that great, strong human heart.

Walter Snow

Bank Run in Harlem's Little Italy

From the forthcoming novel, "The Magnificent Marchetti"

It was a night to stay indoors, to get out of the streets as soon as possible. The weather seemed a guarantee against such events as panic and riot. All the afternoon the sky had been a dull, leaden dome, the air damp, chilly and depressing, filled with occasional flurries of sticky snow. The big fleecy flakes whitened First Avenue only to melt immediately, leaving the pavements coated with dirty slush. With the approach of darkness, when street lights glimmered to life and a hundred gasoline flares flickered and hissed above loaded pushcarts along the curb, the temperature sank and hard pellets of sleet whipped down on the jostling market crowds. Some peddlers already were beginning to wheel away their carts.

Nina Vichi, slender young saleswoman in a radio store across the East River in Long Island City, turned up the collar of her imitation raccoon coat and hurried through the earnest, haggling throngs, worried lest the moisture cause patches of fur to come out of the two-year-old garment on which she was still making regular installment payments. She was bound to visit her mother.

Passing the marble-fronted Harlem Market branch of the Universal Trust Company, Nina noticed a score of persons were inside. The bank kept open until nine o'clock two evenings a week, catering to workers and peddlers.

A round-shouldered old woman, with a black shawl bound around thin white hair and under her chin, framing a dried apple face, stepped to the sidewalk and glanced proudly at a new figure scrawled in her bank-book. One more guarantee against old age when she could work no more, maybe enough to assure her a decent burial and a little grass plot up in the Bronx instead of a pine box and a pauper's grave. The black shawl bobbed back and she gazed at the big gilt letters on the heavy plate glass: MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM; DEPOSITORY, U. S. GOVERNMENT POSTAL SAVINGS; DEPOSITORY, STATE OF N. Y., CITY OF N. Y. In the window was a colored picture of a well-dressed aged couple sitting before a cozy fireplace and smiling at an opened bank-book.

A Thrift Account Means a Happy Old Age!
You Owe a Duty to Your Family. Save Now!
Send Your Boy Through College!

The windows were full of pictures. There was one of a jolly, portly Santa Claus, carrying a toy-loaded bag and decorated with holly, mistletoe and evergreen twigs.

Join Our Christmas Club!
Easy Weekly Payments.
Opening Now!

Over the shriveled, swarthy face spread a wan smile. Doubtless she belonged to the Christmas Club, too, having saved fifty cents a week for a year, and in four more days would receive a check for $25 with which to trim a little spruce tree in her dingy flat, load it with flickering candles, bright ornaments and glistening tinsel. The money would buy a *capitone vivo,* a big live eel—the holiday turkey for Little Italy, parmigiano cheese, a bottle of red wine, cranberry sauce, dates, figs, apples—all the

fixings for a big dinner when for once in the year there would be abundance. It would purchase presents for a little Tony, Angelina and Beatrice: a redpainted truck that could be cranked up to rattle across the floor and dump a load of sand; a little baby carriage with a bright-cheeked china doll and another big stuffed baby that squeaked and had real clothes that could be buttoned up. The money would buy a new sweater for her husband and some of the winter's charcoal. The beshawled woman glanced again at her bank-book, eyes glistening like shiny buttons, hobbled through the crunching slush and was absorbed in a crowd.

A warm glow flushed over quiet, mouse-like Nina. She also had both a Christmas Club and thrift account in the great Universal Trust Company—over in the Long Island City branch near the rooming house in which she lived. Was it not good in these critical times, when many banks crashed, to know that she and her parents had their savings in a strong institution, a member of the Federal Reserve System? Had not the State Banking Superintendent announced in the papers recently that Universal Trust would be merged with the even larger American Traders' National Bank? No reason to worry about such an institution! What would she buy for Christmas? A box of cigars for father, a pair of shoes for mother and . . .

Why, there was the Rev. Msgr. Generoso Ramondo hurrying into the bank. The fat, jovial priest of the Most Precious Blood Church whose good nature lead his parishioners to discount stories that he was too frequent a visitor at the home of that gay French widow, Madame Jules Garnot. Nina wanted to speak to the good father. Merely to say, "Good evening, Monsignor," and win the warm smile that came with the reply, "God bless you child." Nina and her mother were devout Catholics, even though her own father and younger sister were radicals. To think that her sister was a Communist! Tomorrow she must say another prayer for the poor girl's soul. . . .

Msgr. Ramondo was waddling through the great marble doorway. Nina followed. Throngs waited at the tellers' windows. The good *padre* pushed open the low wooden gate in the front office and stepped up to a mahagony desk bearing the sign: "Mr. Lombroso, Assistant Vice President." Nina noticed that some persons leaving the tellers' windows, having made deposits, turned around and joined the end of the waiting lines. That young school teacher there (what was her name now?) withdrawing her money, wasn't she a sister of the assistant teller? Why, she was receiving hundred dollar bills! Mr. Lombroso was bringing a big wad of money to Msgr. Ramondo. The good *padre* held it close to the desk, without opening a billfold, slipped it into his pocket. Mr. Lombroso and the priest were talking in low tones. The latter shrugged his shoulders. Glanced around nervously. Nina hung her head, ashamed to seem spying. She was no look-out moll of gunmen intending to rob the good *padre* of funds belonging to the Holy Church. Really Monsignor shouldn't take so much money all at once. It was dangerous . . . Strange that the bank was becoming so crowded. Must be fifty people inside.

Msgr. Ramondo rose and passed through the gate with Mr. Lombroso slapping his back.

"God bless you! God bless you!" mumbled the ruddy, florid face, nodding right and left. The assistant vice president pushed his way through the throng.

"Make room for the good Father. He wishes to deposit some money here, in this strong Federal Reserve Bank. Mr. Serpe will you take care of our dear Monsignor Ramondo? You wish to make a fifty dollar deposit, Father?"

"Monsignor Ramondo deposits fif—ty dol—lars. Did you put that down, Tony? Fif—ty dol—lars' deposit. Thank you, Father! We always like to see our old friends bringing in more money."

"I, er, I never was a man to be swayed by foolish rumors, Mr. Serpe. I know a good bank when I see one. Always like to leave my money here. It's safe from

robbers, isn't apt to get burned up or lost. Why, a man I know withdrew a hundred dollars from here yesterday. Had been listening to some dirty Communist rumor. Put the money under his mattress and it was gone this morning. Probably that Communist broke in and stole it."

"You're right, Father. A lotta thieves around nowadays. Why, Mrs. Perrelli, you aren't going to withdraw your money, are you? Surely you don't want all your savings stolen, do you?"

"But I thought I'd put it in the Postal Savings. You see. . . ."

"Why, my dear Mrs. Perrelli, the United States Government puts its postal savings money in this bank. President Hoover knows how strong the Universal Trust is. Haven't you seen our statement? More than two hundred and forty millions of dollars are behind this bank—deposits, capital and surplus. Of course you can withdraw your money if you want to do so. We've got plenty of gold here. Millions and millions! The folks who want their money are getting paid. But they're losing all their interest. You'll read about a lot of robberies tomorrow. Too bad, but most people aren't sensible like Monsignor Ramondo."

"So you think it's safe?"

"Why, certainly! Father Ramondo. . . ."

The other tellers, faces hunched close to the grilled windows, as well as Mr. Lombroso and the good *padre,* talked persuasively to people determined to put their savings into sugar bowls, bureau drawers and milk pitchers easily accessible to burglars. Mrs. Perrelli, a huge flabby woman, and a dozen others deserted the paying windows and moved towards the door.

"Why, Father Ramondo says. . . . ."

Stubborn ones remained, communicants of the Italian Presbyterian Church, a few Jews, non-believers, but the members of the Most Precious Blood flock dared not remain in line. Awed, they scuffed to the sidewalk with Nina following. Outside in the cold, sleety darkness, stretching away for half a block, was a snaky line of restless men and women. A hollow-cheeked young mother, clutching in her arms a crying baby, emerged from the bank and stared puzzledly at the waiting throng.

"Don't push!" snorted a policeman. "Plenty of time."

Old women and men deserted their flare-lighted pushcarts, giving small boys opportunities to pilfer apples and oranges from unguarded stands, and hurried to the end of the growing line. The young mother, lifting a corner of the pink blanket wrap, wiped her infant's drueling lips and scampered through the slippery slush, a decision reached.

Up the avenue came the eerie wail of a police siren. A P.D. Ford drew up beside a clam seller's pushart and four bluecoats piled out. A young Italian officer pinched Nina's arm.

"Keep movin', girlie. Don't clutter up the doorway."

Nina sidled up to the nearest pushcart, laid down a coin, opened a clam and squeezed out some lemon juice. Father Ramondo was standing on a chair outside the door now, talking in Italian.

"Don't get excited my children. The bank vaults are full of gold. Don't believe false rumors. It's an attempt of Communists to wreck a sound bank. But they won't succeed. Why, this institution is as firm as the Holy Church. Eternal as the Blessed Cross on which the Savior of Mankind was crucified. It's a Federal Reserve System bank. The Government stands behind it. . . . Oh, yes, Mr. Lombroso, the assistant vice president, asks me to announce that a dirty Communist, an agent of the Moscow atheists, has been arrested on 116th Street for spreading false rumors about the great Universal trust Company. Little good will that Judas find in his thirty Russian Bolshevik pieces of silver. Why, my dear people, this bank is as sound as the Rock of Gibraltar.

Do you want to lose interest earnings by foolishly withdrawing your money on the advice of filthy Bolsheviks? Go home, my dear friends, and don't worry. I, your priest and confessor, command you to go home."

"Bravo! Hurrah for Monsignor!"

A spattering of hand-clapping resounded, police joining in the applause. Scores of depositors deserted their places and the line, which had wound around the corner, shrunk to the length of a quarter-block. Immediately it began increasing again as more persons, who had heard the rumors, streamed from houses and stores.

What's happened? The good *padre,* bless his soul, spoke eh? He says it's safe. What d'you think, Gabriele?..... We should go home..... Well, I'm stickin'..... Bah, you haven't got any faith in the Holy Church!..... Mrs. Cuoca drew out her money and her brother works in the bank. He told her to, but she begged me not to say so ..... What d'you think?..... Me, I got stuck in the Bank of the United States crash. Takin' no chances.....

Once again the line rounded the next corner. Huddled over little figures, young girls, old men in dented derbies, shivering women with fringed shawls over their heads, painted street-walkers with fur coats and gaudy red cloche hats, mothers with children tagging their skirts. Shielding their faces from the sleet, teeth chattering, shifting uneasily, listening eagerly to each stray scrap of conversation, wanting to believe and be reassured, yet plagued by gnawing doubts. They deserted their places in twos and threes, urging others to do likewise, paused and then hurried to the end of the line again.

"Let me get in here, mister?" pleaded the hollow-cheeked mother, her blanket-bundled baby crying. "I've got to get some money for the doctor. Little Dimples is sick."

"G'wan to the end of the line!"

Father Ramondo was speaking again.

"He drew his own money out," muttered a Jewish girl at Nina's elbow. "I was in there and saw him. Took out hundred and only put back fifty smackers!"

"What's that?" snapped a burly Irish policeman, jostling forward. "We got another dirty Bolshevik here. A free love preacher. Here, youse, c'mon to the stationhouse."

The cop whipped out steel handcuffs and clamped them around the protesting Jewess' thin wrists. People broke away from the line timidly and a thousand tongues spread the latest news along the bazaar. Nina elbowed through the throng, dashed into a dark hallway beside the *Farmacia Italiana* and scampered up the creaking stairs.

Mamma Vichi, corsetless, huge breasts shaking, gray hair poking out with leather curlers like a feather duster, opened the door.

"Oh, Nina, Mrs. Grazzi was just tellin' me. D'you s'pose the good *padre* is right?"

Nina spoke hastily, snatched up a soiled corset, draped over a straight-backed chair, laced it around her stout mother and started pulling out the curlers. Pietro Vichi, it seemed, was at the East Harlem Sacco-Vanzetti Club, meeting in a comrade's flat seven blocks north on First Avenue. Mamma Vichi was to take a taxi, Nina leaving the money, and was to hurry him back at all costs. Meanwhile Nina would journey over on the subway to Long Island City, where her money was deposited. It was a long trip: three blocks west to the Lexington subway, a local to 86th Street, express to Grand Central, a run through the subterranean passages to the Queensboro tube and then another ride. She might just be able to make it.

II

Old Pietro Vichi, his battered black felt hat caked with sleet, had stood in line an hour now, moving forward hardly fifty feet. Continually shifting his weight from one foot to

another, stamping the packed wet snow, slapping arms around his body to keep warm. Beads of moisture dripped from his drooping white moustache. His breath rose in a white vapor..... Had they quit paying out money? Why had the some two hundred depositors ahead of him advanced so slowly? At first he had thought he would have abundant time to withdraw his five hundred dollars, the treasured savings of a long frugal life.....

Thirty years ago, as a young immigrant, he had made his first deposit in the bank that had become part of the Universal Trust. Week after week he had tried to put something, fifty cents, sometimes a couple of dollars, aside against sickness and unemployment, the two omnipresent, haunting fears of the masses. Several times the bank account became virtually depleted: when all his family had the flu, during three plasterers strikes, when Nina lay near death from pneumonia, between jobs. But always he had struggled and denied himself little luxuries and often necessities to build it up again. Five hundred dollars—the savings of plasters' jobs, subway pick and shovel work, furnace stoking, the spare dollars Mamma Vichi earned by washing clothes, scrubbing floors, taking in roomers. Would he have time to withdraw it? And what about the persons behind, nearly three thousand of them? Mounted police rode up and down the sidewalk, forcing the waiting line to snuggle close to the grimy buildings and snarling at pedestrians to get the hell off the sidewalk.

Across the street on the curb stood Mamma Vichi, a black shawl over her head, anxiously watching the slow progress of her husband. She was in the midst of a crowd of other wives, mothers and children, who suddenly began to fear a dark and joyless Chrismas; a throng to whom the chill wind and whipping sleet whispered sinister premonitions of fuel-barren stoves, lack of food money to tide many families over until the breadwinners found other jobs, and that most corroding disillusionment of all: abrupt loss of faith in a bulwark they had trusted so implicitly.

Well did they realize now that the tellers behind the bronze grilled windows were resorting to all possible delays to deny them their money. The few who emerged from the bank, clutching their savings, whispered that the tellers took their time checking and double-checking over each account, pausing to give each newcomer at the paying window a long lecture on the undesirability of hording money in homes where thieves could break in and steal, stalling again to thumb over every pile of bills three or four times, and then stopping to tinker with the passbook canceling machine. Furthermore the janitor dragged out a stepladder and moved the long hand of the wall clock ahead to a time that didn't correspond with a watch just set at a jeweler's window. These tales circulated from mouth to mouth in low murmurs, which died down at the approach of policeman or priest. Only Father Ramondo, his sub-priests, the Presbyterian minister and a rabbi were allowed to stroll up and down beside the uneasy human line, urging the drenched men and women to go home, out of the sleet and cold. Pleas and prayers fell for the most part on deaf ears.

For this Pietro Vichi was somewhat responsible. An evening newspaper, borrowed from another waiting depositor, had seemed to hint that something was wrong with Universal Trust. The financial quotation page showed the bank stock had dropped twenty points more, a loss of a hundred in a few weeks. He didn't know much about stocks but it seemed that Universal Trust was quoted lower than other banks..... The old training of the picket line shaped his present course of action. He urged his neighbors to pass on the word to act as though on strike, stand firm, pay no heed to the entreaties of capitalist agents, keep quiet and be sure not to provoke the police. One street car conductor, several paces ahead, talked too loudly. The cops yanked him out of line and rushed him off to the stationhouse. Disorderly conduct, resisting an officer or spreading false rumors against a bank, maybe on all three counts. This was one time, Pietro realized, when silence and discipline were all important. Ah, he could ad-

vance another step, two, three more.Three lucky devils were safe! But what was this? Two mounted policeman were riding down the sidewalk.

"Break up! That's all for tonight. Yuh can some back tomorrow mornin'. It's closin' time now!"

Pietro Vichi stared at his fat gold watch. The hands pointed to 8:30. He slipped it out of sight.

"Wotta *tempo,* time, *ufficiale?*" he asked quitely.

"Most nine o'clock. They've closed the doors. Bunch of people inside. They'll be paid off. That'll keep 'em busy 'till closin' time."

"This is after bein' a gyp," protested a young Irishman in front of Vichi. "It's only half past eight. Cripes, I came here an hour and three quarters before closin' time and I'm gonna get my money."

"Come back tomorrow! Plenty of time! Bank opens at nine a.m. Break up now!"

"Like hell! They've gotta let me in. Jeeze, I need that dough. Haven't got any work. The old gent's laid up with pneumonia. I'm gonna stay here all night."

"*Quieto,* keed," whispered Vichi, lips barely moving under his drooping moustache.

"Quiet, hell! They can't gyp me."

Up rode a thick-necked bluecoat, brandishing his nightstick.

"Break up there! All over! Go home!"

All along the line mounted cops nosed their horses into the human line and prodded the sleet-drenched pedestrians with heavy ash-sticks. The line wavered, great gaps appeared here and there, but other men and women stuck stubbornly in their places.

"Move on! Beat it!"

"I won't!" snapped the Irish youth. "You can't force us off the sidewalk."

Upwards whipped the horseman's arm, then down with a terrific sweep. The Irish youth tried to duck but moved a split-second too late. The nightstick crumpled a wet felt hat, the youth staggered unsteadily, pitched headlong and slumped down at the horse's feet. The steed neighed and pranced forward, stamping a steel-shod hoof into the youth's skull.

"Looka out there," gasped Vichi.

The nightstick cracked across his face and he reeled backwards, nose bleeding. A long-drawn out boo arose from the stragglers. "Cossacks! Brutes!" A half dozen more mounted police galloped up, striking out right and left with their billies. The human line broke in disorder. A group jammed the doorway of a locked building. Others dived for the gutter. A mother, clutching a babe in one arm and holding a boy of four by her free hand, attempted to scamper across the sidewalk to get out of the mêlée. A mounted policeman struck her across the shoulder and she pitched headlong to the wet curb, collapsing on top of her baby. The little boy stumbled, falling in front of the police horse. Old Pietro Vichi, leaning against the brick wall, holding a handkerchief to his bleeding nose, leaped forward to pick up the child. The horseman, infuriated, whipped down with his nightstick and pummeled the aged Italian. Crack! Bang! Down on his outstretched arm, down on his shoulder, slam-crack on his head. Dazed, old Vichi crumpled to the sidewalk. A steel-shod hoof crushed his right shoulder. Summoning all his will-power, he seized Vichi's coat collar and sadistically started thumping the white -haired head with a nightstick.

"You damned wop bastard! You'd resist an officer, huh? Try to poke a penknife into his horse?"

But Vichi didn't hear the curses that followed. Not until the following noon did he wake up in Bellevue Hospital, suffering from brain fever and a fractured shoulder. Meek, little Nina and plump Mamma Vichi were beside his bed. On the quilt lay a newspaper:

UNIVERSAL TRUST
WITHSTANDS RUNS
PAYS OUT MILLIONS
Seize 'Reds' as Rumor-Mongers;
5,000 Mob First Ave. Branch;
Thousands Throng Other Offices

"Millions in gold were to be rushed to the various branches of the Universal Trust Company this morning following a series of runs on eight branches of the bank last night. The great financial institution of *Commendatore* Vincenzo Marchetti successfully weathered one of the severest strains any New York bank has experienced in many months when hordes of panic-stricken. . . . ."

"It worka all righta then?" mumbled Vichi, weakly. "Da *banca* is safe? You got da money?"

"Oh, that's the early morning edition," sighed Nina shaking her dark head. "Got that at eleven last night. Was too late to get my money. Was in line at six this morning. The eleventh from the door. There were a hundred waiting by six-thirty, thousands before eight."

"Then. . . . ."

"Closing notices were posted at nine o'clock . The papers say the Clearing House Association banks will lend us up to fifty per cent of our deposits—at six per cent interest. Universal will remain closed a couple of days until the clerks check over our accounts, then we'll get LOANS. The big bankers didn't decide to give us even that until nearly midnight, last night."

"But. . . . . but Marchetti?"

"He died ten days ago from an appendicitis operation at the Sicilian Hospital. They kept it quiet. That merger plan didn't go through.

Nikolai Pogodin

My Friend

Selected Episodes from a New Soviet Play

EPISODE 5

A private office in one of the most important Soviet institutions.

The economic director and Guy.

The Economic Director: "Very glad to see you, Comrade Guy. Very. Sit down, won't you? My heartiest congratulations. What is one reprimand, anyhow? What decent director among us hasn't had at least one reprimand?"

Guy: "I wasn't reprimanded for bad management, though."

Econ. Dir.: "And you think I don't know what for? Why tell us that you are tired? We've got plenty of that sort; as soon as things get difficult they're all tired out. Why should you be that kind?"

Guy: "Sorry. Alright."

Econ. Dir.: "We're going to help you in every possible way we can. If it should happen that the trade union man hinders you—no matter if he's a respected comrade—a good comrade—we'll cancel his Party membership card and kick him out. And if Comrade Guy—a respected comrade of ours, a good comrade though he is—doesn't start the works according to the plan, we'll cancel his Party membership card and kick him out of the Party. And now tell us what you want."

Guy: "Money—gold."

Econ. Dir.: "I won't give you a penny."

Guy: "Now, listen to me — —"

Econ. Dir.: "I don't want to listen. Did you think I didn't know you were coming to see me? I knew it well. And here you are *(picks up a sheet of paper)* we've given you everything you asked for. The government and the Party is doing you the great honor of leaving you in a position of command but that doesn't mean that we're going to open the treasury to you and say: here you are, take as much as you like! It's a bad way to begin, too, asking for money straight off like that."

Guy: "I only want a small sum. Three hundred and fifty thousand rubles."

Econ. Dir.: "And since when did three hundred and fifty thousand rubles seem only a small sum to you? Eh? You millionaires! Rothschilds! And I get hauled over the coals for every hundred rubles! I get reprimanded as well as you, and I'm kept on a tight rein, too. What do you want three hundred and fifty thousand for? What did you do with the other money you got?"

Guy: "It's no use talking to you now. You won't listen."

Econ. Dir.: "I'm listening very attentively, if you want to know. What did you do with the money."

Guy: "There was a mistake about — —"

Econ. Dir.: "Aha, you made a mistake! You know what happens to people who make mistakes?"

Guy: "Yes, I know that. But I don't know whose mistake it was, ours or yours. Or someone else. We're men of action, we've no time now to go into all

that—who mixed up the numbers, and who bungled the telegrams. The point is that the fifty lathes I need at the second stage have arrived just now. The money hasn't been thrown away, no crime's been committed, but I haven't got the fifty lathes that I need for the first stage. The works won't get going without them."

Econ. Dir.: "Yes, it will."

Guy: "I may go up for trial but the works won't get going."

Econ. Dir.: "You won't go up for trial and the works will get going."

Guy: "But I have no lathes, I tell you."

Econ. Dir.: "And I've got no money. You all come strolling in here like lords! You forget that you're spending the people's money! You never consider the state plans! You think the state is a gold mine! And let me tell you we're going to keep an eye on those gentlemen that think the state is a gold mine."

Guy: "So, we're lords, are we ? I'm a lord, am I? Thank you very much, Comrade!"

Econ. Dir.: "Listen, Guy—you'd better go home . . . You won't get anything here."

Guy: "I'm not going."

Econ. Dir.: "Guy, speaking as one man to another—I advise you to go home."

Guy: "Then there's no use leaving me there as director."

Econ. Dir.: "Guy, I know perfectly well that you'll be able to get out of this mess yourself. Money only spoils people. As soon as a director gets hold of a bit of money, the creative impulse dies in him. What do we want Guy for if we're to be always giving him money, money, money? Any fool can get a factory going with money. He takes the money, buys the lathes, and starts the thing off . . . But what has the Party and the working class to do with it? Go on home, Guy, I'm ashamed of you, I declare."

Guy: "But see here — —"

Econ. Dir.: "I see — —"

Guy: "Use your own judgement —"

Econ. Dir.: "I've used it."

Guy: "Put yourself in my place —"

Econ. Dir.: "I do."

Guy: "N-no-o—I won't start the works!"

Econ. Dir.: "Then we'll cancel your Party membership card and kick you out of the Party."

Guy (At the end of his patience): "Here you are then, I give it back myself—to save you the trouble of kicking me out of the Party because I can't make bricks without straw!"

Econ. Dir.: (Rises, throws on his military coat, claps on his cap in silence and moves towards the door. On the threshold): "I never saw this, Guy. I never heard your words . . . I've shot people for words like those . . . I don't want to see anything more." *(Goes out.)*

Guy (Alone): "What the devil have I done! I've shot people for words like those too. *(Puts away his Party card.)* So it's got to that, has it!"

EPISODE 9

(Guy's office. He comes in, followed by a string of "unhappy wives.")

The dark one: "We'll not let you out of our sight now. You can just sit down and listen."

Guy: "Delighted, delighted! Excuse me—but er—unfortunately, I haven't the slightest idea who you are!"

Red-haired One: "We are Unhappy Wives!"

Guy: "Well, well, that's very touching. You are unhappy wives, and I'm an unhappy husband. Everybody's after happiness, it seems. Perhaps you'd be good enough to explain a little what all this has to do with the works I'm building?"

Dark One: "It has something to do not only with your works, but with your socialism as well."

Guy: "Is that so? Well, then, tell us all about it."

Dark One: "Yes, indeed. You needn't laugh either! Well—er—no! After all, I think I'll say my say last of all. I don't like to have to do it while the others are listening."

Red-haired One: "Funny! It's supposed to be alright for me, though, is it?"

Elderly One: "I think I'll wait, too."

Tearful One: "I don't want to be the first."

Guy: "A queue the other way round: everyone wants to be last. What are you going to do then?"

Dark One: "Then perhaps I'll stay, if the others will go out."

The Others: "Certainly—We don't want to cause you any inconvenience of course. Goodness, the impudence of some women!" *(Everyone goes out except the Dark One.)*

Dark One (With great determination): "I'm the wife of Stolbov, the engineer."

Guy: "Very pleased, I'm sure."

Dark One: "But I'm not very pleased, thanks to you. Where is my husband?"

Guy: "In Berlin."

Dark One: "How long has he been there?"

Guy: "About four months, I suppose, maybe more."

Dark One: "Four months, indeed! He's been a whole year abroad. You've torn us apart. He's married someone else over there. I know it!"

Guy: "Poor Stolbov's so lonely for you, you wouldn't believe — — Pale as anything. I saw him in Hamburg."

Dark One: "I rang him up from Moscow, and, of course, couldn't get him in the evening—he wasn't at home."

Guy: "Such a lot of work, you know."

Dark One: "We know the kind of work they do there. I rang him up next morning and asked him where he'd been the evening before and he said he couldn't catch what I said. He caught everything else, though. A good beating over the head with a galosh, that's what people get for tricks like that, Comrade Guy!"

Guy: "Beating over the head with a galosh! Who's going to get it? Me? But what for?"

Dark One: "No, not you, but Stolbov. I demand that he should be recalled at once. He's going to the bad in that sink of iniquity!"

Guy: "I can't recall him just now I'm afraid. In three months time, maybe."

Dark One: "I order you to sign this telegram—I've already worded it for you!"

Guy: "I shan't sign anything. Stolbov is studying the — —"

Dark One: "And I'm telling you that he's going to the dogs in Europe. And anyhow, what right have you to ruin other people's marriages?"

Guy: "Believe me — —"

Dark One: "I won't believe a word. You're a sadist, that's all!"

Guy: "Madam! Think of what you're saying!"

Dark One: "I don't want to say anything. But if you drive me to my grave, I'll have no mercy on you. I'll take care to remind you of my existence every day —and I'll get what I want very soon, never fear. I only came to warn you. So long—I'll be seeing you soon." *(Goes out.)*

Guy: "Poor old Stolbov. Got a terrible woman for a wife. She'll start beating me yet, I'm afraid." *(The Elderly One enters)* "Is your husband in Berlin, too?"

Elderly One: "No, he's not in Berlin, he's traipsing about the Urals somewhere. What are you doing with my poor Leonty Afanasievitch, anyhow? There he is, ruptured from birth and a bad stomach into the bargain. As if there wasn't anyone else you could send. People are beginning to make fun of me, even. 'Where's your husband?' they ask. 'In the mines,' I say. Down in the mines all winter with a constitution like his. You shouldn't be so hard on us. We're not as young as we were, and we both suffer terrible from rheumatism. Just think—who'll rub him down in the Urals? His legs are getting old now—he's no chicken. What with rupture and a stomach, and rheumatics and his age he needs a bit of comfort, surely. It isn't that we're against the Five-Year Plan, goodness knows, but you should have some consideration for us."

Guy: "Alright, I'll attend to that. I'll make a note of it, for certain. I give you my word."

Elderly One: "If you'd be so good. He's only had a week at home the whole six months. The children are getting too much for me, without him. My girl's actually started painting and powdering. Young men ringing her up on the telephone all day. Asking for Mareika—I give them a bit of my mind, but they just laugh into the telephone—I can hear them."

Guy: "We'll fetch him back then. I promise."

Elderly One: "We'd be real grateful. Have a bit of consideration —"

Guy: "I shall —"

(The Elderly One is going out, then pauses on the threshold.)

Elderly One: "I wanted to say something else but—I can't very well. You're a stranger and a man, after all —" *(goes out.)*

Guy: "Must give the old chap a rest! A sharp old lad, though. Could squeeze blood out of a stone. I'll have to give him a rest in a month's time."

(Tearful One enters.)

Tearful One: "My name's Kolokolkin. I—I—" *(breaks down and sobs, unable to speak.)*

Guy (Pouring out a glass of water for her): "Never mind, Kolokolkin isn't dead or anything. He's studying in America. He's quite well, and he'll be home soon."

Tearful One: "I haven't had a letter from him for —" *(inarticulate sobs.)*

Guy: "Oh! Damn! Excuse me, my dear! *(fumbles about in his briefcase)* Here you are! a letter from your husband—you are Kolokolkin, aren't you?"

Tearful One: "That's me—oh—his writing! His! *(Takes the letter and begins to giggle softly and then to laugh loudly. She jumps up suddenly, gives Guy a smacking kiss and runs away. The Red-haired One comes in as she goes out.)*

Red-haired One: "You think, perhaps that I'm just a common sort of woman? You're very much mistaken."

Guy: "Believe me, citizeness, I wasn't thinking of anything."

Red-haired One: "Try to understand me, let's talk as man to man."

Guy: "As man to man? Alright, I'll try."

Red-haired One: "Send me to America on business."

Guy: "Oh, I'd have to think about that."

Red-haired One: "Away with bureaucracy!"

Guy: "With bureaucracy? I'd be delighted!"

Red-haired One: "Be yourself. Open your heart. Try to understand me—as one woman another. You chased my husband about Germany for six months, buy-

ing something for you. You kept him in England for two months, buying something else for you. But you weren't satisfied with chasing him around for eight months. You actually drove him to America for fourteen months more so that he could learn to do something or other for you there. I implore you ,ring for someone, for God's sake! else as sure as I'm standing here, Comrade Guy, I'll tear every hair out of your head. I'll bite your ear clean off, I'll — —" *(She jumps up, sways, and falls to the floor in a faint.)*

Guy (Rings bell. Xenia Ionovna, the secretary, comes in): "Water, bring some water or something."

Xenia Ionovna (Calls): "Zube! Zube! here!"

Zube: "Eh-eh! Tut, tut, tut! The lady's all crumpled up. And how she laughed!— Well! *(to Guy)* All the ladies have their knives in you. You should have more consideration for people. Eh-h-" *(raises the woman's head. Xenia Ionovna rubs her temples with eau-de-cologne on a handkerchief. The Red-haired Woman comes to herself. Gets up. Goes to the door alone.)*

Red-haired One (from the threshold): "Excuse me! It's by no means funny for me!" *(Goes out.)*

EPISODE 13

The same office as in Episode 5.

The Economic Director is hurriedly putting on his military cap and coat. The telephone rings.

Econ Dir.: "Hello! No, I'm not seeing anyone today! Oh—excuse me, please. I didn't recognize your voice. I'm in a hurry just now. Am just going there—I've got my coat on already." *(Gets out a small note-book from the depths of his pockets, copies something out from it onto a separate sheet of paper. Puts the paper in his briefcase and goes out. For a while there is perfect stillness in the room. Then both the telephones begin to ring at once. Two strangers rush into the office with papers in their hands, they shrug their shoulders in astonishment at the sight of the empty room and disappear. Guy appears, dragging the Economic Director after him by his coat tails.)*

Econ. Dir.: "So you're after me again? Playing on my good nature as usual, are you?"

Guy: "Yes, that's it. You're such a meek little fellow, you are!"

Econ. Dir.: "Now don't get so excited, Guy. Sit down, won't you. Tell us something interesting."

Guy: "In the works it's hard for us to say where we have the most trouble, with our folks down below or with you folks up at the top."

Econ. Dir.: "We can't say either, Guy, where there's most trouble. You need five thousand pair of boots for your outside workers just now. You've managed to worm out an order already for two thousand pair from the man who was acting for me. I know you—you've got friends in the leather trust. And I need five thousand pair this very minute. I get telegrams—even in bed at night—from the Urals, the Donbas and the Dnieper. I need twenty-five million yards of calico for the factories in the border provinces. I need a hundred and fifty million gold tomorrow to pay for the orders given by various arteries of the state. I need a heap of aluminum the size of forty-five Sparrow Hills. I've got to run about all day and I've got my work cut out till midnight; people are waiting for me here, sending for me there, scolding me for my unpunctuality, and here you are taking advantage of my good nature, and jumping at me like a tiger on the stairs. Guy, I must say

I don't like your looks. *(The telephone rings.)* Well, we've done enough talking. *(Rises and then hesitates for a moment.)* Guy, it's very difficult, I suppose?"

Guy: "Very."

Econ. Dir.: "This lathe business, is it?"

Guy: "Yes, this lathe business."

Econ. Dir.: "Unfortunate chap! Couldn't think of anything?"

Guy: "Not a thing."

Econ. Dir.: "You're an awful crook, Guy."

Guy: "I give you my word I'm not."

Econ. Dir.: "Who'd be such a fool as to believe words? I can see by your nose that you've reconstructed those lathes. What are you staring at? You think I believe your word? Guy, you're getting downhearted. Difficult to work with these soulless bureaucrats, isn't it? They don't understand a thing about socialist construction. Thirty years in the Party and don't understand a thing about socialist construction. You ask them for money and they won't give it to you. Well, we've done enough speechifying, Guy. Now write —"

Guy: "Write to whom?"

Econ. Dir.: "To me. Hurry up! Write down what you came for and what you want—and the full amount."

Guy (Writing rapidly and talking at the same time): "I'll never forget this, never! I'll always be grateful to you—thanks ever so much."

Econ. Dir. (signing): "That's what Guy gets for being a good manager and fighting like a tiger for his factory. We know how you're doing things, we can see. You shouldn't get downhearted, Guy."

Guy: "I can't tell you how grateful I am."

Econ. Dir.: "You think I'm in a good mood today, don't you? It was the board that found the money for you. But I keep my eye on you, Guy. Your assistants there have muddled something up with the glass walls. You need imported metal for the frames. I've heard about it. You won't get a penny more from me. And what about the term fixed. Look out, else you'll get into trouble, Guy. We'll have no mercy on you!"

Guy: "Alright. Thanks for the cash." *(goes out.)*

Econ. Dir.: "I'm worried about Guy. Eh?—Yes, he makes me uneasy. This business is aging him, isn't it? Supposing he's begun to make mistakes? I must keep him in mind—*(takes out his little note book from the depths of his pocket again.)* Perhaps we should give him a rest? *(writes)* Perhaps I made a mistake, too, just now? Eh? Shouldn't have given him that money. Tired? I need a rest myself, too. Maybe somebody will remember sometime that I need a rest as well, eh?"

EPILOGUE

The curtain rises on the Economic Director. Guy comes in.

Econ. Dir.: "Good morning, director. What are you hiding from me for? Here I've come on a visit to him and he keeps away from me. You're not too well pleased, I suppose, that I've come."

Guy: "Yes, I am. Very pleased."

Econ. Dir.: "That's easily seen. I've been chasing you all over the building, but you seem to become an expert runner."

Guy: "A conjurer as well."

Econ. Dir.: "Yes, I noticed your new walls of glass and thin German steel. Its a good trick. They're good walls."

Guy: "Yes, they're alright. They'll outlive you and me."

Econ. Dir.: "Why do you look such a dirty sight, Guy? Haven't you any time to wash? Eh? Oh, I understand you quite well: the lathes have to be altered overnight, because the soulless bureaucrats won't fork out the money."

Guy: "Well?"

Econ. Dir.: "And then, when the soulless bureaucrats do fork out the money, you've got to think out some way to fool them. Responsible work, that, too."

Guy: "Well?"

Econ. Dir.: "Well, and now I'm going to give my verdict. You've fooled me, Guy. I'm very upset. I'm furious, but the state is not angry. The works have got going. Who'll get the better of whom—I don't know. But the three hundred and fifty thousand rubles belonging to the treasury remained in the safe. Congratulations and so on. Now let's speak quite unofficially. What would you like? *(After writing a few minutes.)* We beat you, but we're quits now. You got a reprimand? We shall cancel it. What else do you want?"

Guy: "What else do I want? Well, let's see. I'd like to go to the Industrial Academy to polish up a bit."

Econ. Dir.: "What? An important fellow like you? It's time you taught someone yourself—instead of studying. Well, what is it you want?"

Guy: "I'd like to go to the seaside—to Sochi, maybe?" *(laughs)*

Econ. Dir.: "You're ridiculous, Guy. Now, just tell me what you really want?"

Guy: "What do I really want? Isn't that sickening, I don't even know what I want!"

Econ. Dir.: "Poor chap! Don't you know? Well, then, I know. Pack your bag. You've got to go and take a new factory in three days' time. We're giving you a factory ten times bigger than this. What sort of a thing is this, anyhow, it only covers an area of two hundred and fifty square kilometres to build on. We know what you want!"

Translated from the Russian by Anthony Wixley

Maria Gresshöner

Zigelski Was Lucky

A Story of the Polish Peasant Worker in Germany

There are forty seasonal workers employed on the farm. Only forty out of the thousands who are brought over to Germany every year, but the others, as a rule, live just the same life as these. The farm bailiffs get their orders from the state on how to treat the seasonal workers: board, and a barrack to sleep in, and a flat rate of pay for the length of the season.

The strangers' first stop is at the Silesian Railway Station in Berlin. Here they are sorted out in batches and assigned to the various farms. These creatures come in special trains, packed in by the wagonload, like cattle. An endless succession of rye fields—that is what they see in their journey.

The barracks where the seasonal workers live are divided into two rooms. As for a lavatory, they used the share-croppers' until recently; now they have one of their own. It lies just down the hillside—a well worn footpath leads to it, cutting across the potato field on its way. On the edge of the narrow path they have planted chives and onions. The white cheese tastes too flavourless after days of it at a stretch; they get it day in and day out, before and after work. Work, sleep, and work again without a break—that is their life.

Day is just breaking when they come out of doors, men and women, one behind the other. They live together ,as there is not enough room. "These barracks are like so many beehives," says the passer-by to himself, without giving the matter further thought. The men bare their backs and take their stand under the pump, while the water courses over the bare skin. After the heat of the previous day, it is as if the skin were covered with a coating of tallow.

Then they sit down at the tables—planks laid lengthwise across some beams and roughly planed by some carpenter's apprentice.

The big blades of the reaping machine cut down the corn in great swathes. Behind it follows a file of women, gathering the corn and binding it in sheaves. The skirt of each is tucked up to the waist, forming a wadded roll around the belly, while behind, the blouse flaps loose, hanging down, like a blind, over the rolled-up skirt. The naked legs are thrust into slippers or torn leather shoes. Then comes a second file, which piles the sheaves into shocks—little tent-like erections planted at regular intervals. Weeds and flowers dry and wither. Now and then the cutter chances to turn up a nest of little naked mice—then the women scream. The talk that goes on during work is laconic. Seen from a distance, the rhythmical movements seem precise, almost military. The sweat tastes like salt water. As for your muscles—you don't notice them until you rest after work is over.

All the time a lightning-swift gliding motion from right to left and from right to left again. It seems as if the work would never stop. The wagons on which the corn is carted go to and fro, from field to farm and from farm to field, like the swing of a pendulum.

Heat like an oven. The thistles withered, the stubble hard. The grass stems are turning yellow. In the orchard the unripe fruit loses a touch of its lustre—the first maggots are at work. A clinging dust in the roadside ditches. The sand trickles back

into the fresh footmark, levelling it with the road once more. The potato plants collapse into the furrows. The scent of lupines is wafted everywhere over the countryside.

The principal meal of the day is taken in the evening. At midday the workers lie down in the shade of empty wagons or of a shock of rye sheaves. Faces are tanned. Sweat dries upon the skin in clots.

Evening comes and they go off in groups of four or five, one behind the other. The right hand of eachgraspsthe handle of a scythe or rake. So they return to the barracks.

Later on you may see them standing about before the barracks, tired out. One or two are sharpening scythes. Others seem to be drinking in the landscape, gazing into the distance with faraway eyes. They hear the great doors of the barn being slammed to; one part of the harvest has been safely gathered in. Once again they have got in the harvest and once again they have to return,in a few weeks' time, to the insecurity of their native country.

All these men have only one desire—a settled place to live in. They long for a life such as the share-croppers live. For a parlor and a bedroom where the light is dim even at midday. Just one thin slit of bright light on the floor before the windows. . . .

This was what Zigelski had longed for too, many years ago, when he first came to the farm in his days of youth and health—a seasonal worker from Galicia. Well, he was lucky. A day laborer died, leaving a job free, and he stepped into his shoes. Nothing came, it is true, of his dreams of a cottage with a wife and some cattle. But he stayed on, nevertheless. It was just as hard to earn your bread as a farm laborer any other place you went to. Then, when it was settled that he must spend his whole life in this spot he gradually took to drink. He bought rotten gin, the foul stuff that is got from potato spirits—bought it cheap, on the sly, from the workers at the distillery. His little room is next door to the distillery, and on Sundays, when he brings his dinner home, he fishes a bottle of spirits out of the chest and spends the day toping, befuddled with gin. He sits all day on the stone outside his door, in pitiful silence. Slowly, his damp musty clothes get dried in places by the sun.

What has his work brought him? Rheumatism, a stiff back, swollen knees, no money but only board and lodging—at any rate, food. And now he is numbered among those workers who cannot do a full day's work, who are just used up for what they are worth. One does not want to be encumbered with too many of such people. One or two at the most. When one takes on full-time workers in addition to the tenant farmers who help one out on one's farm, one expects them to do more work, for in the long run they become an encumbrance, just as this Zigelski has done.

Zigelski ought really to have been packed off to the workhouse before, but one day the inspector's eye fell upon a dun-colored nag—a dull-eyed beast with crooked legs and scars all over his hide. A superannuated farmhorse—it would be a pity to send him to the knacker's yard, he could still be used for light draught work. And ever since then, day in and day out, the dun horse and Zigelski have been carting stones from the fields. Not till autumn comes can you see that the stone heap at the railway station has grown larger. The wagon jolts slowly over the yard. In summer, during haymaking and harvest time, he draws up before the sharecroppers' houses at midday and takes along the basins and cans with victuals and drinks to the men in fields for their afternoon refreshment.

Always the same. The dun horse is stung by the flies; he twitches painfully, but the low vicious brutes stay where they are and suck themselves full of blood. Zigelski lays the reins over his shoulder and his head droops forward. The work is a strain on him. His feet hang limp, knocking idly against the spokes of the wheel. They are like clods of earth. The dun horse plods mechanically on his way.

In the field on the right is an old well. The tall poplars that line the road on either side do not give any shade. Some lads in dirty shirts are lying in the ditch, fagged out with the heat, pulling stalks of grass through their teeth. They jeer and laugh at him. It does not occur to them that they, too, have nothing better to look forward to. If they hold out long, they may die one day, perhaps, in a cottage overcrowded with grandchildren and grownups. For the present, they are buoyed up by some vague feeling of hope.

The ears of corn stir and rustle, emiting a scent of ripe grain. A far-off cry causes Zigelski to sit up with a start. Up there, behind the farmhouse stands a working woman; she has put her hands to her mouth and calls once more: "Wille—e—ee!" The sound hangs in the hot, almost motionless air. She is trying to get her boy to come back from the station. The children are sitting on the black and white railings, keeping watch on the track. The little local train is approaching.

Zigelski has unloaded his stones from the wagon and put them on the big pile. He nods to one or two peasants who have just got out and are looking around in search of a conveyance. He can take three or four people along with him. Of course, only halfway, as far as the crossroads, where he has to turn off to the fields for his stones.

Zigelski takes his seat just by the front wheel and gives the horse a whack with the reins. At the crossroads the peasants get off. They give him chewing tobacco or a cigar, pressing it into his trembling hand. He breaks the cigar in pieces and starts chewing it bit by bit. The acid juice makes his mouth itch, but he will bite away the pain in his toothless jaw. The old man closes his eyes and, with lips pursed up, gradually sucks back the brown liquid which is running out of his mouth. Palate and gums burn like fire.

When the wet wind of autumn sweeps over the stones, when the wagon stands like a skeleton in the stableyard, from then on until springtime Zigelski cleans out the cowsheds and sees to the wastepipes, thawing them out if they are frozen and cleaning them. Whenever he has a spare minute, he comes to seek that bit of warmth, for which his body craves, in the warm animal vapor of the cowsheds. There is no stove in his room. The pipes of the distillery, gleaming with beads of moisture, pass across the walls. The old worn-out horse-cloth which he has is greasy and does not keep him warm. Rheumatism pricks all his limbs like needles.

Sometimes he passes his hand over a protruding trouser pocket and feels the shape of a dented tin mug inside; then his eyes light up. At midday, when the janitor has shut the door, Zigelski goes into the cowshed on the sly. Pushing his way warily between Emma and Berta, two ponderous milch-cows whose udders are tight most of the year round, he takes the tin mug out of his pocket and milks it brimful. No one knows about that—it's thieving. But when your stomach is hurting you because, having no teeth, you swallow large morsels of food unchewed, and when it gets too cold out of doors, a gulp of warm fresh milk does you good. Zigelski carefully wipes away every trace of milk from his beard. His hands are like gnarled and knotted wood, and one ear, half of which he has lost by frostbite, begins to fester afresh every winter. He thaws out the waste pipes and cleans out the calfshed; then goes back to the shed just once more. That is a touching moment. The stiff limbed old man goes mumbling on his way, shoved to and fro by the unruly calves, each of which wants to suck his crooked old fingers. His eyes, overgrown with dirty grey hair, light up again. He spoils the calves, giving them fresh straw more often than is necessary. He strokes them and trembles with contentment. When the rough calf's tongue passes over the frozen hands, the hot darting pain in them is assuaged for a moment.

He gropes around for cigar ends in the rubbish pit beside the farmhouse, and then disappears—head bent, hurrying, always mumbling to himself—in the cold room beside the distillery.

That is Zigelski's good fortune. The others do not even have their own room; they know only a common form of life created by work in that invisible conveyor which is the harvest. The rich have somehow organized things so as to rob their existence of all meaning. Their native land does not give them a livelihood. Without wanting to do so, they take work away from the workers of other countries. They are exported and imported, just like the corn they harvest. Only a short summer. For these men, one day passes just like the next. It is not human beings, it is labor-power, which is pent up in these barracks. The harvest over, they are taken back to Poland and Galicia. There it seems to be always winter. Enervating autumn rains. The landscape is monotonous, the soil poor. Steppes, and the railway tracks stretching endlessly into the distance. Small straggling villages, with their squat huts. They are few and far between. Only a very few have railway stations—stations where little ragged children beg what they can from a passing peasant or a tight-fisted school-teacher. The priest leaves nothing for them; besides his rosary, he only carries money with him.

The spring storms—"Carpathian winds" is what the Polish peasants call them—are the first thing to bring new life. An official comes and sorts out the workers for the new season. The new season is the German rye harvest.

The first fertilizer for the harvest is the cheap sweat of those who never reap its fruits. The earth is not fruitful for those who till it with such trouble. The grain which comes pouring out of the threshing machine into the sacks, is new seed and . . . ready money. Both elements pass through the great gnarled hands of the workers. They throw the corn into the threshing machine, hang the sacks below, weigh them when they are full and stack the straw, the cut corn stalks which no longer murmur in the wind. As for the further destiny of the grain, that will be decided on the Exchange—not in the way that mankind requires it, but in the way the rulers, the profit-makers, require it.

Translated from the German by H. Scott

Jack Conroy

Hoover City [1]

A Story of the Unemployed by an American Worker-Writer

Nights were still cool, especially where the concrete highway swooped down into a small valley or skirted a lake or river. We could feel the cool air rushing against the windshield and tempering the fever of the Chevrolet's laboring engine. On the upgrade the pistons pounded alarmingly. The car lunged spasmodically if we attemped to slow down. We knew that the spark plugs were badly fouled, but we were too weary to scrape away the carbon which accumulated so rapidly. Ed sat stolidly at the wheel with his right foot clamped on the accelerator, his left one hovering over the brake and clutch pedals. We knew our gas was running short, and—what was worse—we had no more money—no negotiable property of any kind. An involuntary intermission in our homeward journey seemed imminent.

Sleek limousines zipped by us, honking superciliously at our difficult progress. They passed by us in a flash of light, their non-skid tires whining as they gripped the slab, their ruddy tail lights gleaming but an instant before they were out of sight. Through the small sleeping towns we sped. After midnight, most of the streets were deserted, but all night filling stations loomed jewel-like in the dark. The attendants sat reared back against the walls of their kiosks or appeared at their doors, yawning with arms stretched above their heads as our Chevrolet shattered the peace of the hours just before dawn. In the open country we could hear dogs barking around farmhouses far afield when we shut off the rackety motor to coast down a hill.

The car began to sputter and we knew that we couldn't go much farther. When the engine faltered on a rise I instinctively leaned forward in the seat to help push.

"Give 'er all she's got!" I shouted to Ed.

"If I tromp any harder, I'll run my leg through the footboard," he assured me grimly.

We reached the crest of a hill none too soon and saw the lights of a city winking across a river below. The East was flushing rosily as we swooped down toward the bridge, Ed having prudently turned off the ignition switch. In the sudden quiet we could hear steaming water gurgling in the radiator like the death rattle in a dying man's throat, or the rush of the wheels and the squeaking of the chassis. The engine spat out a feeble cough or two when Ed threw it in gear at the opposite side of the bridge, the car made a gallant leap, bucked weakly a few times, and died.

"We're through now, all right, all right!" Ed said resignedly as he climbed stiffly out and stood ruefully kicking the front tires.

It was getting lighter and along the river bank to the left we could dimly make out an apparently interminable expanse of rusting tin, tar paper, low sheds, and grounded houseboats. We thought at first it must be a tangle of debris washed ashore, but gradually the nebulous units assumed definite shape, fell into ordered rows. The farther end of the collection of huts was obscured in the morning mist off the river. One of those little winds that accompany dawn shook the fallen billboard forming the roof of one of the shacks. The billboard displayed a shapely feminine leg and admonished spectators to take a good look at the bottle of soda pop standing nearby.

We pushed the lifeless Chevrolet from the pavement and guided it to rest beside the first hovel. "Welcome to Hoover City. Two Car Garages. A Chicken in Every Pot."

[1] A name ironically given to makeshift living quarters of the unemployed while Hoover was president. Also called "Hooverville." Now generally renamed "Roosevelt Roosts."

read a roughly painted sign nailed to a post. Then we knew we had found a colony of the dispossessed such as were springing up in every industrial center as factories closed, savings dwindled, mortgages were foreclosed, and banks crashed.

Packing crates, bits of tar paper, tin advertising signs, discarded automobile bodies, ancient delivery wagons, and small houseboats dragged up from the river had been fashioned into homes. Some of them had glass windows with dingy curtains, but most of them were designed for shelter and nothing else. The owners had ceased to be particular before they finally were reduced to Hoover City. A hound slunk from behind one of the huts, sniffed our heels inquiringly, threw back his head and howled lugubriously. Then a greybeard thrust aside a flap of rotting carpet and emerged from the hut. He called sharply to the hound, gawped noisily, and blinked his pink-rimmed eyes at the rising sun. His toothless jaws stretched wide in a yawn. He set to scratching vigorously on his chest, under his arms, and reaching for the inacessible regions of his back.

"Good morning, mister," Ed greeted him. "Looks like you got quite a town started here. Don't suppose a man could *buy* a job around here, could he?"

"A job! A job!" the old man cackled derisively. "Jobs went out o' style, son, two years ago. Most folks in Hoover City has forgot they *ever* had jobs."

Then he paused reflectively, looking Ed over from head to foot.

"You look like a bull, though," he resumed. "Jesse Gillespie jist got a job at sand hoggin' in the river. A man can only stay an hour or so at a time. Then sometimes you keel over or twist up with the cramps. It's a nigger's job, but times has got so hard that the white men is chasin' the niggers away and takin' the jobs theirselves. Most of the men in this fair city here has got so g'ant they got to stand twicet t'make a shadder. They got bellies wrinkled up like washboards, and they can't cut the mustard on a sand hoggin' job."

We knew how sand hoggers were lowered in hollow tubes to the bed of the river, how they dug frantically at the wet sand for a while, and then had to be hoisted to the top again. We weren't so well nourished ourselves but we were bound to get home somehow.

"I can stand it—for awhile, anyway," said Ed resolutely. "Where does Jesse live?"

"In the next to the last bungalow on this side of the street."

The old man was bare-footed. He sat down and began to pick mud from between his toes.

Snores or the whimpering of babies sounded from some of the shacks as we walked along. Towsled heads popped out, withdrew hastily, or regarded us with hostility tempered by curiosity. We could hear people moving inside the shacks, muttering voices, the smell of smoke and cooking pervaded the air. Already clouds of flies were wakening to life, for garbage lay everywhere—in the street and behind the huts.

When we reached the shack designated by the old man, we thoughtlessly pulled aside a canvas strip masking the doorway and stepped within. In the faint light we saw a heavy, bearded man sprawled across a pallet of filthy blankets. His boots were still on his feet ,and damp sand clung to the soles. Beside him lay a frowsy woman suckling an infant. The woman seemed to be asleep, but the baby rooted away avidly at her breasts. The women's thin legs were bare and mottled with varicose veins. The baby turned its head and allowed the teat to slip from its lips with a smack which startled us. Its eyes searched us fearfully and it wailed gently. The mother stirred in her sleep and thrust the teat back in the baby's mouth. Ed and I shook off our inertia and retreated precipitately. It seemed to us we had done something shameful. The squalid interior with its rude stove of bricks, the sleepers on the ground, all filled us with mingled terror and horror.

"Oh, we oughtn't to have done that, kid!" Ed whispered hoarsely. "Someway it didn't seem like that was a house for a human, did it? More like a barn or a hog pen. Most

hogs got better pens than that, eh? We didn't have no right to walk in there like a big horse!"

"Jesse! Jesse!" the woman within called shrilly. "They's been somebody in here! I *know* it! I can *feel* 'em!"

The man growled unintelligibly, but almost instantly he appeared at the door. He glowered at us, his fingers rasping through the matted stubble on his face.

"Was it you jist in here?" he challenged belligerently. "If you was, I don't see what you calc'lated t' find, unless you figgered on rapin' my old woman."

"We wanted t' see about the sand hoggin' job," Ed spoke up. "Whether they're hirin'. We gotta have a job."

"They'll hire a man in my place, I guess," Jesse responded sullenly. "I'm one man that ain't a bit picayunish about what I do, but when I got to have my guts twisted up like a corkscrew, when my head aches like it would split, when I can't even undress of a night I'm so tard, I'll try a little starvin'. I'm not goin' back. They can take the job and go to hell with it for all of me. It's two miles down the river if you want to find out about it. I'm gonna sleep for three days hand runnin'."

As we made off we heard him plop suddenly on his pallet.

We felt almost cheerful as we plodded along the river bank. The sun had risen warm and the water dimpled and shimmered. Motor boats darted here and there, sending miniature breakers lapping against the shore and throwing white spray. Hell divers slipped quietly beneath the surface to pop up far from where they dove.

The boss of the sand hogging crew was addressing a group of white men: "You needn't chase the niggers away no more, men. Get me right. I ain't no nigger lover. I come from Peachtree, Georgia, where niggers step off the sidewalk and take off their hats when they see a white man comin'. I tried my best t' use white men, but they play out on me. So I gotta use the niggers. No more white men."

When we returned, the inhabitants of Hoover City were returning from their morning foraging expeditions to the commission houses and the garbage cans. They salvaged overripe bananas, half-rotten potatoes, stale bread, wilted lettuce and cabbage.

"Do you know what the chain stores are doin'?" a ragged crone exploded. "They're pouring coal oil over the stuff in their garbage cans so's we can't eat it. Sometimes you can find a loaf o' bread that ain't soaked, but all of it tastes and smells like coal oil."

We were so hungry that we accepted the greybeard's invitation to join him at breakfast in his hut. The *menu* consisted of slightly decayed bananas, but we gulped them down voraciously, spitting out the spots that were too sour. The den was more dismal than Jesse's. The greybeard's couch was a pile of moldy straw flung in a corner, and the room contained nothing else. It smelled like a dank cellar. Yellowish oat sprouts were rearing out of the damp earth beneath the straw.

"It's a wonder you don't die of rheumatism," Ed marvelled commiseratingly as he frugally nibbled a banana skin.

"I do have it pretty bad in my joints," the old man answered. "Look at the knobs on my fingers. My knees and elbows gets the same way. But it's heaven now to what it was last winter. I like to 've froze more times than one and I praised God to see Spring come again."

The population of Hoover City grew daily. Emigrés from the city arrived with some of their possessions saved from the wrecks of their homes. Others came in empty-handed. A preacher drifted in and rallied enough modern Jobs to erect a church which was slightly more pretentious than the dwellings.

Ed and I kept scouring the city for some odd job. The police harried us and made us keep moving. The told us not to hang around the employment agencies and not to panhandle. The sluff dished out at the soup lines made us sicker than the garbage off the dump. Besides that, somebody was always trying to save our souls.

Finally we found a man who was willing to pay us four dollars to unload a car of gravel. More than once I sank to my knees on the harsh rocks, my head pounding. Our hands were soon lacerated and burning.

"A man needs something that' ll stick to his ribs on this kind of a job," Ed gritted. He shoveled faster and I felt ashamed of myself and staggered to my feet. When we had dug a hole to the bottom and could shovel from the floor, the going was easier. Still, when we tottered to the side of the car with the last pebbles, we sank down inside the car and lay for an hour without moving or speaking.

We had hired the greybeard to watch the car that day, for we were afraid somebody might strip it. We found him dozing luxuriously in the front seat, for it was a great deal more comfortable than his bed of straw. Our muscles grew stiffer, but we were determined not to wait till morning. We were inspired with an uncontrollable desire to leave the place. We carried gas and oil from an adjacent filling station and rejoiced to hear the engine throbbing again. We headed into the glittering maze of neon tubes and street lights. Below and behind us night was blanking out Hoover City. As we chugged along past the smart shops and dawdling crowds it seemed to us that the rouged and bedizened city was flaunting her affluence before the anguished eyes of her sister sprawled beside the river. We were in such a hurry to get away that we had forgotten to clean the spark plugs, but the lurching motor reminded us of it before we'd traveled very far. We pulled the car to the curb and scraped the plugs, then we headed West again. A hot dog stand reminded us that we had not eaten since our breakfast of apples which had been too mushy for the retail trade.

Joseph Kalar

Nothing To Lose

As piles of sand disintegrate when sucked
by the wet urgent tongue of the sea—
as one about to die finds life escaping
like rush of air from a punctured tire— —
as a house gnawed by red teeth of flames
falls at last to ashes and ashes— —
so now the land we love, comrade,
so now the dreams we dreamed,
so today and all the hours . . . .

Hunger is with us.
Factory smoke is sour
with the memory of work
to be done
and a wild look in the eye:
no work today, buddy, no work . . . .
Hunger is with us, it is a rodent
that chews flesh from us
that drops dung on our joys
that dogs our steps blackly
a shadow you can't outrun,
hunger is waiting,
hunger loves you,
hunger is with us, brother.
O now the grease will surely
leave your fingernails
and cinders will surely
leave those eyes alone
for a wild look in the eye:
no work today, buddy, no work,
no, no work, no work, buddy,
the old system
can't squeeze out another job for you,
can't find a loaf of bread for you;
that for you, brother,
a fig for your pains,
a sneer for your love
and spittle on your dreams.

Nothing to lose anymore,
gone now the lies
the beautiful lies
the red white and blue lies,
nothing to lose anymore, comrade,
nothing to lose now but your chains.

This is a new day, brother,
come gird your loins with me,

spit on your hands— —
(no more time for dreams)
a big job is waiting
hard work needs completion— —
a big job is waiting
and is tired of waiting,
for men like you, brother,
who find Hunger a comrade
with a lean embrace— —
and for you too, brother.
with smoke in your eyes
and grease on your nails
and a paycheck smaller and smaller
and hours that seem
never to end
and a boss that demands of your strength
till it seems to snap— —
a big job for us today
a big job for us today
Nothing to lose anymore, comrade
nothing to lose but our chains.

Don't you remember the days
that left us rotting with sleep
and we lay as one etherized
thinking that dreams could last?
don't you remember the days
when that flag meant something
and the blood thrilled
to the red white and blue?
Listen, comrades, have you forgotten
the lies we embraced,
the lies that offered us dugs
full of milk
to soothe our anger
and embalm our wisdom?
Have you forgotten, comrade,
the finger of scorn we pointed
at comrades who shook us from sleep
and told us a big job was waiting
and sang the wonders
of the workers' fatherland?
Gone now, all gone, brother,
gone now the lies
the beautiful lies
the red white and blue lies— —
nothing left us but this hunger
nothing left us but this hate
nothing left us but these hands
and a job that's tired of waiting . . . .

Nothing to lose anymore, comrade,
nothing to lose but our chains!

4 DRAWINGS FROM TADJIKISTAN

Pioneers Going to School—(Boldjuan)

Coming for Cotton—(Kungurt)

BY LOUIS LOZOWICK

At the Gates of the Pamir: Taking sheep to Pasture—(Garm)

Red Tea House—(Tchai-Khana)

S. Tretyakov

Words Become Deeds

The Press and Books in the Soviet Union

A few object lessons in dialectics.

Huge steam cranes, locomotives, monster rolling mills bow their steely knees before the bubbling kettle of James Watt. The lid spurts and rattles garrulously, irritatingly, like an old woman. The steel elephants snuffle respectfully. They are her metalic great grandchildren. She is the great grandmother of the giants of modern industry.

In a Leningrad museum stands a little old leaking boat. Any one of the steam launches fussing about the leviathans riding the waters could blow her to bits with a blast of its siren. But this rotten little craft is wrapped in an air of historical respect as if in cotton. It is the boat of Peter the Great, beloved of the story-tellers as the Father of the Russian Navy.

In Wood Street, in Moscow, not very far from the Butirsky Jail stands a Caucasian fruit stall, with a sign written according to the old style.

If you climb over the counter ,go down the cellar and down the well that stands there, you will find, by groping, a square hole in the wall of the well. You crawl through this on your stomach and arrive in an empty space hollowed in the ground. A few red bricks from the foundations of the house show here and there .There is not even room to swing a cat. A little printing press stands here.

This little hole was the secret printing office of the Bolsheviks of the 1905 period. It was never discovered by the Tsarist police, now it has been restored to its former state and has become a museum.

In the glass cases lie appeals and magazines of an extremly explosive nature. This press, standing forgotten underground, has full right to call itself the great grandmother of the Soviet press of today.

What is a Soviet newspaper? The total circulation for all newspapers in tsarist times was five million. Today the country swallows up 35 million copies. In a single gulp.

When a delegate is being elected it is usual in the course of his biography to ask—what education have you had?

A newspaper education—replies the candidate, in place of the usual high school, university, or technical.

There are 6,775 newspapers in this country. It very rarely happens that a district does not possess its own paper. I once brought back from my travels abroad a copy of a provincial *Wurstblatt.* I placed it side by side with the local district paper. In the latter there were, it is true, no advertisements on how to improve the bust, but there was a great deal of information on repairing tractors for the spring sowing campaign. It contained no verses by pious octagenarians usually old women acknowledging birthday congratulations, but it had a description of the awards received by shock brigade women tractor drivers. There was no lyrical feuilleton on the druggist's silver wedding, but plenty to be said about the disorder in the creches attached to the collective farms. No notes on some prince's doings in a fashionable health resort but an account of the useful minerals discovered in that district by tourists from the League of Communist Youth.

In the advertising section of the foreign paper there was a lot of market news, a great number of music hall advertisements in the amusements and art sections ,a great many lurid murders in the news section and a lot of gossip in the section devoted to politics.

Unpleasant facts were either weeded out, or placed under accidents—"accidents that have no consequences."

The Soviet newspaper is truth, active truth, stubbornly reconstructing the world. There are a huge number of newspapers in the Soviet Union called *Pravda (Truth): The Young Communist's Pravda, The Pioneer's Pravda, Leningrad Pravda, Proletarian Pravda, Collective Farm Pravda,* and scores of others called after different places and fields of activity.

The word *Pravda,* is not merely a name, it is a slogan, a program for Soviet literature in general. If a cartoonist was to draw the plain folk of tsarist times, he would be perfectly correct in picturing him with a bottle of vodka sticking out of his pocket. Nowadays this pocket is occupied by a newspaper, which has become as indispensable to the man as his purse, his box of matches or his handkerchief.

How many people take part in the preparation of one number of a bourgeois newspaper? Scores.

But hundreds if not thousands of pens go to the writing of the worker correspondence and village correspondence columns of a single number of *Pravda.* Every corner of the Union has its worker correspondent of *Pravda* or village correspondent of *The Peasant's Newspaper.*

The liquidation of illiteracy—this is the first examination that has to be passed in order to gain the distinction of being called a Soviet social worker.

The far reaching influence of the written word broadens infinitely the primitive, family horizon of the former "man of the spoken word."

The second examination—is the first letter sent to the wall newspaper—the pen at the service of society.

Every moment the best, the most talented, the most energetic of what was formerly called the "lower strata" sweep forward. Those who were only yesterday ignorant and obscure have become today the leaders ,scientists and teachers in the country that is crying out for even more and more millions of educated people.

The worker correspondents form the first rung in the ladder of advance.

I was working in the editorial offices of a collective farm paper. I saw the process with my own eyes. The people we needed were all around me, honest, sprightly, energetic collectivists in the cooperatives, brigades, in the schools and the village soviet.

Where do we get them from? From the growing ranks of the village correspondents.

A man has only to send four or five letters to the paper before he is already put on to social work and is soon up to the neck in it. And for me, the editor, it only remained to go once more into the thick of the masses and encourage these new folks who had kept silence so long, to urge them on to take up the pen.

Even if it were possible to count the printed newspapers including those issued by factories, Soviet-farms, mines, quarries, fisheries, etc, it would be unthinkable to count the hundreds of news sheets turned out on the mimeograph machines and house presses. And the innumerable wall newspapers in houses, workshops, on steamships, trains, airships, submarines, down mines, on prison walls and in kindergardens.

2

Union House in Moscow was formerly the exclusive club of the Moscow aristocracy. Pushkin loved this hall. Young Leo Tolstoy went to dances there. After the Revolution the trade unions entered it. It was in this hall that Lenin lay dead. It has seen a great many conferences and meetings in the last 15 years.

Now the hall is a meeting place for books. They have come from everywhere. They speak all languages.

Tsarist Russia knew only 22 printed languages, but she used them mainly for printing bibles.

The Soviet Government has given 51 nations a written language and a press of their own.

Ukrainian literature sails a powerful ship into the middle of the hall. Opposite to it along the wall there are books in the White Russian language, in Yiddish, Georgian, Uzbek, Tartar—but these are all tongues that we know. There are other books in the Touva, Shora, Nentsk and Yuitsk languages. Touva and Shora are places situated on the upper reaches of the Yenissey. The Nentsi are the folk formerly called Samoyedes, who inhabit the districts between the Northern Dvina and the River Pechora, the Yuiti are the Eskimos from the Tchukotsky coast.

Make haste for the voices of other nations can be heard in the land—they speak in the Itelmen tongue, the Aventsky, the Tungan, the Uigur, Mansi, Nanai, Nymylan tongues and there are more and more of them. The number of languages spoken in the Soviet Union is 73.

From the pre-revolutionary five million copies of Gorky's works we have jumped to twenty-two and a half million. Eight hundred and forty million copies turned out by all the presses in 1931; compare this figure with the hundred million in 1913. And then take the publication of church books—1,800 in 1913 dropping to 100 in 1927 and to zero in 1931.

The table issued by the Institute of Statistics in Pictures shows several groups of four people. They have books in their hands. In 1913 it appears, there were three books to every four persons, in 1927 there were six and in 1931 the figure had mounted to 21.

Whoever has been in Moscow knows how crowded the tramcars are. Yet everyone can remember seeing earnest folk propped up in the weirdest poses, reading books.

A thoughtful writer has said "people read in the train because it is dull, and in the tramcar because it is interesting."

In 1913 we consumed only 87 thousand tons of paper in the whole country. Two thirds of it was imported. And yet it was sufficient not only for us but for Poland and the Baltic provinces as well.

Now we use 675 thousand tons of paper, none of it imported. But it is not enough.

The active reader of the paper becomes a correspondent of it—a worker correspondent.

The active reader of books is drawn to writing.

A few figures. In February 1932 the writers' bureau for beginners from the collective farms began to work. In February 10 manuscripts were sent in, two were printed. In June—105 manuscripts were received and 25 printed. In September 165 of which 35 were accepted.

Some little books stand in a modest pile in a corner of the hall. They were written by shock brigade workers—accounts of their campaign for "honor and glory" on the field of the Five-Year plan.

One of the books was written by a whole group of railway workers—200 people. And the echo of their modest words rings out in new editions and a huge circulation of seven million sheets. Here the printed word is a toiler, with his sleeves rolled up. Here the pen is the brother of the tractor and the lathe. Here the only words that are bad are those that have nothing to do with deeds and those are bad which have not been made permanent in words .

Jef Last

The Urals

Impressions of a Dutch Writer

Our brigade of foreign writers travelled to the Urals, but before starting on the journey I asked myself: what do I really know about the place where I am going?

From my school geography I retained in my memory a general conception of the locality:-

Urals - mining region on the border of Asia and Europe; principal town, Yekaterinburg.

I also possessed some more or less hazy information culled form *The Earth and its Peoples* - a few ideas about muddy unpaved roads, wooden sidewalks, gloomy dwellings, peasants in bast shoes, and girls in red kerchiefs eternally munching sunflower seeds. .. .

Besides this I knew, of course, that big mills and factories were now being built here, and that the blast furnaces of Magnitogorsk - about which I was told by our Dutch motion picture director Ivens who has worked there—are a marvel of technique.

Nevertheless I had a rather skeptical attitude towards technical marvels, for those which I had seen in America, Germany, or England, meant in the majority of cases only the increased exploitation of the workers.

Well, we arrived in Yekaterinburg, now called Sverdlovsk. Alighting on the railway station I did see some peasants in bast shoes and some girls munching seeds. Our auto tossed on a poorly paved road from the station, and in some of the streets we saw shabby wooden houses. So far everything seemed to tally.

But all of a sudden our auto turned around the corner and I had the surprise of my life. We were passing through the newly built Lenin Boulevard, with its tramways and arch lamps, with its monumental buildings decorated with red banners, with its modern dwellings for workers, with the grand statue of Sverdlov.

When a Dutchman gets a sudden shock and words fail him he starts swearing. And the greater his surprise the more he swears. That is what I did. I began to swear in most vigorous fashion, and I feel like swearing again for the very same reasons. First, because I feel that I shall never succeed in a short sketch to describe what I experienced there, in the Urals.

Second, I have no patience with those thousands in Holland who, even if I write a whole volume on the subject, will never believe me, or want to believe me about the things I have seen there.

Yet, was there anything extraordinary in what I saw in Sverdlovsk? Did I not see boulevards in Berlin, in Paris, or in Brussels?

Of course, I saw boulevards there, with luxurious autos speeding over the shining asphalt, and whenever an automobile halted, there was an unemployed man standing with his hand stretched out, begging.

Splendid goods were displayed in the shop windows; outside the Theatre de Variété was a display of photographs of nude women and under the arch-lamps prostitutes were soliciting - both men and women with painted cheeks and lips.

I saw a different boulevard in Sverdlovsk. No diamonds in the shop windows, no photographs of nude women, no prostitutes on the curb, and no lines of unemployed before the labor exchanges.

Here you can see in the streets only employed workers, hundreds and thousands of them, and there is an acute shortage here of man-power to do the work in hand. In the course of two years or so a great modern city has emerged from the wooden shanties and muddy roads; it took barely two years to build this sky-scraper, this hotel, this school, factory, university, library. They are still at it, laying asphalt roads and sidewalks, putting the finishing touches on new buildings.

Water and sewerage pipes are being laid; there are only temporary electric wires hanging; in the woods tractors are moving away the stumps of felled trees in order that a new building might rise upon the cleared spot within a month or so. Everywhere we saw more houses under construction than those finished and under roof.

Such was the first impression, quite unforgettable for one who came here fresh from Western Europe, where factories are closed, builders are out of work, and ships are laid up, an impression of incomparable energy, of the hustle and bustle of creative work, of a revolution which indeed did not leave a single stone unturned, which has worked such a complete transformation in a couple of years that, standing now in the streets of Sverdlovsk, one cannot believe that this is the site of the old town of Yekaterinburg. It seemed as though the whole of the Urals had been torn open by a great earthquake, and out of the open craters had burst forth, not boiling lava, but blast furnaces ,factories, and cities; as though we were witnessing the rapid change of scenery upon the stage, with the curtain rolled up. The general impression was such that one should not buy a plan of the city because it would be completely transformed in a year.

However, such were our impressions in every new Soviet city that we visited. We were so impressed by Sverdlovsk because we had not yet seen Magnitogorsk, or Cheliabinsk, or the huge construction going on in the steppes around Nizhni-Tagil.

One has to use superlatives here, and even the American term of "largest in the world" proves inadequate when applied to the construction work going on in the Urals. It strikes me that, upon establishment of proper communications, the Urals might enter into socialist competition with Mars!

Exaggerated admiration? Well, let the facts speak for themselves. It suffices to say that at Magnitogorsk where two years ago, in 1929, there was not a single stone, nor screw, nor lever, nor bolt, to-day are working the world's two largest blast furnaces which turn out together thirty times the quantity of iron produced by the seven furnaces of the Ukraine; that a city has sprung up there with 165,000 inhabitants; that the industrial plants occupy already an area of 54 square kilometers; that a dam has been built of a length of one kilometer; that the two power stations are already yielding 143,000 kilowatts; that 22 new open hearths are being built, and that the 8 batteries and 69 ovens of the coke works are producing 2,750 tons of coke annually.

Add to this that all the material for these plants was carried over a distance of 250 kilometers on the newly built and only railway branch line, and that those now working on the most up-to-date machines are peasants who a few months ago tilled with a primitive plough and could read nor write, and perhaps then even people in Holland will understand that something indeed has taken place here that is without parallel in the history of the world.

Nevertheless, Magnitogorsk is only one link in the chain; mention has to be made also of the Ferrostroi of Cheliabinsk, of the plant which will turn out 40,000 tractors annually, of the huge chemical works of Berezniki, of the gold and copper mines of the Urals, of the dynamo works, coal pits, and thousands of other enterprises under construction. It may also be added that all these are items that were subsquently added to the Five-Year Plan.

To him who hears this, it will sound like a fairy tale. He who will see it, as we did, will feel the urge to write about this, not a short article, but a whole book — a book that might become a heroic poem of our epoch, a new and better *Illiad* of the human race. Even such an *Illiad,* such an Epic, not about the conquest of Troy, but about the mastering of technique by one the most backward peoples would not tell the whole story.

A tremendous transformation has taken place not only in the industrial aspect of the Urals, but also in the life and labor of the workers.

Just take a glance at the row of miserable village huts along the railway line, with a hole in the roof instead of a chimney ,and then glance at the new house built of concrete, with central heating, electric light, water and sewerage, with spacious dining halls, clubs, and libraries.

Behold the former gardens of the bourgeoisie turned into parks for the workers; the theaters, cinemas, and palaces of culture, to be found in even the smallest town.

In a country that was ruled by the knout there is now the sevenhour day, the five-day week, one month's vacation annually, and even longer, with sanatorium treatment in the case of sickness, four month, vacation for child-bearing, free medical service, free nurseries and homes for children, free rest homes, free laundries, and so on.

Model villages — garden-cities of the type of Felix, Storn, or Van-Kelle, which constitute isolated phenomena in the capitalist world — are common phenomenon here in Nadejdinsk, Perm, and Sverdlovsk.

The most progressive social legislation in the whole world, the best protection of labor, the best possible conditions for cultural development.

But the most striking contrast between technical progress in the capitalist world and in a socialist country is in the status and position of labor. Labor under capitalism is a curse. The worker sells his labor-power for a miserable pittance to the capitalist employer.

In the Soviet Union, says Comrade Stalin, labor has become a matter of honor, valor, and glory.

On reading this you might shake your head and say that it is merely a pretty phrase.

Coming from Western Europe, your imagination is not struck by these word.

Gradually, however, the meaning of these words becomes clear to you.

You pass through one factory after another, all the factories are in festive attire, decorated with flags and posters.

On the walls you see papers published by the workers themselves; you read the satires and jests about lazy and scamping workmates. You see in the factory the Lenin Corner, the bookstall and reading-room.

You visit the meetings of the factory council, of the literary circle, of the Party and Komsomol organization.

You read the competition contracts drawn up between departments of a factory, between factories, or between cities.

But, above all, you speak directly with the people.

You speak with the stoker who has become a director of a huge mill; you speak with the former kitchen-maid who now has charge of educational matters, or with the fomer servant-girl who is now the secretary of the Party branch. You speak with an engine fitter about Gorky and Pushkin, with a mechanic about Romain Rolland and Upton Sinclair, with a plasterer about the recognition of Manchuria, with a "pioneer," about the children in Holland.

You meet men and women here that will not be found anywhere else. The people here are imbued with an ardent desire for culture and knowledge; they are proud of their work and of their country; they realize their power and possibilities; they

are constantly conscious of being the masters of their country, of working for themselves, for their children, for the future communist society.

Of course, there are also other people here.

There are backward, disgruntled, religious, counter-revolutionary elements.

There are seamy sides to life.

There are difficulties of which frequently we have no idea. There are also failures and mistakes.

No one conceals them; it seems rather that they are pointed out to you before you have noticed them.

It is in the light of these difficulties, failures and mistakes, that one realizes what has been achieved here by the class which used to be despised and downtrodden, which seemed to be doomed perpetually to live in the backyards of life, until it took power into its own hands and began to build the new life.

Nor long ago a friend wrote to me naively from Holland: "Is it true that everybody who visits the Soviet Union comes back an enthusiast?"

To this I replied: One is bound to become enthusiastic, seeing with his own eyes the building of Socialism.

This I wrote before visiting the Urals.

Were I to write my reply now, I should have written: One is bound to become enthusiastic, seeing that Socialism lives already in the hearts of thousands of people, in the ardent devotion of the Komsomol, in the steeled determination of the shock brigades, in the firm policy of the Party under whose guidance the new world is being built.

We saw the Urals. It is no longer the boundary line between Asia and Europe; it has become the boundary line between the old and the new world, between the past and the future; it has become the steel foundation for a new generation, the iron wall of defence against all the enemies of Soviet Russia, an invincible bulwark on which all its foes will break their heads.

If any further proof be needed as to the technical, cultural, and moral superiority of Communism over Capitalism, I shall now have to use no lengthy phrases, but merely to answer my opponents with just one word—"Urals."

Langston Hughes

Moscow and Me

A Noted American Writer Relates his Experiences

"If you can't carry from New York, then buy in Berlin. Everything: Canned goods, sugar, soap, toilet paper, pencils, ink, winter clothes, can openers, toothbrushes, shoestrings, and so on ,and so on, and so on. Otherwise you will go hungry, dirty and ragged in Moscow," thus good friends earnestly advised me.

"You will be guided, guarded and watched all the time in Moscow——the G.P.U.," they warned me.

"The peasants and poor folks have control and they're the stupidest people on earth. You will be sadly disappointed in Moscow," estimable gentlemen who had especially studied the "Russian experiment" told me.

"Oh, and what might happen to your poetry! There's only propaganda in Moscow," charming ladies with artistic souls exclaimed.

"They only want to make Communists out of you-all, you and the rest of these Negroes going in that group—and get you slaughtered when you come back home—if the American government lets you come back," genteel colored people told me. "You'd better stay home."

"Can't," I said. "I want to see Moscow."

So when the Europa sailed from New York on June 14 in the year of our one-time Lord 1932, there I was in a group of 22 Negroes going to the Soviet Union to make a film, *Black and White!*

Moscow met us at Leningrad—in the persons of some of the officials of the Meschrabpom for whom we were to work. And among them was a Negro! None of these men from Moscow appeared pale and undernourished or in need of the canned goods we had brought. And certainly colored Comrade Whiteman didn't look anything like

A motherless chile
A long ways from home.

And he has lived in Moscow for years.

The banquet they spread for us at the October Hotel in Leningrad ran all the way from soup on through roast chicken and vegetables right down to ice cream and black coffee. And an orchestra playing dinner music. All of which was

Better, better, than I gets at home.

The speeches were short and warm with proletarian greetings and the orchestra played the *Internationale:*

Arise, ye prisoners of starvation.

But we were all a little too full of good food at the moment to give that line its real meaning.

Arise, ye slaves no more in thrall.

We did better on that; we Negroes: Moscow and freedom! The Soviet Union! The dream of all the poor and oppressed—like us—come true.

You have been naught,
You shall be all.

We slept on the Express roaring through the night toward Moscow. In the morning we emerged from the train to the clicking of a battery of newspaper cameras and the greetings of a group of Moscovites come to meet us. And among them were two more Negroes! One was Emma Harris who's lived in Russia for thirty years, sings, and makes the best apple pies in the world. And the other was a grandly black boy whom we thought was from Africa—but who turned out to be from Chicago. His name was Bob.

Our hands were shaken. We were hugged and kissed. We were carried along in the crowd to the bright sunshine of the street outside. And there a flock of long shiney cars waited for us—Buicks and Lincolns—that swept us through the Moscow boulevards making as much time as the taxis in Central park. We drove across the Red Square past Lenin's Mausoleum and the towers and domes of the Kremlin—and stopped a block away at the Grand Hotel.

Our rooms were ready for us—clean and comfortable, with hot and cold water, homelike settees and deep roomy chairs. Courteous attendants there were, baths and elevator, a book shop and two restaurants. Everything that a hotel for white folks at home would have—except that, quite truthfully, there was no toilet paper. And no Jim Crow.

Of course, we knew that one of the basic principles of the Soviet Union is the end of all racial distinctions. That's the main reason we had come to Moscow.

That afternoon another long table was spread in the hotel dining room, and we ate again. Around this welcoming board we met our first Russian friends. And learned to say, "Tovarish." And thus began our life in Moscow, the Red Capital.

Here there should follow several pages about how we made the movie that we had come to take part in—except that the movie was not made! Why? Well, here's the inside dope. A few days after I got here, I was contracted to revise the dialogue so, with an interpreter, I sat in at most of the conferences. I listened to Pudovkin, Eck, and other famous kino experts analyze and dissect the proposed script for *Black and White* as prepared for filming. There were heated discussions on every scene and every line of dialogue. There were a dozen different disagreements. The defects of the plot and continuity were mercilessly exposed. And finally the production of a picture based on the scenario at hand was called off.

Moving picture studios all over the world are ,after all, more or less alike. Pictures are listed and cancelled. Directors are hired and fired. Films are made and shelved. What happened to *Black and White* in Moscow, happens to many films in Hollywood. But between the studios of Hollywood and those of Moscow there is this difference: In Hollywood the production of films is quite frankly a business for the making of money. In Moscow the production of films is quite frankly an art for the advancement of certain ideas of social betterment. In Hollywood, too, writers, directors, and producers will squabble over a scenario for weeks, but in the end, if the artistic ideals of the writers are opposed to the money-making ideals of the producers, the artistic ideals go and box-office appeal takes their place. In Moscow, on the other hand, the profit-making motif is entirely absent. It has no need for being, as the films do not necessarily depend on the box office for their funds. And the endless arguments that go on between scenario writers, directors, and producers center rather around how to present with the greatest artistic force the ideals that will make for the betterment of the Soviet people. In Moscow, the aim is to create a socially important film. In Hollywood, it is to make money.

So when the best minds of the Soviet film industry declared the scenario of *Black and White* artistically weak and unsound; and when they said that they felt it could not do justice to the oppressed and segragated Negroes of the world, or serve to further enlighten Soviet movie audiences, there could hardly have been a better reason for the postponement of the film until a more effective scenario could be prepared. Nevertheless, a few of the members of our group, loath to leave the comforts of the Grand Hotel and return to Harlem, shouted loudly that the black race of the whole world had been betrayed, and they themselves had been cheated and disillusioned. Even after they had been paid in full for the four months of our contract, fare in dollars reimbursed, and sent home via Paris, some few still continued to weep in the Harlem papers about the evils of Moscow which housed a film company that would not make a bad picture from a weak scenario—so they could act in it. One can understand that attitude, however, so great is the urge to go in the movies, even among us Negroes. Many an aspirant has left Hollywood cursing Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. But between leaving Hollywood and Moscow there is this difference: Many disappointed would-be screen stars depart from Hollywood hungry. Our Negro artists left Moscow well-fed, well paid, and well entertained, having been given free excursions that included Odessa, the Black Sea, Central Asia, Tiflis, and Dnieprostroy. They went home via London, Paris ,or Berlin. Or they could have stayed (and several did) with offers of parts in other films or jobs in Moscow. But I hear from New York that a few are still mad because they could not immediately star in *Black and White,* be the scenario good or bad.

O, Movies. Temperaments. Artists. Ambitions. Scenarios. Directors, producers, advisors, actors, censors, changes, revisions, conferences. It's a complicated art—the cinema. I'm glad I write poems.

After three months of the movies, I was delighted to pack my bags and go off on a plain prose writing assignment to Central Asia for a study of the new life there around Bukhara and Samarkand—socialism tearing down the customs of ages: veiled women, concubinage, mosques, Allah-worship, and illiteracy disappearing. When I came back to Moscow in the winter, those of our Negro group who had remained, seven in all, had settled down comfortably to life in the Soviet capital. Dorothy West was writing, Mildred Jones taking screen tests for a new picture. Long, tall Patterson who paints houses had married a girl who paints pictures, and together they have executed some of the finest decorations for the May Day celebration. Wayland Rudd was studying singing, fencing and dancing, and taking a role in a new Meyerhold play. McKenzie stayed in the films, working for Meschrabpom. And Homer Smith, as a special consultant in the Central Post Office, was supervising the installation of an American special delivery system for Moscow mail. So the Negroes made themselves at home. Some were getting fat.

After five months in Asia, I was glad to be back in Moscow again—great, bustling city comparable in some ways to Chicago, Cleveland or New York. But very different, too. For instance, in the American cities money is the powerful and respected thing. In Moscow, work is powerful—and not money. One can have ever so many rubles and still find many places and pleasures closed to him. Food, lodging, theatre tickets, medical service, all the things that dollars buy at home, are easily available in Moscow only if one is a worker and has the proper papers from one's factory, shop, office or trade union. I was glad I belonged to the International Union of Revolutionary Writers. Credentials were far more important than rubles.

And another thing that makes Moscow different from Chicago or Cleveland, or New York, is that in the cities at home Negroes—like me—must stay away from a great many places—hotels, clubs, parks, theatres, factories, offices, and union halls—because

they are not white. And in Moscow, all the doors are open to us just the same, of course, and I find myself forgetting that the Russians are white folks. They're too damn decent and polite. To walk into a big hotel without the doorman yelling at me (at my age), "Hey, boy, where're you going?" Or to sit at the table in any public restaurant and not be told, "We don't serve Negroes here." Or to have the right of seeking a job at any factory or in any office where I am qualified to work and never be turned down on account of color or a WHITE ONLY sign at the door. To dance with a white woman in the dining room of a fine restaurant and not be dragged out by the neck—is to wonder if you're really living in a city full of white folks (as is like Moscow).

But then the papers of the other lands are always calling the Muscovites red. I guess its the red that makes the difference. I'll be glad when Chicago gets that way, and Birmingham.

For me, as a writer, Moscow is certainly different, too. It's the first city I've ever lived in where I could make my living entirely from writing. Not that I write more here than I do elsewhere, but I am paid better, and there is a wider market. In America the magazines in which one can frequently publish stories or poems about Negroes are very few, and most of these do not pay, since they are of a social service of proletarian nature. The big American bourgeois publications are very careful about what they publish by or about colored people. Exotic or humorous tales they will occasionally use. Stories that show Negroes as savages, fools, or clowns, they will often print. And once in a blue moon there may be a really sound and serious literary picture of black life in a big magazine—but it doesn't happen often enough to feed an author. They can't live on blue moons. Most colored writers find their work turned down with a note that the files are already full of "Negro material," or that the subject is not suitable, or, as happened to me recently when I submitted a story about a more or less common situation in American inter-racial life—the manuscript was returned with regrets since the story was "excellently written, but it would shock our good middle-class audience to death." And thus our American publications shy away from the Negro problem and the work of Negro writers.

In Moscow, on the other hand, the editors welcome frank stories of American Negro life. They print them and pay for them. Book publishers welcome volumes by black writers, and, in spite of the paper shortage, a great many books of Negro life have appeared in translation in Moscow. Large audiences come to hear colored writers lecture on their work, and dinners and testimonials are given in their honor. There is no segregated Harlem of literature in Moscow.

As to writers in general, I feel safe in saying that members of the literary craft, on the whole, live better in the Soviet Union than they do in America. In the first place there is a tremendous reading public buying millions of books, papers, and magazines, in dozens of different languages. Translation rights of a Soviet writer's work here within the Union alone may bring in thousands of rubles. And there are, in Moscow and other cities, cooperative dining rooms for writers, specially built modern apartments with very low rents, excellent clubs and tennis courts and libraries—all for the workers in words.

As for me, I received for one edition of my poems in translation more money in actual living value than I have yet made from the several editions of my various volumes of poetry in America. For an edition in Uzbek, a minority language that most Americans never heard of (nor I either till I came here), I was paid enough to live in grand style for a year or modestly for two years—which is more than poetry alone ever did for me at home.

There is in Moscow a great curiosity for things American, and a great sympathy for things Negro. So, being both an American and a Negro, I am met everywhere with friendly questions from children and adults as to how we live at home. Is there really a crisis, with people hungry and ragged when there are in America so many factories, so much technique, so much wheat, and cotton and live stock? How can that be? Do they actually kill people in electric chairs? Actually lynch Negroes? Why?

The children in the Moscow streets, wise little city children, will ofttimes gather around you if you are waiting for a street car, or looking into a shop window. They will take your hand and ask you about the Scottsboro boys, or if you like the Soviet Union and are going to stay forever. Sometimes as you pass a group of children playing, they will stop and exclaim, "Negro!" But in wonder and surprise a long ways from the insulting derision of the word "Nigger" in the mouths of America's white children. Here, the youth in the schools are taught to respect all races. And at the Children's Theatre there is a sympathetic play being given of how a little Negro girl found her way from Africa to Moscow, and lived happily ever after.

Strangers in general meet with widespread courtesy from the citizens of Moscow. *Inastranyetz,* they will say, and let you go to the head of the line, if there is a crowd waiting at the stamp window in the post office, or standing in the queue for an auto bus, or buying tickets to the theatre. If you go alone to the movies, someone is sure to offer to translate for you, should they happen to know a little German or English. If you hand a written address to a citizen on a Moscow street, often said citizen will go out of his way to lead you to the place you are seeking. I have never lived in a more truly courteous city. True, there is not here anywhere in public places the swift and efficient directness of America. Neither is there the servile, tip-chasing, bowing and scraping service of Paris. But here there is friendliness. In Moscow there are often mountains and swamps of red tape that would drive you crazy, were it not for the gentle patience and kindnesses of the ordinary citizens and simple workers anxious to offer to strangers their comradely help and extend their services as hosts of the city. So in spite of the entirely new routine of life which Moscow offers it does not take one long to feel at home.

Of course, there is the room problem, for the city is the most over-crowded in the world. A foreigner coming to Moscow (unless as a tourist) should really bring a room with him. The great Eisenstein, maker of marvellous movies, lives in only one room. In spite of hundreds of new apartments that have been built, the growth of housing has not been able to keep up with the growth of the populace. A Moscow apartment is as crowded as a Harlem flat at the height of the great Negro migration from the South. Yet, with all their own housing difficulties, the Muscovite can listen patiently to irate foreign workers who are indignant at not immediately receiving on arrival a three room apartment with kitchenette and bath.

The Negroes whom I know in Moscow are all housed comfortably and are not as much given to complaints as certain other nationalities who come to the workers' capital with a greater superiority complex as to their world importance. The colored people in Moscow move easily in Russian circles, are well received, and cordially welcomed in private homes, in workers' clubs, and at demonstrations. There are always dark faces in the tremendous May Day demonstrations that move for hours through the Red Square. A great many Negroes took part in the gigantic Scottsboro Demonstration in the summer of 1932 at the Park of Rest and Culture. The pictures of Negro workers are often displayed in the windows of shops on the main Moscow streets. During the recent May holidays there was a huge picture of Robinson, the colored udarnik at the Ball Bearing Plant, on display in a busy part of Gorky Street. Moscow's black residents are well woven into the life of this big proletarian city, and they are received as comrades.

As for me, I've had a swell time. I've spoken at demonstrations, read poems at workers' clubs, met lots of poets and writers and artists and actors, attended all the leading theatres from the Opera to Ohlopkov's Realistic Theatre where the stage is all round the audience and you sit in the middle. I've seen the finest Gauguin's and Cezanne's in the world, have eaten soup with the Red Army, danced with the Gypsies, and lived excitingly well, and have done a great deal of writing.

I shall go back to America just as clean (there is soap here), just as fat (and food), just as safe and sound (and the G.P.U.) as I was when I left New York. And once there, I'm thinking that I'll probably be homesick for Moscow. There's an old Negro song that says:

You never miss the water till the well runs dry. Those who ought to know, tell me that you never really appreciate Moscow until you get back again to the land of the bread lines, unemployment, Jim Crow cars and crooked politicians, brutal bankers and overbearing police, three per cent beer and the Scottsboro case.

Well, the Russian workers and peasants were awfully patient with the Tsar, but when they got rid of him—they really *got rid* of him. Now they have a right to be proud of their red flags flying over the Kremlin. They put them there. And don't let anybody in America kid you into believing what with talking about lack of soap and toilet paper and food and the G.P.U., that Moscow isn't the greatest city in the world today. Athens used to be. Then Rome. And more recently, Paris. Now they'll put you in jail in Alabama for even mentioning Moscow! That's one way of recognizing its leadership.

Red Banners pass the Lenin Mausoleum

MAY DAY IN MOSCOW, 1933

Voroshilov and other Red Army leaders greet

The workers

Armed factory workers greet their leaders

ARTICLES and CRITICISM

Sergei Dinamov

Contemporary Capitalism and Literature

In a conversation with the first delegation of American workers on September 9th, 1927, Comrade Stalin gave the following characterization of the Leninist theory of Imperialism:

"Marx and Engels gave in *Das Capital* an analysis of the fundamentals of Capitalism. But Marx and Engels lived in the period of the domination of pre-monopoly capitalism, in the period of the smooth evolution of capitalism and of its 'peaceful spreading over the whole world. This 'old phase came to an end towards the close of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, when Marx and Engels were no longer among the living. It stands to reason that Marx and Engels could only guess about those new conditions in the development of capitalism which were to come in connection with the new phase of capitalism which took the place of the old one, when the smooth evolution of capitalism made room for the vicissitudes of the catastrophic development of capitalism, where the uneven development and the contradictions of capitalism revealed themselves with particular force, when the struggle for markets of export and import, in view of the exceedingly uneven development, rendered unavoidable the periodic outbreak of imperialist war for the purpose of periodic redistribution of the world and of the spheres of influence. Lenin's contribution, and consequently the novelty of his doctrine consisted in that he, relying upon the basic principles of *Das Capital,* gave a consistent Marxian analysis of Imperialism as the last phase of capitalism, having exposed its sores and the conditions of its inevitable doom. The outcome of this analysis was the famous proposition of Lenin, that under the conditions of Imperialism the triumph of Socialism is possible in separate capitalist countries taken individually."

The gigantic growth of monopolies, the creation of national and international trusts and cartels, not only does not eliminate competition in general, as is presumed by the reformists, or within a given country as is presumed by Comrade Bukharin, but "monopoly strengthens and sharpens the chaotic" (Lenin). The imperialist stage of capitalism is characterized by:—

1. Concentration of production and of capital. Transformation of banks from intermediaries into all-powerful monopolists; establishment of a financial oligarchy hastens to a considerable degree the "process of concentration of capital and the formation of monopolies."

2. Banking and industrial capital become more and more welded together, the banks become the masters of production, financial capital occupies the commanding positions in the economic and in the political spheres.

3. Particular importance is acquired by the export of capital, whole countries become "parasitic states," "rentier-states;" there is a headlong increase of the group of rentiers whose sole occupation is to clip dividend coupons, whose sphere is not that of production, nor even of distribution, but that of consumption. The parasitic essence of capitalism finds its particularly glaring expression in the ever-increasing growth of the rentier group of the bourgeoisie.

4. Essentially, the sharing out of the world has been completed, the imperialist robbers having sliced the earth's globe and "distributed" the spheres of influence. The completion of the sharing out of the world becomes the source of new sanguinary wars and of endless growth in armaments.

5. Lastly, the fifth token of the epoch of imperialism is the emergence of international monopolist organizations.

All these qualities of imperialism by no means indicate that the epoch of imperialism is "mature" or "organized" capitalism, that capitalism has landed in some sheltered harbor. The basic contradiction is that "production has become socialized while appropriation is still private" (Lenin), and capitalism in the imperialist epoch is torn by this contradiction which causes protracted crises, which creates such rocks on which the bourgeois class will inevitably be shattered. The growth of monopolies becomes the source of fresh concussions, because monopoly, the outgrowth of free competition, does not eliminate the former but exists side by side with it, "thereby engendering a series of particularly sharp and momentous contradictions, frictions, and conflicts" (Lenin). The height of the rise of capitalism is only a particularly high ascent towards the brink of the precipice: "The higher the rise of capitalism, the stronger is felt the shortage of raw materials, the sharper the scramble for raw material resources throughout the world, the more desperate the struggle for the acquisition of colonies" (Lenin), the more frequent the outbreak of armed collisions for new selling markets, for new colonies. The imperialist bourgeoisie creates all manner of "pacts" and "treaties," all manner of "leagues" and "cordial understandings;" nevertheless all this meddling with scraps of paper, all this hullaballoo around the "struggle for peace among nations," is but a special form of preparation for devastating wars: "Peace alliances prepare wars," says Lenin in his treatise, *Imperialism, the Last Stage of Capitalism.*

Lenin says: "Imperialism is: 1) monopoly capitalism, 2) parasitic, or decaying capitalism, 3) dying capitalism." *(Imperialism and the Split in Socialism,* Vol. XIII p. 468, 1st Russian Edition). This decay impregnates the whole system of capitalism; the virus of decomposition affects the whole of the bourgeois culture, all the capitalist "superstructures"—from theoretical natural history to the cinema.

Time there was when capitalism fostered the development of science and technique; science under capitalism had lost its abstract character and became wedded to industrial practice; by leaps and bounds went on the development of physics, chemistry, biological sciences, mathematics, of cognate applied sciences, and especially of technology. Yet, capitalism harbors within itself insolvable contradictions. On one hand the bourgeoisie must encourage the development of science and technology, while on the other hand this development encounters insuperable obstacles. Natural science rejects religion, but religion is one of the mainstays of bourgeois society. Geology rejects the Bible, but the Bible is one of the mainstays of religion. The engineering art cannot properly develop under the existence of private property, but private property projects the capitalists class. Monopolies lead to technical decay and stagnation, but capitalism today is precisely one of monopoly. Scientific discoveries and scientific progress, under capitalist conditions, become a stimulus for retrogression, for a return to medievalism. The mutability of the atom, its destructibility, which is the supporting point for a dialectial approach to physics, serves to bourgeois science as an impulse towards seeking refuge in religion, in idealism. The bourgeoisie has inaugurated a campaign against Darwinism, and the Bible is taking the place of Darwin. In 1925 an American college teacher, John Scopes, was indicted for teaching the Darwinian theory, or as it was put in the verdict of the court, for imparting to his pupils "certain theories which deny the story of the divine creation of man as it is stated in the Bible," and for teaching on the contrary that "man has descended from animals of a lower order."

Geothe was an enthusiastic bard of science and technique, he was one of the greatest scientists of his time. Nowadays capitalism has no use for such poets, for such thinkers. Oswald Spengler says in his last book, *Man and Technique* that "Faustian thinking begins to get sick of technique." "Machine technique," he says, "will die out together with the Faust-man, will be smashed and forgotten .... The history of this technique is rapidly

heading for its inevitable end." Another philosopher, K. I. Obenauer, still allows this "Faustian thinking" to exist for the sole reason that, from his point of view, "*Faust* is a profoundly religious, even Catholic work" (K. I. Obenauer *Der Faustische Mensch,* Jena, E. Diederichs, 1922). The fascist Valentino Piccoli in the journal *Gerarchia* (Editor in chief, Mussolini) takes an equally benignant view of *Faust* because, so he says, "it is a nationalistic work, and the idea of nationalism, of patriotism, is one of the fundamentals of fascist ideology." Yes, capitalism marches backwards, towards medievalism, and it crouches already under the heavy burden of the philosophy given by Goethe in *Faust;* it has no further use for art which urges the human mind onwards, to new scientific achievements, to new discoveries. Spengler splendidly expresses this ideology of decay when he says: "We have now reached the climax, where the fifth act begins. One decisive event is followed by another, and the tragedy draws to a close."

The return to medievalism is characteristic of bourgeois culture as a whole. Lenin, in *Materialism and Empirio-criticism,* demonstrates that "ecclesiasticism is the unavoidable corollary of bourgeois science." The "scientist," Dr. J. S. Haldane of New York, published in 1929 a whole treatise on *Science and Philosophy* in which he argued that "God is apparent in the daily work of the laboratory," and that therefore he does not fear for the future of religion. The distinguished American surgeon, Howard A. Kelly, in his book *A Scientific Man and the Bible* (published by the Sunday School Times Co., Philadelphia 1926), declares: "I accept the whole bible as God's word . . .! Believe in the second coming at any moment." James Truslow Adams, another distinguished American public man, is displeased with science because "it is too sterile and it can never satisfy man's deepest spiritual needs." *(Harper's Magazine,* February 1928.) The celebrated physicist, Sir Oliver Lodge, published in 1930 a book entitled *Why I Believe in Personal Immortality* in which he declares the continuance of personal existance after death to be a "demonstrated fact."

There was even such a curious fact as the publication of "Letters from Jack London" sent by him from the other world!

Bourgeois "scientists" have created a special theory according to which religious faith is considered as a method of knowledge on a par with scientific research.

Thus, the mathematician Herman Weil, in his review of Kassierer's book on *Einstein's Theory of Relativity,* writes: "Alongside of the physical picture of the world, there exist on equal terms also other methods of conceiving the Universe, the esthetical, the historic, and the religious." The Russian bourgeois scientist, L. S. Berg, in his book *Science, Its Sense, Content, and Classification,* declares also that science and religion are at variance only in form and not in substance. Expressing the general mood of bourgeois science, D. G. Lewis writes in his *History of Philosophy* that "properly speaking, there can be no quarrel between theology and science."

Science is also dragged towards ecclesiasticism by the Vitalists who admit the existence of a "supreme" or "dominant" (G. Bunge) force which directs life. (Francais, Pauli, Wagner, and others find psychology in the plasma, etc.). Reinke, in his *Philosophy of Botany* argues the existence of a Creator. The biologist Platte, who set up a special aquarium to demonstrate the presence of capitalist wars even among animals, declares that "religion is the greatest boon."

Idealism, superstitious belief, return to medievalism—this is the goal towards which capitalism brings even the "exact" sciences, even natural science.

At the same time genuine scientists are hounded and persecuted, as was the case with Kammerer who was driven by such persecution to commit suicide.

Berthelot observed at the close of the past century: "We are now on the eve of a fresh assault by mysticism against science." This assault of mysticism and superstition is now in full swing along the entire capitalist front. Capitalism has become a brake on the further development of science. The U.S.S.R. is now the real fatherland of real science.

The bourgeoisie is now rearing pigmies of theory and of human thought—gone for the bourgeoisie is the age of men like Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Goethe. In a survey of university life in America, Germany and England by Abraham Flexner *(Universities: American, English, German,* by Abraham Flexner, New York, The Oxford University Press), a truly depressing picture is drawn of the condition of bourgeois science.

The crisis has affected all branches of bourgeois culture, science, and art.

The sharper the contradictions of the imperialist epoch become, the more militant grows the reaction against materialism even in the so-called "exact" sciences, not to speak of the social sciences. The bourgeoisie endeavours to turn science into pure empirics, at the same time adulterating theory and making idealism, mysticism and the like the basis of scientific research.

It is also relevant at this point to recall the fact that in connection with the recent Goethe Anniversary an attempt was made by the imperialist bourgeoisie to link the humanism of Goethe ,his love for mankind, with the neo-humanism of contemporary fascism And the American humanists are also embarking upon a campaign against science.

We will allude here to one of the recent manifestoes of the bourgeoisie that is heading for fascism, on the symposium *Humanism and America* (New York), which represents a sort of new bourgeois code on questions of culture. It ought to be observed that the American fascist-"humanists" have invented no gunpowder, that they are fully in unison with world fascism. The imperialist bourgeoisie the world over is waging a campaign against true scientific knowledge, baiting and persecuting those scientists who refuse to distort the truth in order to suit the ruling class.

In this symposium Paul Elmer More sympathetically quotes the words of Whitehead in the *Hibbert Journal* of July 1927, to the effect that natural science leads straightway to God, that the more we delve into science, the more we arrive at the conclusion that all things are made by God, that God is the principle of world construction. The same ideas are propounded by Whitehead in his book *Science and the Modern World,* which the humanists include in their theoretical inventory. Paul Elmer More also takes exception to Darwinism, because the theory of evolution "disturbs the peace."

By the side of More and Babbit, the prominent humanist ideologician T. S. Eliot, in his article "The Religion of Humanism," essays to reconcile theology with science, claiming that if the defects of both currents were remedied, we should be able then to build up a new basis of reality—that which he designates as Humanism.

Eliot at the same time objects to religious ceremonies. The humanists are trying to build up a new religious conception from which all the outward religious ceremonies are to be eliminated. The very idea of the humanists about religion closely resembles the utterances of Henry Ford on religion.

The automobile king, in his book *Today and Tomorrow,* says that "Providence is not the servant of the weak."

This is precisely the attitude of the humanists on the question of religion:

"The need of the modern world is the discipline and training of the emotions, which neither the intellectual training of philosophy or science, nor the wisdom of humanism, nor the negative instruction of psychology can give." (Eliot—"Religion Without Humanism.")

To humanism, religion is discipline. It inclines, first of all to Catholicism, and even to the most militant force in Catholicism—the Jesuits, for, as they say, humanism does not repudiate reason, humanism tries to give its own system of conceptions on the basis of reason, but the reason given by science is not adequate.

Religion, from their point of view, is a necessary complement to science. Eliot says that "we must be disciplined by religion." Humanism is thus put on a par with religion. Thus we see that humanism, while trying to appear in such an exceedingly gentle and humane mask, is indeed militant reaction and it takes up Catholicism as the basic weapon

of its struggle both in Europe and in America, endeavouring to penetrate also into the East. The humanists have even created a special Humanist Church. Charles Potter founded the religion of Humanism in 1928, having established temples of worship in a number of American cities. This humanist religion is based upon the following cardinal principals: rejection of outward ceremony, mystic communion with God. Other features of the cult are: self-perfection of the individual, which the humanists connect with the growth of the race, and so forth. But the basic tenet of this creed (which we find particularly interesting) is, that salvation will come not from without but from within, which is really a repetition of the Ford formula, that "Providence" is all right, but one must work and help "Providence." The English theoretician of fascism, Barnes, says that "Syndicalism (which is his name for fascism) may exist while rejecting neither religion, nor patriotism, nor private property." Hitler, the famous "leader" of German fascism, says that "the German nation can be rejuvenated only in the lap of the Christian popular church." It strikes me, however, that this formula was stated with particular clearness by Prof. Irving Babbit in his treatise on *Democracy and Leadership,* where he says:

"The choice to which the modern man will finally be reduced, it has been said, is that of being a Bolshevist, or a Jesuit. In that case (assuming that by Jesuit is meant the ultramundane Catholic) there does not seem to be much room for hesitation. Ultramundane Catholicism does not, like Bolshevism, strike at the root of civilization. In fact under certain conditions that are already partly in sight, the Catholic Church may perhaps be the only institution left in the Occident that can be counted on to uphold civilized standards. It may also be possible however, to be a thorough-going modern and at the same time civilized."

The alliance of humanism and catholicism is the alliance of one reaction with another, and its purpose is clear: it is necessary to keep the masses in submission, and one of the means to this end is religion; it is necessary to save the masses from Bolshevism. It would be incorrect to presume this crusade against science and this frank plea for religion to be exclusively characteristic of fascism. As a matter of fact, this is characteristic of bourgeois democracy and capitalism as a whole.

The literary slogans of humanism are as contradictory as the whole of its theoretical system, which is a mess of sundry fragments of theory adapted to the demands of the fascist bourgeoisie. (It is characteristic that Irving Babbit tries to rely on Plato, Aristotle, Confucius, Christ, Kant, Schiller, Hegel, St. Beuve, Croce, etc., being unable to create anything that would even remotely resemble a theoretical generalization of these philosophico-religious systems.) The monarchist T. S. Eliot puts forth the slogan of religiousness and irrationally (see review of the book *Reason and Romanticism* by Herbert Read, and *Messages* by Ramon Fernandez in *The New Criterion* of October, 1926). But the slogan of unconsciousness is not popular among the humanists. Just as they take religion as the disciplining principle, so they allocate to art above all the pedagogical function, and in this respect they reach atrocious banality and vulgarization. Thus, one of the leaders of humanism, Paul Elmer More, considers literature exclusively as a peculiar moral mechanism, as the mere sum of methods of influencing opinion. From More's point of view it suffices to grasp the moral "mechanics" of Dante to become a Dante: the whole thing is in the moral ideas. "A work of virtue will hold its own," says More. Alan Reynolds Thompson in an article entitled "The Dilemma of Modern Tragedy" states with equal emphasis that literature should deal with the moral laws which regulate conduct, and that it should influence man. Stanley Chase in an article "Dionysius in Dismay" raises the question of basing humanism on classicism. The gospel of classicism finds its artistic realization in the practise of the artists of American fascism, like Thornton Wilder *(Woman of Andros).*

The return to classicism is seemingly in contradiction to the activist principles of humanism, but in reality it coincides. On one hand the humanists are for active art, but

on the other hand, as the ideologians of a moribund class they have to run away from reality, to conceal its contradictions, substituting for the contradictions of the present epoch a distorted history of the past (or a utopia of the future, as they do in Germany and in England). The literary traditions serve here as a sort of cementing medium to prop up the crumbling present. "The most promising development in American poetry at the present time, I believe, is to be found not in these centrifugal and eccentric movements, but in the considerable amount of genuine if less spectacular work which is being done upon the lines of firmly rooted literary traditions." (Chase). The Appeal to the intrinsic "value" of man is an escape from the contradictions of reality into the world of individuality, into the sphere of the secluded "ego" where the contradictions become purely logical and abstract ones, so that their keen-cutting edge gets blunted. "The humanist seeks in literature moral satisfaction," says Chase, "he wants to look truth in the face. But he also wants (this "but" is rather characteristic.—S. D.) to preserve the normal humanity, where human values are in the center of things."

The humanists take exception to the naturalism of Dreiser, because this writer sees "nothing positive" in contemporary life. (Robert Schaefer, "The American Tragedy").

The aesthetical theory of humanism is the theory of the defense of capitalism in the period of its universal crisis. Classicism appears to humanism to be the basic road of humanist art. The effort to find "strong" men, to find a "healthy" mankind (an expression coined by Mussolini) in the face of inability to find such things in the contemporary anarchic, disorganized society, leads the humanists back to the "golden age" of antiquity. A strange concoction of ignorance and blatant reaction, of antiquity and fascism, of crass philistinism and refined estheticism, of activeness and contemplation. This strangeness is the expression of the contradictory nature of humanism, which is the ideology of the bourgeois intelligentsia turning fascist during the period of the universal crisis of the entire capitalist system. Humanism offers a special means of training the bourgeois for the struggle. The very individualism of humanism is one of a special kind, such as subordination of the individual to the bourgeois system, such as the gospel of the peculiar fascist state in which everything is subordinated to the will of one leader. Irving Babbit's book *Democracy and Leadership* is entirely devoted to the question of the need for a leader, of the need for a leadership which will come and take the world into its hands.

Humanism is an attempt to unite the American bourgeoisie. The humanists extend their activities also to Europe and to the East, preparing for future class battles[1]. A struggle goes on for the intelligentsia, a struggle for the class, and not only for the bourgeoisie but also for the petty-bourgeoisie.

On reading the miserable theoretical writings of More and the other founders of Humanism, one cannot help recollecting the characteristic given of Hitler by one of the German publicists: "He is a man who is incapable of giving a single original idea, yet precisely therein lies his strength. From day to day he dispenses all these miserable and shallow thougths to his followers, invariably calling forth whole storms of ecstasy."

But it ought to be remembered that behind this theoretical poverty stands the entire practice of the fascist bourgeoisie which is developing a furious propaganda for fascism.

Fascist humanism, with all its activeness, with all its militancy, at the same time carries within itself the elements of real disintegration (mysticism, idealism, rejection of science). Therefore, that which transpires in world fascism—which is a militant organization of the bourgeoisie while at the same time definitely indicating its doom—becomes fully revealed in the American humanism. A clear understanding of the

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[1] The French fascist Julien Benda in his book *La Trahison des Clercs* (Paris 1927) also preaches Humanism, as against the humanism of Romain Rolland. Benda's humanism urges "improving the quality of man, of the race," for future battles.

contradictory nature of fascist humanism can be obtained only in the light of the Leninist theory, that the epoch of imperialism is the epoch of the decay and death of capitalism, the last stage of the bourgeois society, the period of proletarian revolutions all over the world.

Capitalism oppresses the majority of mankind in the name of a minority dictatorship; the ideal of the proletariat is the classless society. The communist society is the highest organized development of the forces of production. Private property raises barriers to technical progress; the proletariat is struggling for the abolition of private property, and so on, and so forth. The desire of the progressive intelligentsia for the fullest possible introduction of the principle of planning into the world, for the deepest and broadest development of mankind, coincides with the communist ideals of the proletariat. "The more relentless and independent that science becomes, the more it accords with the interests and aims of the workers," says Engels *(From Classic Idealism To Dialectical Materialism)*.

Maxim Gorky, in a profoundly interesting article "The Music of Stout People," while pointing out that the bourgeoisie is degenerating, that its culture is declining, shows against this the working class as the only bearer of further progress.

"Culture is perishing!—shout the defenders of the stout people over the working world," Gorky writes. "The proletariat threatens to ruin culture!—they lament—and they lie, because they are bound to see that culture is being trampled down by the world's herd of stout people, because they are bound to realize that *the proletariat is the only force capable of saving culture, of deepening and widening it.*" (The emphasis is ours.—S. D.).

II

This decay of bourgeois culture is glaringly revealed in contemporary bourgeois literature. To begin with, we find here a peculiar group of businessmen-literati who chant the praises of capitalist production, who compose odes to capitalist rationalization. These are poets of markets and profits, of bourgeois enterprise and exploitation.

An example of this literature is given by the novel of the German writer Wilhelm Vershofen, *Fenris the Wolf*. Vershofen states in the preface that his novel is free from the "romantic trash in which everything essential evaporates," that the novel is "based on the demands of pure objectiveness." And the novel was published even without the author's name, in order to accentuate its objectiveness. The novel is made up wholly of documents. These comprise: telegrams, protocols, newspaper correspondence, letters, notices, etc. The author pretends to hold severely aloof from the things he describes. Properly speaking, the human element is absent in this novel. There passes before us the system of financial capitalism. The artist endeavours to picture this process objectively, as though from aside; nevertheless this objectivism of the artist is at the same time the manifestation of his class bias—by detaching himself from the material, the author helps imperialism, defends it completely. He shows the growth of the trust, how the trust wipes out competition, bribes the press and the politicians, and he really admires this system, it vanquishes and captivates him. The artist creates a peculiar enthusiasm for the imperialist bourgeoisie, and his objectivism enables him, while "holding aloof" from this system, to make out an ardent defence of capitalism.

In his post-war novel, *Chancellor of a World Power,* using the same method of documentation, Vershofen unfolds a broad picture of the activities of a capitalist concern which holds the whole world in its grip, which spreads out its tentacles everywhere, and is at the same time forced to subject the world ever again and again to new horrors of war (the chief organizer Dunridge confesses: "I am seized with a certain nervousness as I ponder over all that threatens the maturing of our plans. The tragic

irony of our fate does not escape me: we, the creators of a world economic power, of this kingdom and embodiment of universal peace, are forced to plan continually for new wars.") Vershofen, no doubt under the effect of the war, has lost some of his former enthusiasm, cracks have appeared in his art; nevertheless he still maintains his "objectiveness" which helps him admirably in concealing his worship of the capitalist system.

Georges Lefevre is far more characteristic of the literature of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

He begins his journey with the birth of rubber on the plantations. He says: "I like to walk behind the players and peep into their cards." And indeed he does peep into the industrial, political, and economic "cards." Of course, when traveling through the rubber plantations, Lefevre sees none of the sufferings of the natives, nothing save the pure process of production.

Rubber, is the hero of this novel. Lefevre says in the middle of his book: "And now, like passing images, these words come back to me in a thick crowd, disciplined, like a swarm of bees freighted with their prey, to form one common significance—Rubber." He creates a new gospel of capitalist enterprise; his heroes are: captains of industry, organizers, men of business and commerce, *i.e.*, people whom he believes to be the motive forces in this crisis-stricken world.

He depicts the entire process of production, from the plantation to the Ford factories, having traveled around the world on this rubber journey. His record of the journey is continually interspersed with passionate replicas, addressed now to the government, now to the manufacturers, now to the young generation, urging them to take up the struggle for Beautiful France, for the French Republic, for French capitalism. He is not a mere objective onlooker. He is a political leader in his chosen sphere.

Frequently he breaks up the narrative and addresses himself directly to the reader with appeals and and exhortations; his art is publicistic. He consistently demonstrates his main ideas: separate, independent enterprises cannot cope with production, they must be monopolized. Being an employee of one of the biggest capitalists in France, the rubber king Gomberg, Georges Lefevre advocates the policy of big monopoly capital.

He waxes quite pathetic when speaking about the builders of capitalist France.

"I do not hesitate in this work to give the names of the firms. These firms have a sense and a majesty of their own. There is eloquence in their names. Read them, and they will need no comments.

"I was the witness of amazing efforts, I lived with intrepid people. I felt creative energy boiling around me and the rhythmic breath of the country's breast in the progress of its haphazard industrial evolution."

He does not merely observe things. He explains, he turns to facts of history, he outlines methods of rationalization in rubber manufacturing. He is ready to help with his advice the merchant, the plantation owner, the manufacturer; he sharply scores the French administration when it forgets about its imperialistic functions; he appeals to bourgeois France, endeavouring to rouse her energy, to compel her to fight for colonies, for trade, for turnover, for rubber.

Lefevre is a businessman who turns his art into a medium of information on efficient methods in the making and selling of rubber.

The *Epic of Rubber* is an epic of modern imperialism. We have before us here a commercial agent of this imperialism creating a special enthusiasm for his epoch. It ought to be conceded that this man carefully studies his material. He gives facts and figures; the novel bristles with documents, the figures and statistics blend themselves into the story, enabling Lefevre to interpret the phenomena and to help his class. At times the "Epic" turns into a newspaper report, a sort of propagandist poster advocating the

struggle for colonies, for rationalization. We have here an artist who is fully aware of why and for whose sake he creates his art.

Dirk Seeberg, an artist of the same school, seems to be the only writer in the world who combines art with the duties of a banker.

Dirk Seeberg conceived a fiction series on the theme of *Metal City*. In the Prologue to the series—*Standing Around the City*—Seeberg gives the picture of a prominent architect, a builder, an organizer. It is the image of a goal-conscious organizer of finance capital.

In the novel *Upper City* (1927) Seeberg draws the picture of one of the German cities. Personality in this novel is merely a point of economics. It interests the artist only to the extent that it is tied to some part of the capitalist system of production; the individual personality *per se* does not exist for the artist. He depicts the psychology of business.

It is an art of trade returns, an art of capitalist organization. An American newspaper once said: "Of what use are to us all these Mark Twains, Sinclair Lewises, Longfellows? This is not art . Our art is in our business books." And this new truth of capitalism is expressed by Seeberg in his novel. The theme of the novel is rather curious—the clash between two streams of capitalism: industrial capitalism as represented by Grandmother Matilda, the owner of the factory, and the new financial capitalism which has arrived in an entirely different form, in the impersonal form of joint stock companies, trusts, and monopolies, which sticks at no means in the furtherance of its aims. And Seeberg, while to some extent longing for the old capitalism, is at the same time entirely the artist of the new capitalism. *Upper City* is a novel about the upper crust of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Seeberg did not manage to complete the series. The general crisis of post-war capitalism shattered his imperialist illusions about a "healthy," powerful capitalism; the contemplated happy end of the series was wrecked by the capitalist reality.

Vershofen, Lefevre, Seeberg, are endeavoring to create a capitalist epic; they are the bards of the economics of imperialism; they want to depict the process of capitalist production with the utmost fullness and precision, they try to imbue their class and the petty-bourgeoisie with big ideas, to stir them by the enthusiasm of capitalist construction. But their ideas are shallow, their ideological level is exceedingly low, and their art is bereft of substantial content. These artists have no aims that might stir enthusiasm. There was a time when the artists of capitalism, like Goethe, Rousseau, Diderot, saw in themselves the representatives of the human race, when they fought for the whole world, when they subjectively saw in themselves the defenders of everything sublime and noble in this world. The artists of imperialism are defending profits, exploitation, the swallowing of the small fry of finances by the big sharks, the tyranny of the minority over the majority. Such aims cannot create great art, such ideas cannot beget great artists; neither can great artists beget such ideas.

Accumulation for accumulation's sake, expansion for expansion's sake, such is the drive in the work of Lefevre, Seeberg, and Vershofen. Not to think, not to feel, not to ponder over anything but business, such is the substance of their heroes.

They resemble mechanical automatons. The "tendency to mistake bigness for greatness"—to use a phrase coined by Bryce—characterizes the basic trait of the heroes of the imperialist style. The world becomes transformed into a quantity, and the thinking process itself assumes an arithmetical character. The value of phenomena in real life begins to coincide with their market value.

The basis of their enthusiasm was aptly expressed by the bourgeois theoretician Walter Rathenau, to whom "business" was in the center of his *Weltanschauung*. "The object to which the businessman dedicates his labor and his care, his pride and aspirations," says Rathenau, "is his particular enterprise, whatever be its name: selling, manufactur-

ing ,banking, shipping, theatre ,or railway. This enterprise stands before him as a living thing endowed with a body which, in its bookkeeping, organization and form, has its own independent economic existence. The businessman has no other aim than that his business might grow into a flourishing and powerful organism, rich in future possibilities."

"Activism" in the imperialist style lays bare the nature of the bourgeois, the "scope" of his aims, the "width" of his grasp of the realities, his persistence and determination; but all this within certain bounds, all this chiefly in terms of quantity. This "activism" reveals also, therefore, that the bourgeois is not a representative of art and culture, that he is the limited and illegitimate heir of the rich past. The organizers of moribund capitalism, the heroes of imperialism are branded by the seal of decay and devastation. The best proof of this is in their art, in their artists, in their creations.

This "poetry" of business cannot be truthful, the artist of capitalist enterprise must inevitably embellish and varnish the realities, he dares not speak the truth about capitalism; for it would mean to expose the exploitation, the unbearable conditions of labor, the transformation of the human being into a semi-brute; to expose the bloody oppression that goes on in the colonies; to show how, in spite of all this, the proletariat and the slaves in the colonies are consolidating their forces for the struggle for a new, socialist, Soviet society.

By the side of these literary businessmen, a central place in the contemporary bourgeois literature of the imperialist epoch is occupied by the literature of war, by the literature of militarism and colonial expansion. These are artists who study the experience of past wars and who train the world for future collisions; they are the artists of hate, of militarism and annexation.

Rudyard Kipling may justly be considered the patriarch of this literature of blood and hate.

Kipling began to write in the 'eighties. He wrote chiefly about the country that is called "the gem in the British crown," about India. Kipling saw in this India, first of all, the figure of the colonizer, the British officer and soldier, and by their side he put the Indian soldier carrying out the policy of British imperialism. Kipling waxed pathetic when portraying Indians of this type, where he depicts Indian sentries at the tomb of Queen Victoria standing out twice as long as the English soldiers.

At the same time the fundamental side of Kipling's ideology is revealed; it is the bloodthirstiness that is characteristic of all the artists of imperialism, it is the new, modernized cannibalism clothed in esthetical vestments. Thus, in the story "With the Main Guard" he depicts with elation the decimation of an insurgent Patan tribe.

The Hindu is considered by Kipling as an inferior being destined by fate to be implicitly obedient to the noble British.

Kipling in his collected poems and stories pursues one sole purpose which he frankly avows—to create a poetry of militarism. He is indeed the "patriarch" of this militarist poetry.

A new bourgeois generation has now come which interprets from the bourgeois point of view the experience of the imperialist World War with a view to bringing about a new carnage. In France there is a good deal of talk just now about the biologist Quenton (who died in 1925). Quenton wrote *Aphorisms About War* in which he demonstrated from the scientific point of view that the real human existence is war, that the real heroic death is one upon the field of battle ,and that war is the unavoidable trait of human nature.

This canonization of a long-forgotten and insignificant biologist like Quenton is no accidental phenomenon. Capitalism is preparing for a new war; for this purpose it needs the support of artists, scientists, theoreticians and men of letters, and Quenton furnishes a peculiar theoretical basis for the future war.

The thought about war, and of the preparations for it, occupies now the minds of numerous bourgeois artists and writers. The ideologian of French fascism Georges Valois declares war to be national revolution, claiming this to be his reason for supporting war, because through war the nation undergoes a peculiar baptism which lengthens its lease of life . Let us recall the formula of Marinetti: "War is the world's only hygiene." The winged word which he let out in 1908 is now being reiterated in various keys by the whole of bourgeois Europe.

An American writer, Kirke Mechem, devotes his works to this sanctification of war. His play *Who Won the War* appeared in 1925, and it was written by him especially for the fascist American Legion. Mechem, through the image of one of the heroes, Marshall, gives a hint of criticizing war. He makes him deliver a speech against war. Marshall denounces war as crime and murder; he exclaims: "Do not speak about liberty, democracy, ideals! They have nothing in common with war. It has neither beauty, nor faith, nor ideals!" The reply to this is given by Mechem through the lips of the "real hero" of the war, McQuinn:

> ". . . . Don't you see, we're not here just to beat Germany; to save France! It's a fight for democracy! It's a fight to make it impossible for one man to throw the whole world into war again—We're fighting to make all nations republics!"

The play depicts the front in idyllic tones, war is to the fascist author a round of merry adventures; he brazenly varnishes the horrid reality, diligently painting and embellishing it.

A no less characteristic work by one Roland Pertwee appeared in 1930, a novel under the title of *Pursuit,* in which war is portrayed as a source of sublime heroism for the brave soldier. In America in 1929 a book appeared under the characteristic title: *War Breaks Down Doors.* Its author, J. N. Greely, jumps out of his skin to demonstrate the "boons" of war. He tells the thrilling story of the son of an emigrant miner who joined the army at sixteen, before the war, "to get out of trouble after a strike," and who in the war won a major's commission, made a fortune through lucky speculation and married a rich heiress, etc.

In recent years there appeared in the West scores and hundreds of similar books, and also sketches and reminiscences of war veterans—former officers, colonels, lieutenants, majors, and generals—reproducing the world war as the heroic and patriotic work of the whole nation.

There exists a peculiar branch of this militarist literature: the literature about sports. An entirely new genre is being created in the West, of stories and poems dedicated to sports. This literature trains the bourgeois, turns him into an athlete, boxer, fine sportsman, football player, motor-cyclist, aviator. This literature is precisely the continuation of military literature and is destined to prepare future fighters. Henri de-Monterlan wrote a whole series of stories and poems under the title of *Olympic Games.* Monterlan says: the new Europe is being created on the stadiums and sport playgrounds. And it is characteristic that the same Monterlan, in his long poem "Funeral March to Heroes of Verdun," gives an apotheosis of war. Sport and war, football field and trenches, tennis racket and rifle, motor-cycle and field gun, go cheek by jowl in this sport "genre," intertwined and interconnected. Not accidentally does Monterlan declare that he draws upon three sources for his creative work: religion, sport, and war.

Henri de-Monterlan is but one of the more blatant representatives of the sport literature that is now so widespread in the West.

Preparing for war, preparing for new battles for markets and colonies, the bourgeoisie prepares in the first place for war against the Soviet Union, against the world's first Socialist State. Here too the artists of capitalism are carrying out the necessary

ideological preparation: each one of them, to the extent of his small but noxious ability, slanders the USSR, "scares" his readers with the "horrors" of Bolshevism, giving full play to his lurid imagination.

The British colonel Hay in the novel *Poor Gentleman* drew such a savage picture of alleged Bolshevik brutalities that even the bourgeois *New York Times Book Review* questioned the authenticity of the stories turned out by the gallant colonel. Maria Moravskaya in a little book under the very sympathetic title of *Bird of Flame,* and the sub-title "A Story of Revolutionary Russia," narrates a sad story about a "Prince Vanya" who during the years of civil war had fallen in love with an American woman. His chief occupation was to bemoan the "sufferings" of the Russian people.

Gabrielle Reval in the novel *Fiery Slaughter* tells a no less heartrending story about a Caucasian prince and his oil wells that had, of course, been taken away from him by the bolsheviks.

One Herbert Quick in collaboration with a Mrs. Helen Stepanova, under the brave title of *We Have Changed All This,* tell a story about a wealthy Russian family which robbed of all its possessions during the Revolution, was compelled to flee from the country. The mother of this family, in order to save her son's life, offers her daughter to the bolshevik commissar, but he is already in love with her, and he saves the son gratuitously. One Edison Marshall published in 1929 a book about a splendid patriot, Captain Nansen, who had occupied Soviet lands in the far north and hoisted there the American flag. We quite agree with the *New York World* that "the book is worthless and the author has never turned out any worse trash than this." That is quite so. The record was beaten, however, by a Mrs. Nankivel who wrote a story about the *14 Fingers of St. Peter,* unraveling a thrilling bolshevik plot. It transpires that they (the bolsheviks) had gathered all the fingers of St. Peter available in Russia (14 of them were found), and having pieced together this material evidence, they started upon the destruction of the Orthodox Church. The Fabian *New Statesman* was quite shocked by this monstrucous claptrap.

Scores of slanderous books of this kind are published in which the fascist writers carry on war preparations against the USSR.'

The fascists publish also travel sketches about the Soviet Union. The fascist ideology finds its fullest expression in the book of the Frenchman Henri Beraux, *What I Saw In Red Moscow.*

The traitor Panait Istrati, who visited this country under the mask of a sincere friend, has written several filthy, lying books about the Soviet Union. Liam O'Flaherty, who was so touchingly sympathetic towards us during his stay in the USSR, has since followed in the dirty footsteps of Istrati, having written a sordid calumniatory book about this country which was justly ignored by literary critics in England.

Just now a new genre of fascist utopia is being created in world literature. In Germany "utopias" of this kind are being turned out literally in scores.

The universal crisis of capitalism is being conceived by a number of writers as the end of civilization, and the end of capitalism as the end of the world. More and more books are being published on the approaching crash of our planet. Cicely Hamilton in *Theodore Savage* (London 1922 and New York 1928) depicts the horrors of the last destructive war in which cities and towns, men and vegetation are wiped out and the few survivors are reduced to conditions of primitive savagery. The authoress looks into the future with the profoundest pessimism. The future is to her but a huge enlargement of the present, while in the present she sees nothing but death and perdition.

And a New Earth by G. E. Jacomb (London 1926) is tinged with equally gloomy colors: the multi-millionaire Smith quits the civilized world and sets up a new cul-

ture upon a lonely island, but the island is attacked by an international fleet and in 1958 everything created by Smith is wiped out. This kind of drivel is being published in scores and hundreds of volumes. Particularly prolific are Western writers in turning out imaginative stories on the dangers of scientific discoveries. Edmund Snell has a thrilling story along the line of medical research: the hero of his novel *Control* (1928) had devised a scheme for replacing a damaged brain in a sound body with a sound brain from a crippled body and thus succeeded in creating a new race of terrible people. A similar theme is developed by Guy Dent in *Emperor of the If* (1926): the brain of a shopkeeper is transplanted into a living organism existing under conditions of the glacial period. John Taine in *Green Fire* (1928) tells a terrible story about two great intellectuals; one whose every thought is destructive, the other constructive.

Almost completely gone is the utopia that was so popular before the war: the utopia of the struggle for a progressive order of society. The great birth of the USSR, the tremendous growth of the revolutionary movement, the practical building of the socialist society in this country, have served to stifle interest in this kind of utopia. The real defenders of socialism, instead of writing utopias about things that should be, prefer to study the development of socialist construction.

But the bourgeois reactionary utopia is flourishing. The dying class indulges in furious dreams about the doom of Bolshevism, about victories over the bourgeoisie of other countries, about conquests that are not so easily attainable in reality. Thus, Hector Wywater in 1925 gave a fair write-up of an American-Japanese campaign to take place in 1931-33 (*The Great Pacific War,* Boston 1925). The British officer F. Britten Austin in the novel *The War God Walks Again* equally deals with a war on the Pacific which, by the way, terminates somewhat differently from Wywater's story—a revolution breaks out in London. Scores of such novels are produced. Let us observe that before the world war there was an equally rich crop of imaginative militarist stories.

No less prolific are the purveyors of anti-Soviet and anti-Communist utopias (or rather, fairy tales). Such is the story of Floyd Gibbons *The Red Napoleon* which met with some success in America. Gibbons tells about a Tartar-Mongol leader Kara-Khan who, as the Dictator of Red Russia in 1932, sweeps across central Europe, annihilates the French, British and Belgian armies, instigates a successful revolution in England, moves his forces across the Atlantic, attacks America and so forth. The purport of this ludicrous yarn is to scare bourgeois readers throughout the world with the spectre of aggressive red militarism.

Equally filthy is the fantasy of another writer who was even too bashful to give his full name, preferring to hide under the nitials of three J's (*The Blue hirts,* by J.J.J.). It is a rabid story about a proletarian upheaval in England, about communist burglars and robbers, about brave Labourites who cooperate with the police against the Communists and eventually vanquish the revolution. The hero of this story returns to his home at night. Having lost the doorkey, he climbs in through the window where he surprizes a burglar. The burglar takes to his heels. Next he meets another thief—a girl. She turns out to be a representative of a secret terrorist society who came with a companion to burglarize the reformist "Union of Free People" existing in England. Ramsay seizes her, and a talk ensues. She is a "revolutionary," and she tells him who her companion is. He is "an experienced fellow, he had been in Russia, and is now here in England"—she confides—"as an agent of the GPU." "What antiquated methods are employed by this revolutionary," says Ramsay. "I don't think so" replies the "revolutionary" lady, "if you had seen him on the job of breaking locks and cracking safes, you would not call his methods antiquated. I have never seen one more dexterous in this work." Such is the picture of a "bolshevik," a copy of a common burglar. But this is a mere trifle. The author has even more dreadful thrills for his readers. He spins a whole series of dangerous adventures calculated to shoot bolshevism through

the heart. The Socialists win a majority in the general election and a Socialist Republic is proclaimed, and the money for this successful campaign was obtained in the following manner: "Where did they get the money from?" "From Moscow, chiefly in valuables smuggled in via France; some of it came in bankers' cheques from Germany." A picture is given of the Revolutionary Tribunal which sends all "decent" people to their death. There is a merry chapter captioned "Red Sunday," describing the scene in London when the Bolsheviks took power. The water supply has stopped. England languishes from thirst (the events are taking place on June 7th). No gas, no milk for the babies, generally an absence of everything save the fancy of the "artist" who has written up this drivel. All this ends, of course, in the triumph of the so-called "Blue Shirts," the party of law-and-order; bolshevism is completely stamped out in England. The purpose of this claptrap novel is quite clear: to scare the bourgeois reader with horrid nightmares about the future. They scare their public by slandering the Soviet Union, but with this alone they are not contented; they draw also horrid pictures of the future of Germany, of France, and of America, under bolshevik rule. This provides a sort of "local color."

In the book of Camille Eimar, *Bolshevism or Fascism?*, we get a "theoretical" statement of the problem. Eimar takes the two systems—Sovietism versus Capitalism—and he pathetically exclaims: "Frenchman, you must choose! Do you want nationalization of women, do you want nationalization of banks, and do you want famine—then accept Bolshevism. If you do not want these things, oh Frenchman, then you must make your choice!"

Such is the essence of this book, as indeed of all the fascist utopias turned out so voluminously in the West.

Fascist art is the art of decay. This is revealed alike in the shockingly low level of fascist art, as well as in the fact that behind this boisterous militancy, behind this cannibal cruelty, can always be seen the brute fear of the bourgeois scared by revolution, by the Soviet Union, by his own working class, by the rising colonies. Imperialism is the epoch of decay, of the doom of capitalism, the epoch of proletarian revolutions. Quite often the furious vituperations of these artists betray spasms of fear. Thus, Marinetti has confessed that they are swept by the broom of madness, that they are running forward in the face of death. Monterlan, the ideologian of militarist sport literature ruefully declares that to him personally there is nothing in life but the pursuit of pleasures ("At the Source of Desires").

Social-fascism is the faithful helper of Fascism, really a group within the organization. The social-fascist writers are joining the militarist literature of the fascists, with whom they vie in producing "utopias" about the horrors of the proletarian revolution (James Walsh ,etc.) The "pacifist" war novels are equally a weapon for the preparation of new wars, as they befuddle the reader with the fog of humanism, thereby shielding and masking the preparations for war while creating the illusion as to the possibility of peaceable escape from the pestilence of capitalism.

The world has never seen a literature more lying and more calumniatory than these novels of blood and hate, than this literary cannibalism. But do not the capitalists possess also important artists? Assuredly, they do. But precisely the latter portray most forcibly the process of doom and decay that has overtaken the contemporary bourgeoisie. At the present stage of capitalist development the height of the artistic level of its artists is commensurate with the depth of their portrayal of the fall of their class. Such is the work of John Galsworthy, a real first-rank world-writer who for the last two score years had been indefatigable in analyzing how private property stultifies the mind, how its baneful breath withers all living thought ,every forward movement, every courageous action. There is no room for bright thoughts and beautiful actions in the

personages drawn by Galsworthy that are in the grip of this horrid and baneful sense of private property.

This is the only theme of nearly half a hundred of Galsworthy's novels and plays. But this theme is so deep that Galsworthy rises to be not only among the foremost but also among the most original writers in contemporary England; for his theme is that of private property.

Property determines the feelings and thoughts, the mentality and actions, the will and the desires, the life and conduct of Galsworthy's heroes. Property sets to them insuperable boundaries in life, property narrows down their living horizon, invading the innermost recesses of their consciousness and steering it in one sole direction—the acquisition of property and the maintenance of their exclusiveness.

Galsworthy has shown with particular width and depth this power of property over man in his three-volume *The Forsyte Saga.* In the Preface to this work he writes: "If the upper-middle class, with other classes ,is destined to 'Move on' into amorphism, here, pickled in these pages, it lies under glass for strollers in the wide and ill-arranged museum of Letters to gaze at. Here it rests, preserved in its own juice—The Sense of Property." (Applying these words to the other works of Galsworthy, one must speak not merely about the big bourgeoisie, but also about the bourgeoisie in general).

The life of the bourgeoisie is pried open in the "Saga" with exhaustive depth and colorfulness. It habits, morals, customs, limitations, conservatism, dress, shelter, environment—all this is portrayed in *The Forsyte Saga,* the most capital work of 20th century English literature.

Not limiting himself to this, Galsworthy began in 1924 a new cycle, *Modern Comedy* which is a continuation of the story of the Forsytes in the post-war period (*The White Monkey,* 1924; *The Silver Spoon,* 1926; *The Swan Song,* 1928). The foundation of the power of the Forsyte family is built by the Forsyte stock-gamblers, businessmen and manufacturers. Property is for the Forsytes the basic stimulus of activity, it imbues their life with the active principle; all the aims and aspirations of the majority of the Forsytes are in the long run bounded by the one objective, Property.

Cemented by the liens of property, the Forsytes are firmly attached to each other whenever their common interests are concerned; on the other hand, they are disunited when their respective individual interests come into collision. Hence the peculiar features of the style of the Forsyte cycle. The heroes are shown in close conjunction with the objects that surround them, property too becomes a "hero"; psychology gets reflection in the inanimate things; relationships and phenomena become condensed and "materialized" in the latter; the lasting connections of the *dramatist personae* knit all the actions in the cycle into one intrinsically connected whole; the concluding phenomena of the work are traceable to the earlier scenes and bound up with them. As the climax of the story approaches, the tempo of the conflicts is quickened, the contradictions grow in volume. The conflict does not transcend beyond the class boundary, developing only within the class; nevertheless the basic contradiction inherent in private property, which nurtures all the collisions in the novel, is not eliminated after all; for it can be eliminated only by the proletariat, which, by abolishing private property, abolishes its own antagonistic existence as a class. Yet, the proletariat is not represented in the novel by even a single image. Galsworthy's negation does not reach the extent of self-abnegation of his class. But the growth of the class activity of the English proletariat was bound to be reflected in this social novel. If in the *Forsyte Saga* the author turned chiefly to the intimate family life of the Forsytes, in *Modern Comedy* we find big social phenomena interwoven into the action, and the break up of the Forsyte family in *The Swan Song* is shown against a background of class struggle (the general strike).

The younger generation of the Forsytes turns out to be no better than their predecessors. They too are entirely in the grip of Property; their superior education has

only modified somewhat the form of their dependence on inanimate things, on private property, and that was all.

"England was born with a silver spoon in her mouth, but without teeth to retain it," is the conclusion drawn by Galsworthy in regard to the propertied class, the bourgeoisie: they possess much, but the future does not belong to them.

People of the epoch of bourgeois decline are also portrayed by another great bourgeois writer, Marcel Proust (died in 1932), who, while taking a different attitude towards them than Galsworthy, nevertheless depicts no less forcefully their emptiness and the absence of high aims and ideas in their life.

Proust acquired real influence in those years when the dying of capitalism became particularly apparent, when the World War had laid bare the basic contradictions of the capitalist order. It was during that period of revealed contradictions that the artist attained fame, whose method is one of shunning realities, whose world is one of ease and roses, of dream and fancy, of recreation without work, of spending without accumulating, and of activity without actions.

Thus the dying class clutches at illusions; thus the quitters of the struggle indulge in day-dreams; thus the art of repose and harmony acquires its utmost appreciation in a period of "disharmony," of the collapse of the bourgeoisie. An irony of history: it was the October Revolution that determined the fame of the bourgeois artist Proust; because after that date a certain section of the capitalist world felt constrained to clutch at Proust, in order to embellish life with the sham of art.

Illusion which predominates over reality, and therefore, the reality as an illusion—this is what lies at the bottom of Proust's creation. Characteristic in this respect is an early work in which in a chance encounter with the musician De-Laleant, an instantaneous touch of his hand, the whole world became a pale shadow, everything existing ceased to exist, everything became unreal, and only he, De-Laleant, became everything. Thus an instant turns into a whole age, a flashing spark turns into an excruciating flame of agony. The "faint voice of dreams," such is the connection of Madame de Brave with life. For, "two worlds—the world of reality and the world of fancy—run parallel to each other and can never merge into one, the same as the body cannot merge into one with the shadow which it casts." In his sketches Proust returns again and again to the people of fiction and of fantastic reality, while revealing this extramundane existence—the past gives forgetfulness, it makes one forget about the incisive conflicts of the present. It is only the light of yesterday which illumines the dimmed present of Proust's heroes. "True reality is formed only in the memory"—such is Marcel Proust's symbol of faith. The events of today serve as a stimulus for escaping to those of yesterday: sketching in the first part of a series of contemporary scenes, Proust quickly turns them into a means for turning back to the past ("I spent the greater part of the night in reminiscences of our previous life"—and a recital of this previous life follows).

The turning of fiction into reality was bound to lead to distorted notions about the realities. And so it actually happened with Proust. His dreams about life inevitably lead him to the denial of life. Thus, for instance, he feverishly paints an imagined Italy—he has visions of Venice and of Florence, he creates two "regal cities" while only contemplating the journey into them, but he utterly fails when it comes to depicting the real Venice and the real Florence.

The infantility, the puerility of Proust's perception is the direct consequence of his subjective-idealistic attitude towards the world, of his striving to get away from contemporary life, to free himself from a conscious attitude towards his surroundings, to "purge" himself of that which is, by means of imagination and reminiscence (yet without destroying these things, because they enable him to commune with the past). He does not reject the today—oh no, he calmly lends to it the appearance of yesterday.

coloring it with his childish directness. Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* represents an ingenuous attempt at getting away from the rational into the irrational, from maturity to infantility, from common-sense to intuition. The outward "refinement" of Proust, his really unconscious childish attitude towards the world, has concealed the characteristic trait of Proust—his "materialism" of the the stomach. Yes, this subjective idealist, this refined analyst, this dreamer was the artist of the triumphant human beast, the only justification of whose existence is that he drinks, eats, and sleeps with one of the opposite sex.

Proust's world is one in which nothing has really happened. It is a world of snug comfort, restful immobility, placid equilibrium, perfectly undisturbed harmony. In this world every trifle which upsets the balance appears as a shock, the least disturbance of the harmony is perceived as a catastrophe. Proust devotes hundreds of pages to the impressions of a child which reflects through its direct consciousness the life of a staid bourgeois family. It is firmly knit together, this family is; everything in it is in its place ,it is separated from the rest of the world, no winds blow into it, no storms sweep over it, no social gales disturb its peaceful haven.

Proust's heroes do a lot of eating, walking, talking, and sleeping, and they have no time left for anything else. Proust does not in the least disown them, and his own keen observations serve merely to lend an air of a real existence to these heroes of the dinner table and the alcove.

The private property nature of the bourgeois, his fear of movement, his apprehension about any change in the existing order, his general conservatism is expressed by Proust not only in his panegyrics to existing customs, but also in his elated descriptions of comfortable appointment ,of swell dinners and luncheons.

The class function of Proust's is the profound delineation of voidness. Yet all the profundity of the description cannot conceal the shallowness of that which is described, and all of Proust's great art cannot conceal the paltry money-bag mentality back of it all. The creative method of Proust, his infantility and directness enable him to successfully discharge this specific function for his class. For, had he but departed from the mere recording of impressions, had he but departed from intuitivism and looked into the inside of his "heroes," he would perforce have turned materialist and satirist. But to do this, he should have transcended beyond the orbit of his class. His creative method consists in affording the utmost justification for the existence of the money-bags. Proust's art gives the bourgeoisie the right of existence which really does not belong to it. Proust's creative method, I repeat, is precisely the one to suit the class which burdens the earth by its existence but does not wish to go under. The crassest practical "materialism" of bourgeois existence is cleverly masked by the subjective-idealistic method of Proust.

Proust is a great artist, one of the greatest writers of the 20th century. Yes, at the same time he is the most brilliant expression of the decay and doom of capitalism. As an artist, he interests himself only in the emptiness and depravity of his class; reproducing the depth of the fall of the degenerating bourgeoisie.

Stefan Zweig, another important artist of the contemporary bourgeoisie, stands close to Proust, as he also portrays only the decay and degeneration of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Zweig's world are the fashionable hotels, health resorts, race courses, casinos, sumptuous studios of prosperous artists, castles, and estates. Even when he turns to another world—to the organizer of capitalism, even then he depicts only such events as have no bearing on their productive functions (thus, in *A Failing Heart* where the banker lives apart from his family which is leading the "gay life" of the idle rich and the bourgeoisie). For Zweig's heroes *the Basic Function in Life is how to Kill Time and not How to Influence Reality.* The intrinsic voidness and futility of such an existence

necessarily transform Zweig's novels into pictures of narrow individualist phenomena. The world of the senses and not the world of thoughts, the world of contemplation and not of public activity, such is the sphere in which Zweig's mind revolves. Bound by the exceedingly narrow limits of plutocratic ideology, Zweig equally restricts the whole breadth of the realities, never stepping out of the individualistic orbit. A big artist of small parasitic people, such is essentially the characteristic of Zweig. He cannot perceive phenomena in their objective substance, he does not find the necessary proportions, he is incapable of distinguishing between the great and the insignificant. Zweig minutely examines his heroes under the microscope, and since he sees only them, for he does not turn to the other social groups which build the world, it is but natural that the insignificant appears to him to be great, that he mistakes the pigmy for the giant, the part for the whole, one of the aspects for the entire picture. Insignificant and small is the psychology of the money-bag, but it is the only psychology of which Zweig is aware in reality. Its quantitative enlargement produces but the impression of external bulk; however profusely Zweig might colour his heroes, in whatever various situations he might place them, all his variants are only external modifications of his one and only theme. This theme is confined to the problem of sex. From wherever Zweig's heroes might start, and wherever they might land, their deciding stimulus is sex. The exceptional role of the sex element in the evolution of Zweig's heroes is to be accounted for by their psychological poverty. They have no broad public interests, their outlook is that of the hen; wealth is reality to them—either wealth in the direct sense (money), or wealth in the sphere of sex. Their flickering existence is revived only by eroticism, but the erotic element in them becomes again a check on progress; because the absorption of one's entire existence in sexuality means self-impoverishment, artificial isolation from the rest of the world, as though tearing out a small piece from the whole of existence for the very sake of this small piece of existence. And this results, in its turn, in that the movement actuated by the sex impulse becomes transformed into purely external movement: or in other words, the former passive existence is only masked by a form of movement without really budging from its position of dead stillness. Thus the quivering of the shell only fastens its hold upon the contents.

The hero of *Fantastic Night* leads a sort of dreamy existence: nothing interests him, nothing attracts him. "I have eliminated from my existence . . . all the resistances," he writes, "and my joy of life has been blunted by this lack of resistance."

He feels that he suffers from "spiritual impotency, inability for passionate possession of life." He stagnates, this typical bourgeois dividend-clipper, everything passes him by, without disturbing his mind. "I flitted past, as though floating along a mirror-like watery surface, stopping nowhere, striking no roots, and I was quite aware that it was the frigidity of death. The foul smell of decomposition had not yet set in, but it already betokened the hopeless state of icy insensibility."

This living corpse gets a "doping" impulse from a chance meeting with a woman which resurrects him for a new life. But for what a life? For the same old life of idleness and parasitism. His sharpened interest in his own existence is not a stimulus for regeneration upon a new base, oh no, it is only a new affection for the old foibles.

The heroine in the story *Letter from an Unknown Woman* suffers all her life from being in love with a writer, and for a stretch of many years this infatuation burns within her, ousting all other feelings and turning into a mania. Madame Henriette in *24 Hours in a Woman's Life* manages within 24 hours to fall in love and to desert her family and her daughters, while Mrs. K. in the same story retains in her memory, as the brightest event in the whole of her life, a sudden affection for a strange man. The professor in *Perplexed Feelings* wrecks the whole of his carreer for the sake of sexual perversities.

"Neither her blood that was fully satisfied with connubial bliss, nor the feeling (so

frequent among women) that her spiritual interests were flickering away, nothing prompted her to pick up a lover; she was perfectly happy by the side of her well-to-do, mentally superior husband and her two children, indolently carrying on a quiet bourgeois, cloudless existence. *But a languid atmosphere is as likely to arouse sensuality as a wave of heat or a storm; blissful placidity may be more disturbing than misfortune.* Satiety agitates the same as hunger: the safe and even tenour of her life had aroused in her a thirst for sensuous experiences."

These lines from the story *Fear* may be taken as an epigraph for almost any of Zweig's works. Stefan Zweig narrates precisely about troubled satiety, about dissatisfaction due to over-satiety. One cannot produce a storm in a closely shut room by means of a fan! Erotics does not make new men and new women of Zweig's heroes, because this sensuality arises on the very ground of their parasitic existence, forming an integral part of their life. Eroticism disturbs their established and regulated mode of life, but does not affect the whole system of their existence. Here we see the bourgeois artist who is incapable of rising above the narrow horizon of his class, because he fails to see that the only movement which he sees is not movement, but merely the reflection of mightier and more momentous processes. Stefan Zweig returns no verdict by his artistic work; he is an objective observer who refrains from pronouncing judgement, who takes jolly good care to withhold his own views on the social aspect of the phenomena which he depicts. Zweig's "philosophy" asserts itself in the whole of his creation; he speaks now and again in the first person, and is fond of speaking on general topics; but how miserable is this "philosophy" of the dividend-clipper, how blind is this "philosophy" of moribund capitalism!

Zweig's reality turns into the "ego," and this "ego" becomes to him the whole of reality. But he who will turn the world merely into the subjective, who will measure the world only by his individual yardstick, will be unable to understand this world and its laws, and reality will appear to him to be blind and inexorable, casual and elemental. The prophet of dividends, Böhm-Bawerk says in his *Fundamentals of the Theory of Value of Economic Boons:* "Social laws, the study of which forms the task of political economy, are the result of the play of intercoordinated motives." The same "play" point of view is at the bottom of Zweig's creation. Not necessity, but casuality, is the mainspring in the conduct of his heroes and in all the events described in his works. Spontaneity stalks through the whole of his creation, unchecked and unhindered; it impregnates the whole of his art, it determines the whole of his "philosophy."

"I—who but an hour ago was a man of unblemished character—have committed a theft. I have become a thief . . . And I muttered *mechanically,* in time with the clatter of hoofs: 'Thief! Thief! Thief! Thief!' Yet, what a strange thing! How can I describe that which happened afterwards? And this so *necessary,* so *unusual." (Fantastic Night.)*

"In the life of a woman there are hours when she is exposed to mysterious powers beyond the bounds of will and consciousness," says the author in the story *24 Hours* which deals precisely with such an incident in the life of a woman.

"With fatal inevitability, without participation of the will, her commiseration instantly turned a different sympathetic feeling; both of them, without being conscious of it, plunged into this fiery abyss." *(Perplexed Feelings.)* "You are generally incapable of willing!" is the wife's reproach to Ferdinand (in *Compulsion),* a man who has no will of his own, who passively submits to the march of events in which he is an involuntary participant. Zweig reveals himself as a worshiper of spontaneity also in the Preface to his short stories *Fatal Instants,* where he says: "History, as in a mirror, reflects nature in her innumerable and countless forms; it knows of no system and despises laws; now it heads for the goal like a stream, now it creates *an event from a casual*

waft of wind." It is such "casual wafts" of the erotic wind that move the heroes of Zweig who blindly submit to the casual and elemental, who meekly carry out the dictates of their fatal Eros. "He alone lives the real life, who perceives his fate as a mystery," utters the hero in *Fantastic Night*. Such a philosophy of mystery can be engendered only by a declining class, by a dying society, by moribund capitalism. For he does not live who "perceives his fate as a mystery," for he has no place in life; because he is not the builder of events, but their slave. Zweig's heroes are precisely the slaves of the casual. Necessity is considered by them to be blind, because it is incomprehensible to them, and to their creator.

Capitalism is degenerating in the domain of culture. Its artists either defend it by means of crude and false art, or they expose its decay by means of relatively great art. The pathos of doom, this is what moves the bourgeois art forward. But this forward movement is heading for catastrophe, for the end, for destruction....

The best writers are seeking new foundations for their creation; they gradually go over to other positions; they quit the bourgeois soil, and parting with the petty-bourgeois illusions, they join the ranks of the fighters for revolution, they become honest and staunch defenders of the Soviet Union. Anatole France, Romain Rolland, Theodore Dreiser, Bernard Shaw, John Dos Passos, André Gide, Sherwood Anderson, Waldo Frank, Ernst Glaeser, Bert Brecht, etc. etc.—how many artists have broken away from capitalism, how many great writers have been lost by the bourgeoisie, how many new friends have been acquired by the working class!

Translated from the Russian by Michael L. Korn

A. V. Lunacharsky

Problems of The Soviet Theatre

On Socialist Realism, Literature and the Theatre [1]

Our time—is the greatest of all times that humanity has ever known. Our time—is a time of heroic struggle for Socialism, for that future of humanity which is really the only form of existence suitable to man.

We are experiencing a tremendous universal overturn. Our country must strain all its powers to accomplish the task historically set before it. On a sustained effort in one direction, or on the reverse, a lapse, hesitation in some other direction may hang important results which will influence the term of final victory or even the continuity of the rise of humanity to its future. There is no one, whatever his field of work may be, that is not, in this sense, a participant in this struggle. The more intensely, the more consciously, he takes part in the building of socialism, the more he is a son of his time. The less he understands our problems, the more indifferent he is to them, the more he resists being drawn into them, the more he sabotages, harms, the more does he represent the strength of the dead undermining the living.

Our art cannot but be a power exercising tremendous influence on the general trend of the struggle and on the building of Socialism.

When the bourgeoisie came upon the historical arena and attempted to obtain its hegemony, it was a realistic class. Bourgeois realism expressed itself most strongly at such times as the higher and upper middle classes felt most satisfied—was it because it was triumphing, because it had triumphed? In any event this was when classical bourgeois realism developed. Its inner music, its fundamental tone was: nature is beautiful, life is a blessing, everything, from the sun rising over this earth on which we live to some pitcher of water with an onion and a piece of bread beside it—it was all good, it was all beautiful. The problem of the artist was to make us love with all our soul these our surroundings, this life, this way of thinking, feeling, experiencing.

Such was the realistic painting of the Netherlands which first Hegel and then Marx acknowledged as the most typical realistic art.

But a self satisfied bourgeoisie cannot regard its surrounding world as anything but static. It says simply: being is good.

The bourgeoisie is not however an integral class. There exists as you are aware, a middle class, a petty bourgeoisie, which was not satisfied with the triumph of the higher bourgeoisie, a petty bourgeoisie which at the time of the revolution raised its flags high, sometimes came closer to power, at times even held it, but was then thrown off by the turn of events and severly subjugated to the rule of the higher bourgeoisie which swallowed up some of the strata—for capital marches over the bodies of small independent manufacturers and traders. This gave rise to an intense sadness, a great disillusionment in the petty bourgeoisie. Bourgeois realism was attractive to the petty bourgeoisie only insofar as it was a contrast to the old feudal culture with its attempt to shut humanity in within the narrow confines of caste restrictions and rob him of any hope of a better life on this earth by all sorts of fables called "the word of God." The petty bourgeoisie starting out from bourgeois realism sought other ways—often called those of negative realism.

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[1] Speech delivered at the Second Plenary Session of the Organization Committee of the All-Russian Union of Soviet Writers.

This negative realism was most effectively expressed in the so-called naturalism of the petty bourgeoisie. The leaders of this tendency disclosed its essence themselves saying—we have no program. And how could they have a program?

The petty bourgeoisie said: we are estranged from politics. Our business is to describe the mean system created by the bourgeoisie, perhaps falling into the mood of caricature, but in the main with scientific honesty.

In this way negative realism insofar as it was purely naturalistic, that is to say, objective, honestly described the bourgeois system and amounted to a disclosure of the seamy side of reality for this reality was far from sweet to the petty bourgeoisie.

A more definite departure from reality is represented by romanticism. Bourgeois romanticism has its origin in illusion, the desire for illusions. Artists and theoreticians who are honest enough to understand that it is an illusion—create "art for art's sake." Such people will tell you they are running away from reality. Even when they portray it, they are interested not in the object but in the portrayal in itself, the technique of portrayal, the purely artistic side of art. It is evident that such running away from the problems of reality is a form of negative realism.

This is the diapason of bourgeois art: static realism, negative realism, an attempt to put up romantic illusions against drab reality.

There are exceptions, rare flashes, recalling tendencies of proletarian art. The few authors of such works, representatives of the young bourgeoisie were squelched by this very bourgeoisie as proponents ,according to Lenin's terminology, of the American way of development.

What is Socialist realism? It is primarily also realism, true to reality.

We do not get away from reality. We recognize reality as the field of our activity, as our basic material, our task. However, this realism gives a picture of humanity with all its dark phases as they were—all the horrors of feudal and bourgeois slavery, the cruelty of capitalism on the offensive or battling for its existence. We know that these were inevitable stages which social development had to pass to reach the state now prevailing in the U.S.S.R., on humanity's road to the realm of freedom. We are far from petty bourgeois negation of reality, making virtual war on it.

We accept reality but we do not accept it statically—for how could we consider it static when we primarily take it as a task, as evolution?

Our realism is exceedingly dynamic.

The proletarian realist examining reality realizes that the fundamental, moving historical force in the past, at present, and in the nearest future is the class struggle. One can of course imagine a Socialist realist to whom this is not yet clear—such a Socialist realist belongs to the preparatory school which, it is to be hoped, he will soon graduate.

A Socialist realist understands reality as evolution, continuous motion, going on by means of a continuous struggle of contradictions. But he not only is not addicted to static, neither is he a fatalist; he orientates himself within this development, in this struggle, he defines his class position, his being as part of a definite class or his relations to this class, he considers himself an active force which is to be applied to make the process take such and such a course and no other. He understands himself to be, on the one hand, an expression of an historical process, and on the other, an active force which influences the process.

The Menshevist fatalism which dares to pass itself off as Marxism, a false Marxism for which Marx cannot be made to answer with a single drop of ink, is as a matter of fact, if not static, fatalistic and hence inclined to remove human volition from reality. A Menshevist type of writer will be one that speaks of evolution but speaks about it "impersonally," "objectively."

We can imagine people (they may and may not, as we should be glad to feel, be among us) that are still realists of the bourgeois type. They could not be satisfied with reality, could not sing in unison with it, because our reality is a Socialist one and a bourgeois minded person could not possibly sing in unison with it. Which means they find themselves in the position of dissatisfied elements, of oppressed elements. What kind of art would they create? They would create artistic journals, artistic photographs of the back yards of our revolution and say, like the pig in Krilov's fable that they "have rooted all the back yards" and found nothing good. *(Laughter, applause.)* This is a fine time for bourgeois realists to do their "realistic" rooting in the backyards of the revolution—when we are in the midst of an intense struggle, when there is much unfinished construction, many lapses, many unfinished buildings, much that is muddled. He takes it all statically—"as is." Imagine a house in the process of construction and when finished it will be a magnificent palace. But it is not finished and you paint it in that state and say: there's your Socialism—without even a roof. You will of course be a realist, you will be telling the truth—it is however apparent that this truth is an untruth. The Socialist truth can only be told by one who understands what house is being built, how it is being built, and who understands that a roof will eventuallly be there. A man who does not understand development will never see the truth—because the truth does not resemble itself, it does not stay put, but flies; truth is development, truth is conflict, truth is struggle, truth—it is the morrow and it must be seen that way and whoever does not see it that way is a bourgeois realist and hence a pessimist, a whimperer, and often a swindler and falsifier, at any rate a voluntary or involuntary counter-revolutionist and wrecker. He may not be conscious of this, and sometimes answer the demand of the communist to "tell the truth" by saying "but this is the truth," he may not be filled with counter-revolutionary hate, he may imagine himself doing a sad duty by telling an unpleasant truth—but it is an untruth in fact, lacking in analysis, lacking reality as development, and such a "truth" has no semblance of Socialist realism.

Can there be such a thing as a Socialist romanticism? Since we are satisfied with reality, accept reality, what room is there for romanticism?

I have already mentioned that we are satisfied with reality inasmuch as it represents development, as its trends are our own, as we go on along with them, as these tendencies live in our bosoms. We accept reality because yesterday and tomorrow are in conflict today, because we are part of the struggle for tomorrow.

For this very reason we are not altogether satisfied with reality. We should like to organize its active forces most rapidly, to muster them more solidly. Art is a tremendous force in our hands for this purpose.

Why then can our art have no grand synthetic images—if not in the novel or the drama, at least in the opera or in colossal pageants where tens of thousands of people are gathered? Because it is not realistic? True—there are traces of romanticism in this as the combined elements have not the likeness of truth. But they truthfully represent this truth. It uncovers the inner features of development, becomes its pennant and there is no reason for us to deny the need for us of such an art.

There is no reason for shutting out a means of artistic prognosis. Remember what Lenin said: It is a poor Communist that cannot dream. We should attempt to reach heights from where we can look further into the future. Here the imagination and seeming untruthfulness play a great role, mistakes are possible, but there must be some truthfulness here which, perhaps, consists of this—that the victory of the proletariat, the triumph of the classless society and the great renaissance of personality on the basis of collectivism is the truth.

And so we see that together with the tremendous problem of socialist realism to give a picture full of truth, based on a close description of an object of reality, giving

it so, however, that development, motion, struggle are evident, together with this form it is really possible to have a Socialist romanticism, one that is however entirely different from bourgeois romanticism. By virtue of the tremendously dynamic quality of our reality it calls into action such realms where fantasy, stylization, and all kinds of liberties in the treatment of reality can play a big role.

Socialist realism is a broad program which includes many different methods we have already acquired and some that are still to be developed; but it is through and through a live thing, breathing development, devoted to struggle, it is through and through the builder, sure of the communist future of humanity, having a great faith in the powers of the proletariat, its party and its leaders, understands the full significance of the first fundamental battle and this first act in the drama of socialist construction which is going on in our country.

Static realism, idealist tendencies, are having a good time beyond the borders of the Soviet Union, they sustain the evils of the world, are themselves our yesterday, our enemy and we will continue our merciless struggle against them.

Our object, however, should not be to reproach one another that here, say, realism is not rigidly maintained and a certain amount of stylization has crept in—we must respect and support each other. The thing is our writers, critics, like our proletariat, like our entire struggling and constructive world, should present a solid front against our common enemy—it makes no difference whether he lives beyond the border or right here amongst us. For the reason that, if this enemy stirs within our own ranks, whispers his static disillusionment or idealistic escape from life we shall do, as Mayakovsky said about his own untimely songs: we will stamp our foot on this enemy's neck. *(Much applause.)*

2

The drama occupies an entirely distinct place in literature. Whenever the class struggle grows tense drama steps up to the front, because, if all literature serves the class struggle, the drama, by means of the theatre is the most active force. We understand this thoroughly and cannot be indifferent to this truly exceptional force. The theatre is graphic in the highest degree and hence highly emotional. Also it affects directly large masses, merges in unified impressions, unified feelings thousands of people. Considering that we wish to by all means increase the influence of socialist art on the masses, we are compelled to turn our particular attention on the theatre.

As Socialist art aims to present events in motion, with their conflicts and consequences or prognoses which follow, no form of art answers more to the spirit of socialist realism than the drama, and the class character of the conflicts is self evident to us. These conflicts may take place between persons, within the individual, in dialogue or monologue. But whenever you see "two natures struggling in the breast" of a character, it is the conflict of different social ideas, different systems of feeling that correspond to the ideas and feelings of the classes taking part in the struggle. One might examine any of the greatest works of art and always find it so. Such investigation is one of the problems of theatrical and literary research.

In this connection I should like to state one problem that has troubled us a great deal. It was at one time considered quite the thing for an artist ,especially a dramatist, to make a thorough study of dialectic materialism, grasp the forms dialectic materialism assumes in artistic work, and only then write accordingly. Such an approach is of course incorrect. It is of course, absurd to think socialist realism attainable only to people having a thorough knowledge of dialectic materialism. This would be equivalent to selecting a small group of writers that have made a special study of Marxian philosophy, if there are such, as the only capable ones and relegate the rest to limbo. The work of writers in the field of socialist realism can of course be based on a thorough

study of Marxist-Leninist theory. But one can very well imagine men passionately in earnest in an active struggle for Socialism and yet little versed in dialectic materialism. Artistically presenting the socialist revolution in the practice of which he is immersed, he can instinctively uncover many most important traits of our reality. He clearly understands the struggle going on, has taken a definite side in this struggle but is not sufficiently versed in philosophy to have justified pretensions of the rounded understanding of life which dialectic materialism gives. Such an artist writes with the simplicity of direct observation. But when such writing gets to the proletarian general staff, to our party, it may prove an excellent and artistic creation for dialectic-materialist interpretation.

There may thus be within the literature of socialist realism a large number of gradations.

If the writer has mastered dialectic materialism in the field of sociology and philosophy it is very good. Any one that has the ability and the possibility to master this method should be congratulated. This does not mean, however, that the artist must needs spend a great deal of time first to first find out how to write according to the method of dialectic materialism, how to apply the laws of dialectics to artistic creation, and only then write. In fact, an artist thoroughly versed in sociology and philosophy will do wrong to stop and think of what particular rules of dialectic materialism apply during the process of creation. There was a time of particularly fetishistic worship of the triad which Lenin has ridiculed so aptly in his "Friends of the People." Mehring has an excellent story of a centipede. A centipede is a very complex creature, you know, that has forty legs and nevertheless, in spite of its complexity, carries out its functions of life very well. Once, however, an evil minded toad asked it: "May I ask you one question?" "Please." "When you put your first foot forward what other feet go forward too, and when the 14th and 19th knee bend what happens to the 27th leg?" The poor centipede stopped to think and couldn't move from its place. *(Laughter, applause.)* One must not narrow down the creative process. You wish to portray artistically with socialist conscienssciousness a mean for a noble event in the struggle—must you abandon the effort because you do not know how to do it "by means of dialectic materialism?" Do it, comrades, even if you do not grasp all the fine points of dialectic materialism. What is important is, that you have revolutionary feeling, that you understand the basic problems of the revolution in the given stage, that you are artistically sensitive and that you possess a style that stirs the reader and successfully conveys your thoughts and feelings. Of course one must have knowledge for this purpose—knowledge of the revolutionary practice which served as a basis for Marxist-Leninist philosophy, and which draws so much strength from this philosophy without a knowledge of which it is difficult to give a true picture of reality.

It does not follow that we should not be interested in how dialectic materialism enters or is left out from artistic creation, how it developed, lived and lives. It is very important to work this out. The mastering of dialectic materialism gives the artist a great deal in the sense of a proper education and maturing of his thought and his outlook on the world. If you will, however, approach every line, every image with a demand for "dialectic materialism," you will only emulate the toad that so disconcerted the centipede.

The problems of the drama are tremendous and so are its possibilities. We do not consider the so-called dramatic genres immovable categories and do not think our dramatists should feel themselves fettered to these genres. Not only can tragedy, comedy, and the drama merge into one another but there can also enter epic and lyric elements. But we can take the older terminology as a starting point and ask, for instance: can there be socialist tragedy?

Not only can, but must. Marx says: the greatest tragedy writers of the past dealt with the sufferings of a dying class, a ruined class, the new tragedy writers will deal with the sufferings of a new world in travail. We have great antecedents, we have excellent tragic subjects in the past. Take such heroes as Thomas Müntzer who went as far as his contemporary reality permitted and who supported himself on the foremost elements of his society. Marx and Engels have pointed out to La Salle that Müntzer, not Sickingen, should have been his hero. Why should not our dramatists pick up the tragedy of Müntzer, show the heroic death of peasant and proletarian heroes of these times, why not show a hero not fallen from the sky, not a genius stranger to this earth, but a class leader, a leader of the class which was then not yet destined to triumph but whose partial defeat was, as Marx said of the Commune, the greatest guarantee of future victory? The closer to ours the era from which the hero is taken the less futile the sacrifice and the nearer the reality to the accomplishment of the class struggle to which we have now approached.

The elements of tragedy, however, are not lacking even in our era, because sacrifice is not only possible but necessary. Sacrifice was necessary during the civil war, sacrifice is necessary in the class struggle between the old and new worlds going on in all countries. There are constant sacrifices in the struggle we are conducting against our internal enemies that put up such bitter opposition now, penetrating even into the socialist forms of the new life, attempting to distort their content. There is a fight on not for one's belly but for life itself. To sing the praise of our victims of this struggle, portray the heroes of this battle now definitely destined to end victoriously—this is doutlessly a very important problem and a glorious basis for a modern tragedy.

And modern comedy? One of our theoreticians passed judgement that the proletariat lacks a sense of humor. But what is humor? It is softening laughter, it is a mood for ridicule while feeling sorry for the one ridiculed, or although funny, calling for understanding and forgiveness. So, says this theoretical comrade, the petty bourgeoisie, timid and half hearted found it necessary to laugh, to smile, it needed not satire but humor. The proletariat is relentless, if it laughs—it laughs to death.

The comrade came to a wrong conclusion because he was considering an abstract proletariat and isolated enemies. It is not so in fact. The proletariat is a great educating class. It educates the poor and middle peasantry, educates the hired man that stands so close to it, educates its own backward elements, educates itself, and educates the intelligentsia which, alas, needs the education badly.

With respect to those classes which the proletariat is educating, to those elements within its own ranks that are basically good but have their failings, humor is an excellent corrective. The humorous comedy, the tenderly satirical comedy, showing failings and teaching how to correct them, is therefore a mirror into which one can look, not to be frightened enough to look for a rope and nail, but in which one can see that a wash and shave are needed.

3

The relation between the theatre and the drama is very important.

What is the drama? The drama is part of literature. What does artistic literature mean to us? It is a definite, exceedingly important social act of thinking, feeling, creation. In this act society, by means of certain representatives, certain definite agents that have special aptitudes in this direction performs an act of self-analysis, self-judgement, self-organization. It is a tremendously conscious social act.

This is the drama. And the theatre? The theatre by itself (without the drama) is an institution erected for the purpose of producing the greatest possible impression on a public by means of an organized spectacle. The "ideal theatre" is one, in fact, where

everything can be presented and is like a good phonograph: plays any record you put on.

A good machine will play well, a poor one poorly. Only the theatre is not as simple a machine as the phonograph, and can of course by means of its technical and expressive parapharnalia, work over the material given to it by the dramatist. But can it itself define problems? No, it can not. Defining the problems is one of the functions of the dramatist. If the theatre happens to have a light operator that has written or worked out a play, this was a feat not of the theatre but of the light operator who happened to be a playwright. Only the dramatist can define what the theatre should give, what its social content should be.

Does this mean that the theatre should be indifferent to the work of development of our drama generally and that Stanislavsky, Tairov, the Theatre of the Revolution can say: "We are form craftsmen, we give drama its final, complete form. Give us plays of a high degree of theatrical literacy that we may play them interestingly!" Pardon —this is not so. Soviet consciousness must be part and parcel of our entire art front. The theatre must live a life in common with Soviet revolutionary dramatics and help it grow.

Social class consciousness, acting by means of the dramatist advances what could be called the dramatic literature of a given decade, year, etc.; the theatre tries to heighten the Soviet character of what is to be stressed, bring home the hidden treasure and correct any errors—and in this respect the theatre and the dramatist must interact one upon the other.

Engels has said that not only were new instruments created because the composers had invented new music, but also new music was often created because the composer had new instruments. Engels has said that human development followed technical progress. The dramatist that knows the theatre discovers new possibilities for his own art. It is impossible to be a good dramatist without a thorough knowledge of musical instruments. In this sense there is a definite interaction. It must always be remembered, however, that the drama with its social content makes the Soviet theatre. the Soviet theatre as form is what gives this drama its highest expression. When the theatre develops a new form, this is exceedingly important, but there must be a definite interaction, in which social content not form is the leading factor.

What is an innovation? An innovation is the discovery of new ways or methods, not known before, and that follow from new developments that present us with new technical problems.

What is stage trickery? It is an attempt to distract, entertain the public without regard to class thought, creative work, the public as a mob, by means of some novelty, some trick which has nothing to do with the problems of the day. In the first case we have a problem that comes from the content, in the second empty form void of all content.

It is necessary that the dramatist comes very close to the theatre indeed, in order that the theatre will feel the value of his collaboration towards the final results attained and remember that the social content is the prime factor to which the theatre must adjust itself.

The problems of Soviet drama cannot but be concerned with the burning questions of the day. Let us, however, analyse this thesis. Truly great art creations are rarely produced overnight. It is true Grillpartzer wrote his best play, *Sapho,* in 20 days while those which he took a longer time to write came out worse. This is not the rule, however. Certain peculiarities are required for this which are rarely met with. In general the author must read and reread his work many times, test it, make over parts so that everything is in its place. And life is on the run. The dramatist is often

tempted to say: where do I come to work out things—I must have a sort of internal "kodak," snapped—and ready for the theatre. It may not be perfect but it will be fresh.

A frequent failing of our critics is the narrowness of their view point: everything that extends beyond these narrow limits seems wrong to them. Their viewpoint must be sufficiently broad to include the entire wide variety of problems.

One can imagine a theatre of limited forms that shows in the evening what happened in the morning, a live comedy and drama can be conceived in which our every day is reflected. One of the big problems of Soviet art is the ability to work fast. It is hard to get away from this problem. Otherwise:

I loaded well the cannon thinking
Soon we'll have our friend ablinking—

but our friend in the meantime has gone. *(Applause.)*

What, then, are writers to do who are working on big serious things? Is it their fate then to lag behind the times? No, comrades, this is not so. When you travel by train the small pebbles at the tracks run together and seem continuous lines. The fill and the ties however do not lose their contours. Further there are mountains that long remain in the field of vision because they are big and dominate the terrain. There are many problems that dominate beyond our year, our decade, even our century and we must turn our creative attention to them.

From this point of view it is exceedingly important to realize that these general problems of which I spoke are defined, concretely presented, in a way peculiar to the period. I refer not to the concrete problems of the day, but to the problems of the age in which we live, the phase of the struggle in which we find ourselves.

We are, first of all, at a particular phase of our conflict with the enemy. World capitalism is showing signs of extreme nervousness; although in its death throes it is making mad efforts and looking for a way out of its difficulties. One must understand Lenin's saying: there are no fatally hopeless situations. If the enemy is in a weak position, if he is dying and gasps, do not hope that he will expire anyway but finish him off for otherwise he will stop dying and finish you.

We are in a continuous struggle—which is not a mere statement. Our world is therefore developing in torment while their world is falling in torment—we must present this dramatically. What could be dramatically more effective? Two worlds that find themselves in such different states and preparing for their last grip. Our enemies will not willingly lay down their weapons—they may fall out of their hands when raised against us, and they may not, the conflict must take place in any event. This presents us with the problem of the art of defense in the widest possible sense—not only with respect to serving our Red Army, our most glorious and most important defensive weapon—the entire front of socialist construction must be considered.

There can be no Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party or session of any other large Soviet or Party body about which the dramatist can say: well, they are talking politics, you know, and I am putting the finishing touches on my drama—it is not my business, I have other irons in the fire. When the Party speaks of basic points of life it is a signal for every front of the proletarian struggle.

Our life, especially that of the village, the collective farm, has not rid itself yet of the alien kulak elements that have dispersed and now like microbes spread contagion. Participation in the struggle for a victorious collectivized village is one of the central problems of our dramatic art. We know the microbe. It is baneful private property, the desire to grab a better piece of meat for oneself, for one's family at the expense, even the harm of the collective group. Our big enemy, big in size—the capitalist countries, banks, trusts, say: "Devil take them, for 15 years we can do nothing with those Bolsheviks. But they have an internal disease. That is our small brother. He

lives there masked and poisons, disrupts, everything about him. You will see how with time this fortress before which we have lost our courage, will sink of itself." To expose this enemy, dramatically present in comedy and drama his cunning tricks, his masks, his temporary successes, the inevitability of his defeat which can, however, be had only at the cost of a great effort, psychologic insight, understanding of what he says not to express but to hide his thoughts—all this is the business of the writer, the business of the socialist artist-psychologist.

As against the forces of class antagonism there is the growing socialist consciousness of the masses and that deep shift, which for the moment seems to be the true center of application of our forces—the growth of social ownership and the growing consciousness that by strengthening the socialist economy we shall all be enriched. I am wealthy because the Union of Soviet Republics is rich. I am now building Magnitogorsk, I have gained or lost as construction is successful or not and am happy or suffer accordingly, it is a vital question to me. People that have already reached these heights of socialist consciousness should be raised to mountain peaks that they may serve to help the socialist rebirth of those that have not yed rid themselves of the yoke of old slave feelings, thoughts, habits.

Engels was a good communist. He was also a dreamer. It is true he did not dream of this: it would be good if every dramatist would think out, before writing an act, how dialectic materialism applies to it. But he has said: I have a vision of dramatic works as true and as full of life as Shakespeare's but which also are imbued with a deep understanding of the historical phases they deal with. He adds: this will probably not happen in Germany.

That is really so—it will not happen first in Germany, but in our country. There is already a close approximation to it here.

As every one of you knows, we represent only a portion of the front, a regiment of fighters for socialism. Over this front the banners of victory are waving. On one of these banners the hand of Comrade Stalin has lettered: "The fight for science and skill."

The dramatist must do battle for science, for, if the dramatist does not know reality he will be superficial, lacking in color. He must fight for skill for he will not otherwise express reality, be actually creative. We struggle for supremacy in science and skill to raise the level of our specific activity and make it of service to socialism.

In the future, when the final victory has been won, our descendants will turn the pages of the history of our life with great respect. Let there rise as monuments of this great transitional era not only the ideas of our thinkers and leaders, not only the triumphs of our masses, not only skill achieved by our socialist labor, but also our great artistic creations, our plays that will then still be presented in order to tell the history of these times with its own voice *(Tremendous applause.)*

Translated from the Russian by S. D. Kogan

S. Eisenstein

The Cinema in America

Some Impressions of Hollywood

When in the days of our tender youth we all studied a little of this and of that and political science according to "Berdnikov" we were thoroughly drilled in the so-called chaos of capitalist production.

But the logic of these dry pages could not displace the image of the Americanized superman, with an adding machine in place of a heart and a time table, accurate to a second, for all life occasions taking the place of an organizing brain. The images of those heroes given by popular novels, of the two legged industrial giants who by pressing a button transfer world markets from one hemisphere to another, those engineers with steel blue eyes enclosing it would seem, the entire atavistic mysticism of the superstitious west-European middle-ages in the steel vise of exact science, mathematical formulas and mechanics, and finally the brilliant, charming, energetic virtuosos of crime in their continuous battle of wits against the no less brilliant and energetic detectives who beat them by "scientific methods" and "exact science" by means of which they uncover their crimes. It is altogether irrelevant that the detective turned out a criminal and the criminal remained one.

The hypnotic charm, beyond good or evil, was always with the inimitably clear, unmetaphysical knowledge of reality, human nature, the complexities of human psychology, three level subways and human relations.

On looking at things domestic or at things passing on the screen one could sense behind them these people that have solved all the secrets of nature, the human personality and can play without error on the keyboard of human passions and interests by means of their exact knowledge.

And suddenly the system cracked.

Cracked on a world wide scale.

Cracked in the very armor of the idealized giant—American technical civilization, exact science and rationalization from water closets to the higher activities of the nervous centers.

Cracked in that visible exterior which, bristling with skyscrapers, so blinded timid onlookers hypnotized by the really overwhelming and tremendous figures of advertized Americanism.

But every hour, every minute, this illusion of a steel giant of exact knowledge is tumbling, collapsing wherever it touches spheres which deviate in any way from the psychological processes by which the crankshaft, flywheel or hoist have their existence.

Just as the Wall Street billionaires sank instantly in the bottomless pit opened by the "great depression," so sinks into eternal discredit the illusion of a capitalist system, so sinks in the impression of the traveler in the United States, the myth of the steel dragon with an absolute knowledge of the aim, which meant absolute knowledge of the means of achieving that aim.

Only in one direction is the aim, the means of attaining it, and the hysterical application of these means perfectly clear—in the merciless reaction to the revolutionary pressure which hits at the head of the steel giant.

Here there is refined, purposeful, efficient apparatus to crush everything alive and vital, because all that is really vital, that is really alive must irresistibly come and is coming towards revolution.

Hence any moral toleration, permitting, say, the shortening of the skirt by a finger or two, seems to the fanatic American moralist of today a license, a beginning of that which will sweep them from the face of the earth.

II

Will Hays is called the dictator and czar who holds in his hands the fate of cinematography. The organization headed by him, "The Association of United Film Producers and Theatre Owners of America" is in fact very powerful and can with the speed of an electric current paralize any undesirable feature that can be forced into the Hays inspection.

On what is this magic power based and what price is being paid for it?

America has no official censorship. The senate at Washington does not refrain from passing a censorship act, suspending it like a sword of Damocles over the heads of the movie industry for the occasion when their product does not morally match up to the standards of the average American housewife or Presbyterian minister.

And the movie magnates create their "Association of United Film Producers" and raise Will Hays to the all-powerfull post with almost unlimited powers.

The iron claw of political suppression can be read between the lines of the printed code, giving good advice on moral questions:

Code:

regulating production of talking, synchronized and silent movies. Formulated and adopted by the Association of United Film Producers and Theatre Owners.

The film producers are conscious of the great trust and hopes placed upon them by mankind. They acknowledge their responsibility before the theatre goers entertainment as being factors affecting the life of the nation.

Therefore, although a film is primarily a form of entertainment without definite educational tasks of the character of propaganda—they realize, without exceeding its functions of entertainment spiritual and moral progress, for raising the standards of public life and a more correct way of thinking.

Basic Principles

Not one film is to be issued which may lower the moral level of the onlooker. Therefore—the sympathy of the public must not be invoked in favor of crime, immoral acts evil and sin.

The sanctity of human laws or the laws of nature must not be mocked and infringement of these must not call out any sympathy.

Special Cases Applying

Crimes against the law must never be shown so, as to awaken sympathy for the unlawful act or against the judgement for it or awaken in others a desire to do likewise.

Murder

The act of murder must be shown so as not to awaken a desire to do likewise.

Bestial murders must not be shown in detail.

The influence of alcoholic beverages on the life of Americans can be shown only in such cases when it is necessary to the dramatic structure or for adequate characterization.

Sex

The sanctity of wedlock and the home must be maintained. Lower forms of sex relationships must not be shown on films as commonly accepted or acceptable.

Scenes of passion can be introduced on the film only when necessary or called for by the dramatic structure.

Excessive and lewd kissing, lewd embraces, improper poses or gestures must not be shown.

In general all scenes of passion must be so treated as not to stimulate the lower instincts.

Seduction and Rape

must never exceed the limits of a hint and only in such cases as it is necessary for the solution of the dramatic knot, but must not be shown with any detail even in such cases. Seduction and rape can never be used as a proper theme for comedy. Sexual perversion or any hint of it is prohibited.

Questions of white slavery are barred.

Race mixture (sex relations between blacks and white people) are prohibited.

Sex hygiene and venereal disease cannot be used as a subject for a film.

Scenes of labor (birth) in natural form or as silhouette cannot be admitted on the screen.

Sex organs of children must never be shown.

Costume

Total nakedness must never be permitted. Under this is understood nakedness shown either in silhouette or de facto, or all seductive and morally corrupting mention of nudity made by any personage on the film.

Scenes of undressing must be avoided and permitted only in extreme instances.

Dance costumes made with a view to improper exposure or improper movements during dances are prohibited.

Dancing

Dances hinting at sexual relations or showing such or improper passion are prohibited.

Religion

No film or episode can show any religion in a ridiculous light.

Ministers of the cloth or other servants of the cult must not be shown as comic persons or villains.

Places of Action

The treatment of bedroom scenes must show delicacy and conform to the dictates of propriety.

The subjects enumerated below must be treated carefully and in good taste:

Execution by hanging or on the electric chair, as lawful punishment for crime committed.

Third degree methods of examination.

Rudeness and excessive pessimism.

Brandmarking of persons or animals.

The sale of women, or a woman selling her virtue.

Surgical operations.

Follows the text of the singular oath of duty, handing over the fate of movies to a preliminary censorship, a censorship during production and a final censorship upon completion at the solicitous hands of Will Hays' organization. The instruction ends up with the following admonition:

"In consideration of the aforesaid, it is resolved that the following methods shall be adopted in practice:

On demand of the officers, The Association of United Film Producers must gather facts, information and propositions relative to the acceptance of scenarios or their manner of treatment.

Every movie producer must submit to the Association all films produced, without any exception, before the negatives are turned into the laboratory for printing.

The Association of movie producers, after viewing the film, informs the production manager in writing of its opinion on the merits of the film with regard to the code above, underlining and pointing out those subjects, treatment, or episodes, in which the film infringes the code.

In all cases of infringement of the code, the film can not be issued until all the corrections indicated by the Association have been made."

In such instances of disagreement with the Hays censorship, as one movie magnate expressed it, "We take and retake the scene until it resembles a woman who having lost her innocence also loses the rebelliousness that agitates the censors."

Assuming the post of producer, manager, supervisor or chairman of the board, one must take an oath to invariably follow the above code.

And if you will overstep it—you will be forced.

But vulgarity—means money, and sensationalism—means money. And money—means everything.

So we see on the screen a most head breaking game of cat and mouse that the Hays organization plays with itself. More correctly, the moral bosses of this respectable institution are beaten by the interests of the actual commercial bosses whenever the movie industry gets an opportunity to make a hit on a morally doubtful or even altogether scandalous piece of sensationalism.

Not in vain is the phrase repeated, with the roll of a small drum:

"If it is absolutely necessary and called for by the dramatic development of the action."

Under the powerful pressure of scandalous sensationalism, twenty-five dead bodies are dragged through this loophole in the film *Beast Over the City* showing a battle between police and Chicago beer king bandits. In *Shame of a Nation* just as many dead bodies strew the path of the film winding up with a formal siege of his iron clad lair where he heroically succumbs to a suffocating gas bomb on the edge of an incestuous affair with his own sister whose lover he has shot out of jealousy.

The inflated by advertizing doubtful "charges" of this film entirely evaporate into a hymn to the powerful personality of the "strong man" to which the hearts of little clerks and stenographers respond, and the mutual destruction of beer kings is very much like the relentless battle of their financial bosses on the exchange or their social benefactors in preelection and election fights.

Some "beneficial" educational value, of course, can be gleaned even from this: a parade of the police fully armed to crush those attempting to break the law may warn those "other" lawbreakers who rebelliously prepare red flags for May 1st. A tear gas bomb does not care at whom it is thrown!

III

King Vidor did an unheard of thing—a Negro film. His last argument was a sacrifice of salary. King Vidor agreed to share the risk with the firm. King works not on a safe salary basis, but on an uncertain percentage of the profits basis.

Irony is inseparable from pathos.

A true follower of the not unknown skirted messiah, Mary Baker Eddy, King Vidor is enchanted by the jazz ecstasy of African Methodists.

But the methods of administering the religious poison, the economic exploitation of religious feelings, are so wildly grotesque in themselves that in spite of the well intentioned religious enthusiasm of the producer, the full grotesqueness and buffoonery of the new messiah racket comes out.

A Negro preacher, provided only by the able enterprise of his black parents with an aureole of sanctity, a special Pullman coupled to a freight car in which there is a special ass, like a Christ enters "on an ass" the city of many sins, that pours out to meet the new Colored prophet.

But in the crowd there is a Colored prostitute with her pimp who were witnesses at that drunken orgy at which the present preacher, then a cotton trader selling the product of his father's farm, having spent the money realized on drink in a drunken rage shoots his brother, and is illuminated by a heavenly light and hears the call to "go forth unto man and sear their hearts with words of fire."

The prophet's partners in the recent orgy, the initiators of the spree, ridicule him in spite of the holy mood of his public.

Undisturbed in his serenity, the prophet calmly dismounts his ass surrounded by an angelic chorus of black children in white muslin, and expertly beats up the insolently laughing mug of the pimp.

After which he calmly continued his entry of the new Jerusalem, having turned his boxing fists into heaven directed palms.

But God's ways are unfathomable. In one of the succeeding reels the sinful maiden is brought to the sacrament of second baptism in the waters of one of the branches of the Mississippi.

Ecstasy enters the God directed soul of the sinful maiden dipped in the cold waters of second baptism.

The ecstasy is transmitted to the newly arisen baptizer.

The girl feels sick. The girl loses consciousness. The baptizer picks her up in strong arms and carries her to a tent on the shores of the flowing river. Only the interference of the provident mother of the prophet saves the religious ecstasy from turning into something even shameful for she grabs him with an energetic black arm and tears him away from the camp bed on which the converted sinner lies, whom the Lord God may enter but not his undeserving servant.

The ceremony of saving souls by dipping bodies in cold water is in full swing and the undeserving servant must return to his workaday drudgery.

The girl later becomes such a frenzied addict of virtue that when her pimp comes to her to turn her back to sinful ways, she lams him with a poker and repeats in a shrill voice:

"That's what I'll do to everyone that steps between me and my salvation."

There are many ways of taking a risky dreamer down a peg. If it is hard to convince the creator of the *Big Parade* of the economic imbecility and racial impropriety of taking up the theme of the blacks, there's the flexible network of the renting apparatus which can, by able tactics, paralyze the successful run of its own products even though made in foolhardiness by such big fellows as the director of *Big Parade,* not to speak of smaller fry.

King Vidor himself told me how *Hallelujah* was knifed by their own renting agents.

The paragraph of the code covering racial problems reigns supreme.

The losses of *Hallelujah* are covered by the profits of the *Big Parade.*

But what are losses compared to the lesson taught that Negro films don't pay, that incontrovertible argument remains in the arsenal of race hatred, subtle tactics in that same class struggle to discourage all those who may ever have a desire to touch again the black taboo.

A Color film, not at all in "natural colors," but on the fate of Colored people in America was one of the first subjects we proposed to Paramount. And our first creative initiative was paralyzed by the cold horror of the company at Negro films which don't pay: "there's the sad experience of King Vidor's picture."

The ironic smile at the religious conceptions of a lower race, not without cunning passed by the code, avenges itself, and *Hallelujah* shoots higher than the aim—over a particular incident ,into the religion of the system, into the thirty-three religious systems of America.

IV

So much has been said, written, and told of how the "bosses" of the movie industry come out of the cosmic chaos of speculation in real estate parcels and old clothes, the victorious circles of manufacturers of chewing gum, natural and artificial fertilizers, that I am reluctant to again broach this subject. It will be better to touch on the living people of the curious last conflict within the leading circles of the movie industry that in 1930 completed the thirtieth year of the first stage of American cinematography. I was a living witness of all that which has been swept off the face of the earth without leaving a trace by that "mighty hurricane" the Wall Street crash and the general crisis and economic depression.

Fox, Lasky, and other veterans of the American movie have been thrown out of the game by the depression. I caught them yet, saw these lions of the movie industry, heroes of the highway, first pioneers that came to discover Movie-California on wheel and horseback, just as in forty-eight flocks of gold seekers rushed to the California gold fields. Not the celluloid gold fields of Hollywood but the gold dust of the river Sacramento, of the fat soil on the estate of the general John Sutter, the hero of another rejected film subject of ours, around the California gold rush in the forties.

The bosses were really scared at the idea of letting "bolsheviks" handle the subject of gold.

The old movie industrialist was a movie adventurer, a desperate player in the dark—the darker, the surer—excelled in sweep, imagination, and was irresistibly drawn to the risk of the game.

America even now plays on everything possible. Half of the speculation of an election campaign is made up of a great number of bets on this or that candidate, as on the leather glove of this or that boxer, the legs of a race horse or of a greyhound.

On a bet, as in the days of the great Mark Twain, tremendous frogs are raced every year in the region of San Francisco.

At the tables of an ocean steamer logbook eagerly crowd holders of sweep stakes on who will guess closest the number of knots the ocean skyscraper will make that day.

Our own five week stay on the border between Mexico and the United States was the cause of not a few dollars changing hands in Hollywood on bets whether we will be readmitted to the land of Major Pease or not.

This old type of movie business man, adventurer, dreamer, sportsman, poet of profit, is being replaced by prosaic adventurers not of the boundless prairies and pampas, but of the dry clatter of adding machines, bank operations, adventures on the exchange.

I was present at the last rounds of the death between the old romantic pioneers of the movie industry and the dry bureaucrats—creatures of Wall Street without initiative, avoiding anything that is not absolutely certain beforehand of bringing in sure returns.

At their hands only a sleepy shroud of endless repetition comes and creative initiative is crushed, although against all logic it once in a while escapes on the shores of golden California.

These are cutthroats without a gleam of romance about them. But they were the victors in the battle.

It is surprising that the accuracy of bank accounting, the exactness of exchange deals did not take root in the chaotic factory kitchen of Hollywood.

Nowhere will one find a greater thirst for the unknown blessings of the god success, a more panicky trepidation before him; and a more complete ignorance of how to win him, how to serve him, how to please.

Chaos, chaos, and chaos.

Chaos in everything that in the least departs from the process started by turning

the lever of an automatic machine or the endless conveyor of technical processes. In everything that is not electro-mechanical, physical or chemical, purely technical.

Or in anything creative that cannot by constant repitition be brought to the ground, triteness, the low level of dull automatism, standard lighting, standard cast, a standard Tom Mix on a standard mare.

A total disorientation in what is needed and how, what is good and what is bad, even in what is profitable and what isn't—which is after all the end of this game of blind man's buff with themselves.

The voice of the prudent cries only for the endless repitition of what once was successful. The voice of the madman calls only for sensations, of whatever order you please from a dance of fresh feet or bellies on the pavement of Broadway to the next crowned Bourbon who just lost his inherited throne again.

Do you think Trotsky could write a scenario? was the first question on my first acquaintance with Laemmele, the Hollywood "Uncle Charles," head of Universal, one of the first pioneers into the unknown, then infant movie industry.

When I shrugged my shoulders at the hand cupped at his ear he continued:

Would he come to be photographed?

And after a while the old man did send a telegraphic proposal to come and be filmed — — to the Spanish Alphonse.

For quality Hollywood makes up in quantity.

The uncle of a friend of mine used to say, "Don't pass up a single girl and you may sometime come upon a good one."

On this principle Hollywood works with respect to scenarios, stars, authors, producers, musicians, artists.

Everything is bought. Snatched from under one another's noses. Throwing out tens, hundreds of thousands of dollars, they are all collected under the brilliant California sun that shines the year round.

They all drink hard, run around in wonderful automobiles breaking all traffic rules and speed limits when the policeman doesn't look, buy him off when he does, when he catches them on his motorcycle; they get tanned, smearing themselves with thick layers of cream against sunburn, go in for ocean bathing, but mainly for their weekly checks, for which in a fit of conscience they think up schemes for creating eternal values.

Then it appears that 90 per cent of these people famous somewhere for sham or real qualities are useless to the movies and sumptuous greetings at pseudo Spanish style cottages of movie magnates and stars are replaced by silent departures with current accounts fatter than before.

In the loss columns of the company appear another ten thousand dollars or so. And the serviceable triangle of the inured scraper removes some more black letters from the glass of one of the thirty to forty scenario offices or one of the twenty or so producer's offices.

In a week the dark letters of another famous name appear on the door, and behind it another eminent light will sit bored and yawn, catch flies while waiting for his appointment with another imported wonder on the golf links.

Should this new eminent guest, by rare accident, get some shadow of an idea into his head, he will have to try for about ten days or so to obtain an interview with the manager, who will give him three minutes to tell, amid the noise of telephones, dictaphones and hoarse shouts of loud speakers, of what, to everyone's really great sorrow, had the temerity to enter his head.

The presence of these great lights is dictated primarily by advertizing considerations, and the daily routine payroll brokers.

Should after a stay of many weeks, a rachitic offspring of the departed dramatic genius remain to squeal, this semipractical original will fall into the hands of expert

nurses who will not fail to make of it the hundred and first variation of the same eternal triangle story.

In general the guest is faced by two dilemmas: to forget personality and convictions, climb the golden merry go round and merrily turn out merry products without taking things too seriously—like Lubitsch; or take a tragic view of things and leave the promised land like Reinhardt.

But how I shall be asked, does Hollywood, with this chaos, confusion and lack of system succeed in flooding all its own and the world's markets with a sufficient, if not to say excessive quantity of movies?

On railroads, willy nilly, a certain number of accidents will occur year in year out.

Out of a hundred scenarios one must turn up more or less possibly good at least for doing over.

Do you need a hundred scenarios?

Assume ten per cent good ones.

And Hollywood buys ten thousands.

Where a business is conducted not on scientific principles and the logical results of analysis, of long years of experience, the business will necessarily be drawn into the debauchery of unaccounted volume, large staffs, and useless expenditures counting largely on statistical probabilities: to a hundred items of trash one, two, perhaps three worth while.

The debauched, unbusiness like chaos is due principally to the disproportion between expenditure and income in the movie industry.

The mistakes and groping in the dark of a group of unwise is more than made up by the foolishness of millions of users, in their unending thirst for spectacles ready to swallow any trash.

In addition the theatregoer is safely bound in the chains of the chain system of theatres, giving him no choice but to take what is offered.

Where there is no clear cut analytically scientific understanding in the organization and technology of the creative processes, there can be no systematic education of youth, no rational education in cinematography except the Shamanistic adventurism of private speculative "movie studios," that generally prepare youth for totally different purposes.

The necessity for conscious efforts at self preservation in the merciless struggle of competition dictate the putting up of a triple ring of barbed wire around the sacrosanct territory of moviedom.

Youth not only is not educated.

It is barred out by triple bars on impenetrable gates.

The circular of the past president of the Academy, William DeMille, that has appeared in all newspapers in the United States says:

"It is necessary to adopt measures to convince youth that it is unnecessary in Hollywood. The situation is a strained one as there is an excess of unemployed in all branches of movie production.

"Out of seven thousand actors and actresses registered at the call bureau only six or seven people were employed a day. If the number of calls were divided by the number registered it would show that one can expect to get a role once in three years.

When the industry is in such a position that it cannot employ its experienced actors, any attempt of young people to push through is tantamount to suicide . . ."

Out of 17,500 extras registered in 1930 at the central actor's employment bureau only 883 had on an average one day's employment a week and only 95 worked three days a week.

Talented youth can really only end up in suicide or crawl about in fruitless search of "a pull" with one of the numerous relatives of movie magnates that grace their companies.

That was in 1931.

Now when stars that once shone alone in bright miles of film are compelled to cluster in groups of five or six in one picture with a corresponding distribution of the laurels the plain mortal that once played leading roles are forced by economic pressure into the rows of paltry "extras" to earn a grub stake from role to role.

V

And this squalor of ideas, thought and thriftlessness is served by the world's most perfect technical apparatus. And here to balance the sombre colors of the picture painted thus far, one must sing a hymn of praise not only to the technical achievements, but to the unending reserves of labor, energy, time, and money which are spent to solve the smallest practical and technical problem in detail.

Skyscraper research laboratories on accoustics and the perfection of the microphone, reequipment of entire million dollar buildings and outfits in the sound registering system, chemical treatment persistent effort to increase the sensitiveness to light of emulsion—all this converts the seemingly dreary field of production technology into a continuous live stream of improvement and technical triumph.

Rational differentiation of the executive apparatus, high qualification of the units composing it, headturning speed of taking and serving news reels and the existence of special news reel theatres; the ability even though wrongly in their own way, perhaps in pursuit of sensation, but with plenty of flexibility and speed to react to facts and events of the stirring present; the brilliantly functioning network of rented theatres, even though on a commercial and not cultural footing, but embracing all of America inclusive of the smallest hamlets; finally the great sweep of the movie industry as a whole, giving it the respectable place of third in size of the largest industries of the United States assuring to it in this way a sufficient material basis for continuous technical development—all this cannot but set us fiercely to thinking on these points, on all of which we sin doubly living in a system of all embracing planned economy of socialist sweep, which, on rational approach, gives us incomparably greater possibilities on all lines than decaying capitalism.

And we must always have before us with unbending and unceasing persistence and flaming enthusiasm the slogan "Catch up and Surpass" on those positive features which can be found in the achievements of the class enemy.

An uncompromising realization of this slogan, instilling our ideology and our content into a fully developed technique which "in the period of reconstruction determines everything"—this is the bolshevist task which stands before our cinematography as a whole at the moment of our victorious entry into the second five year plan.

Translated from the Russian by S. D. Kogan

Granville Hicks

Problems of American Fellow Travelers

Notes on American Novelists, Poets and Critics

At the present time a large proportion of the outstanding novelists, poets, dramatists, and critics in the United States are avowedly sympathetic to the major aims of the working class. In cannot be assumed that all these writers will continue to support the party in its struggles; indeed, there are already signs of defection and apathy. But there is no doubt that a considerable number of the present fellow-travelers will remain loyal and will come closer to the working class. And they will not only aid in political campaigns and other struggles; they will also express their convictions in their writings. They will exercise an important influence on American life, and they will contribute to the development of a genuine proletarian literature.

Yet we must not suppose that the fellow-travelers have an easy task. On the contrary, all the evidence now available indicates that they face extremely complex and persistent problems. Many of these arise from the fact that, though the fellow-travelers have now allied themselves with the proletariat, they are in fact bourgeois. Even those who were born of working-class families have been educated in bourgeois institutions and have felt the innumerable influences of the bourgeois literary world. It is not difficult for them to transfer their allegiance from the bourgeois to the proletariat, for most of them have long been actively in revolt against bourgeois theories and standards, but it is difficult for them to destroy old habits of thought.

We must frankly recognize this situation. It does no good either to assume that the fellow-travelers have completely obliterated the influence of their bourgeois upbringing or to berate them for having failed to do so. The only way to solve the problem is to face it. In particular it is necessary to see precisely how the conflict between proletarian loyalties and bourgeois habits affects the novels, poems, and plays of the fellow-travelers. The literature of the American fellow-travelers is already extensive, and an examination of it may help readers to understand both the achievements and the failures of these writers. And it may help the writers themselves to overcome their faults.

The Novelists

The problem reveals itself most clearly in the novel. It is natural for a novelist to want to write about the kind of life he knows best, and for most fellow-travelers that means writing about the bourgeoisie. Now obviously no part of life is forbidden to the revolutionary novelist; his task, if he chooses to write about the bourgeoisie, is merely to embody in his novel a proletarian attitude towards that class. But that is easier said than done. On the one hand, it is quite possible for him to select material that shows the decadence of the bourgeoisie and reveals the psychology of an exploiting class. On the other hand, however, it is very hard for him to display in such a novel the power and promise of the working class. The typical modern novel presents life through the consciousness of its characters, and, in America at least, the average bourgeois is conscious neither of his role as an exploiter nor of the menace to his class in the insurgent proletariat. Sometimes the novelist can find a device that suggests the nature of the forces that are working for change: John Herrmann's *The Big Short Trip,* for example not only portrays the bankruptcy of capitalism, by showing the collapse of a jewelry salesman, but also, by introducing the interest of the salesman's son in Russia, gives an indication of the growth of a new world. Ordinarily, however, the novel of bourgeois life is limited, as is Edwin Seaver's *The Company,* to the depiction of disintegration.

Much the same difficulty arises when a novelist chooses to portray the sections of the

proletariat that have not been roused to class consciousness. Erskine Caldwell has written two novels about southern poor whites. The first of these, *Tobacco Road,* shows why its characters lead so miserable an existence, but gives no indication of the forces making for change, and the second, *God's Little Acre,* very inadequately suggests the latent power of the southern proletariat. Edward Dahlberg, in *Bottom Dogs* and *From Flushing to Calvary,* deals with the *lumpenproletariat,* and he too ignores the existence of class-conscious workers. Both Caldwell and Dahlberg leave an impression of futility, and, indeed, their books might even be cited, by enemies of revolution, as demonstrating the helplessness of the American proletariat.

We cannot wonder that many of the Communist sympathizers have preferred to deal with struggling workers. A strike has obvious dramatic value, and it demands dynamic treatment. Yet, as five novels about the Gastonia strike show, it is not easy to give a comprehensive picture of such a struggle. In the first of these novels to be published, Mary Heaton Vorse's *Strike,* the story is presented principally from the point of view of a middle-class observer. It was obviously easier for Mrs. Vorse to describe the emotions of such a person, for she herself was awakened by the Lawrence strike of 1913 as her character is awakened at Gastonia. And it cannot be denied that her method is in a way effective, for the bourgeois reader can put himself in the place of this character and feel with him the courageous determination of the workers and the blind brutality of their exploiters. Nevertheless, as in many of Upton Sinclair's novels, the personality of the middle-class sympathizer obscures from the reader the essentials of the situation, and at times bourgeois sentimentality is more prominent than proletarian militancy.

Two of the other novels, Fielding Burke's *Call Home the Heart* and Grace Lumpkin's *To Make My Bread,* deal with women who leave their homes in the mountains to work in the mills. The former is a masterly picture of both the barbaric and the poetic qualities in the daily existence of the isolated people of the southern mountains, but it very imperfectly describes what happens to these people when they go into the mills, and it fails to give any realistic account of the strike. It almost seems as if the strike material were imposed upon a conventional local color novel of mountain life. The ending is illogical and inconclusive, and the central character, excellently portrayed in the first part of the book, becomes blurred and unconvincing. *To Make My Bread* is better proportioned and seems to be based on a wider knowledge and a closer understanding of the people it portrays, but it too suffers from the author's failure to catch the full fighting spirit of the workers. It is not dynamic enough, and as a result neither the characters nor the situations are memorable. It is a conscientious chronicle rather than a moving and vital creation of the proletarian spirit.

Sherwood Anderson's *Beyond Desire* points to a different sort of danger. Anderson has been writing for nearly twenty years and has concerned himself largely with inarticulate persons. In trying to fathom the minds of these characters he was led, in the early twenties, into a foggy mysticism that for a time threatened to extinguish his creative powers. His recent interest in Communism has given him fresh courage, and in many ways *Beyond Desire* is a firmer and stronger book than any he has written in recent years. But his mysticism has by no means been eradicated, and it dominates much of his new novel. As a result the novel is not unified and at times is not even coherent. He is still obsessed with sexual problems, which he continues to treat in the manner of D. H. Lawrence. Though a good deal is said about Communism, the struggle of the workers plays a relatively unimportant part in the book, and it is presented in a falsely melodramatic manner. *Beyond Desire* is significant because it reveals the kind of discontent that is seething below the surface of American life, but it makes a very poor model for revolutionary writers.

And still another difficulty appears in Myra Page's *Gathering Storm.* She has a clearer idea than any of the others of what a novel on a labor conflict should contain. She shows

the conditions of white and Negro workers, traces the growth of class-consciousness, shows the relation of the Negro problem to the labor problem, and describes the methods of the labor leaders. But she has tried to include in the novel many elements of the situation that her imagination has not assimilated, and as a result we find, side by side with vivid descriptions and clear characterizations, passages of straight exposition and argumentation that make the novel disorganized and unconvincing. It is not enough for a writer to know what his novel should contain; he must grasp his materials firmly and re-create them in terms of his chosen medium.

The fellow-traveler, and even the writer who belongs ideologically to the working class is, as we have seen, confronted with an unpleasant dilemma. On the one hand, there is the material of bourgeois life, which he knows but finds it almost impossible to treat to his own satisfaction. On the other hand, there are the experiences of the proletariat, which he has not shared or has very incompletely shared, and which he is in danger of treating as an outside observer. John Dos Passos has attempted his own solution of this problem. In the complex narrative of which *The 42nd Parallel* and *1919* are the first two volumes, he tells the stories of ten characters, some of whom belong to the bourgeoisie and some to the proletariat. Thus he is able to use his own experiences, re-interpreted in terms of his present attitude towards the bourgeoisie, and at the same time he can show the forces that will overthrow the capitalist class. The method is well-adapted to Dos Passos' talents, and it is adapted also to the complexity of the American scene. Even now the lines are far from sharply drawn, and an accurate account of America must show many shades of opinion. If there is any complaint to be made against Dos Passos, it is that, at least in the first two volumes, he has not sufficiently emphasized the strength of the working class. Moreover, the complexity of his form, with such devices as the "Newsreel" and the "Camera Eye," is likely to prejudice the proletarian reader. This complexity may be the necessary expression of Dos Passos' vision of the contemporary situation; it may even be advisable in any rendering of that situation at the present time. But surely a time will come when a novelist who is saturated with the revolutionary spirit can achieve all that Dos Possos has achieved, and more, in a form that any worker will have no difficulty in comprehending.

The Poets

Amid all these difficulties novelists have one advantage: the tradition of critical realism developed by various dissident sections of the bourgeoisie has made many contributions, by its failures as well as by its successes, to the creation of proletarian fiction. Fellow-travelers can learn much from muckrakers such as Upton Sinclair, naturalists such as Dreiser, and satirists such as Sinclair Lewis. In poetry, on the other hand, there is almost no usable tradition. Whitman was the only nineteenth century poet to vigorously express the spirit of revolt, and his extreme individualism, his mysticism, and his lack of discrimination make him a dangerous model. In the poetry of the past twenty years pessimism, agrarianism, and obscurantism have been dominant; middle-class poets have evolved elaborate and largely personal methods for the expression of their private sorrows. Almost the only poet of the nineteen-twenties who made any attempt to deal with the life of the working class was Carl Sandburg, and he was much influenced by and has now largely yielded to the pessimism of his contemporaries.

Whereas the revolutionary novelist may, at least to a certain point, learn from the more critical of his bourgeois predecessors, the revolutionary poet has no earlier stage of revolt to which he can look for guidance. The result is that several of the younger poets who are in sympathy with Communism have tried to adapt to their purpose the forms and idioms of the experimental reactionary poets. Both Horace Gregory and S. Funaroff, for example, have been much influenced by T. S. Eliot, who calls himself a royalist, a classicist, and an Anglo-Catholic. Eliot and kindred reactionaries have evolved forms that express their own restlessness and futility. The attempt to use their

technical devices for the expression of the revolutionary spirit inevitably involves a fundamental contradiction, and the resulting poems are confused and ineffective.

It has been suggested that revolutionary poets would do well to draw upon the simple poetic expressions of the people. Unfortunately America has no strong tradition of folk poetry, partly because newspaper versifiers such as Edgar Guest have vulgarized the themes and the verse forms of earlier folk poets. However, we have the songs of such militant working-class poets as Joe Hill and Ella May Wiggins, and there is probably much material of this sort that remains uncollected. One would not suggest that fellow-travelers should limit themselves to the subjects and methods of these fighting poets, but they would find much healthier nourishment in their work than in the elaborate elegies of T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. It is significant that Langston Hughes, a leading Negro poet, has been deeply influenced by the work songs of his people. Poets must not only rid themselves of every remnant of bourgeois pessimism; they must also find a fresh idiom and create new rhythms for the expression of proletarian militancy.

The Critics

The task of the critics is, in a sense, easier than that of the novelists or the poets. Novelists and poets draw upon emotions and impressions that may have been affected by their bourgeois experiences in ways that they do not recognize. Critics, on the other hand, depend more upon logic and analysis, and their prejudices are more clearly revealed. They do not find it easy to eradicate bourgeois attitudes, but at least they are more likely to recognize these attitudes for what they are.

This advantage, however, carries with it a corresponding disadvantage. Because the critic deals to no small extent with abstract ideas, he is in danger of losing touch with the actual experience of the creators of literature. Even if he has a correct understanding of Marxian principles—and few critics in America have made more than a beginning in the study of Marxism-Leninism—he may apply them in a narrowly dogmatic fashion. If this happens, his formulations will be of little assistance to either readers or writers. They may, indeed, so confuse writers as to be a positive menace to literature. This is particularly likely to happen in America, where few of the fundamental problems of Marxist criticism have been cogently dealt with. It is necessary for the critic to master Marxist-Leninist thought and reconsider his reading of past literatures, and at the same time he must maintain the closest possible contact with the work of revolutionary writers and with the realities of the revolutionary situation. It is no wonder that much Marxian criticism is confused and mistakenly dogmatic.

It is easy enough to see that many, though not all, of these problems can be solved if the fellow-travelers draw closer to the working class. On the one hand they need the discipline of Marxism, and on the other they need to participate in the struggle of the workers. Only thus can they destroy the innumerable survivals of their bourgeois inheritance. Only thus can they resolve the conflict between the two sets of interests that are struggling within them.

The seriousness of these problems I have tried to indicate. And yet there is no reason for despair. On the contrary, what may broadly be described as the revolutionary movement in literature is extraordinarily promising. In addition to the writers I have mentioned, there are many others, far too many to list here. The work of many of these writers—such men, for example, as Moe Bragin, Robert Cruden, Joseph Vogel, and Whitaker Chambers—is full of promise. To give the names of the younger writers who are sympathetic with the revolutionary movement would be to mention a large proportion of the authors whom even bourgeois critics recognize as significant for the future. With such writers, and with the dynamic power of the revolutionary movement, there can be no talk of failure. Gradually problems will be solved, and the full importance of the new era in American literature will be apparent.

Joseph Kalar

To the Murderers of Harry Simms

1

Harry Simms. Communist. 19 years old. Murdered.
Harry Simms. Dreamer. Fighter. Boy.
We'll make a poster about that.
We'll hang it up on the walls of your rotten
rat devoured world.
We'll hang it up where the rust of dark dead days
will never gnaw the least small word.
We'll hang it up where we can always see,
so that the thought of you and you and you,
will always be a retching in the foul gutters
of your decaying world.

2

Surely today now the frog mouths of you are smiling.
Surely surely you are today spitting the foul phlegm
of your minds in the unwashed spittoons
of your world.
Surely surely the hog jaws of you are slavering today:
"We got him, we got the bastard, we got the Red.
It was rich, was'nt it, the way the hospital
wouldn't let him in for an hour
until the bill was made good,
and him lying there, bleeding at the guts."

Surely today now your world of bills, hunger, and death,
looks very good to you,
doesn't it, gentlemen?

3

And if the sun shines
licking the wounds of our toil with warm soft tongue,
and if the clouds sail gracefully before it,
and the stars shine,
and grasses soft under foot
remind us that the world is good
and life is very beautiful,
still we shall remember
the cancer of capitalism gnawing at the heart
of this, our warm beautiful world.

And the softness of the days shall not rust
the steel of our hearts
nor the iron of our purpose!

Emi Siao

Nanking Road

Quiet on the Nanking Road.
Through the mist the lanterns glimmer.
Cold, chilly rain drops
On the bones of the rickshaws shimmer.
Behind the walls while the heavens weep
Ladies and gentlemen lie down to sleep.

The high walls dream. Shadows creep.
Someone glides forward from a dark hollow.
Two others peep
And begin to follow,
Bent, intent.

Corner.
This is the place.
"Hurry up!"
"Wait!"

A scattering of words from an unseen face.
One goes ahead. Another to the right.
A third to the left, running in the night.

A-Chang, ready.
A-Lee, ready.
A-Wong, ready.

Now the posters are up—that's all.
The slogans hung—that's all.
The notices pasted on the poles,
The banners on the wall:

LONG LIVE THE SOVIETS
DOWN WITH THE KUOMINTANG
LONG LIVE THE RED ARMY
DOWN WITH THE BRITISH GANG

The Russian White Guards
Are England's obedient servants—
Truer than the "treacherous" Hindus—
The lousy dogs, the bastards:

At a crossing of Nanking Road
A White Guard stands with his gun.
The shadows glide by but cannot be hidden.
The White Guard sees and aims.

A-Lee knows it's all up.
A-Chang tries to flee.
Into a side street, into the darkness,
The White Guard shoots!
One!
Two!
Three!
A-Wong falls. Lee and Chang
Rush to the White Guard, grab his gun.
Turmoil . . . .
Groan . . . .
From everywhere police hounds run
To rope the dead tigers.

Whistles shrill on Nanking Road.
"You can't get by us!
What the hell are these papers for?
What's this red stuff?"

"Red banners
For the demonstrations.
These papers,
Our proclamations:
Written cries—
Calling the workers to strike,
The peasants to rise!"

"Give it to 'em!"
The butt of the gun . . . the bayonet . . .
"Say, you bums! Where did you come from?
Where're the others yet?"

"Everywhere!
Where the air is—We are there.
Where classes are, struggle is born,
Where the fate of slaves will not be borne.
Easy enough to kill us three,
But thousands stand in line behind me:
For life or death—the class struggle,
A tremendous thing, a fierce battle."

Thus the last slogans—loudly shouted.
The last groans—in the death rattle.

Quiet on the Nanking Road.
Through the mist the lanterns glimmer.
Cold, chilly rain drops
On the bones of the rickshaws shimmer.
Behind the walls while the heavens weep
Ladies and gentlemen lie down to sleep.

Adapted from the Chinese by the author, Lydia Filatova and Langston Hughes

LETTERS and DOCUMENTS

F. Schiller

Marx and Engels on Balzac

Unpublished Correspondence of Friedrich Engels

Foreword by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute

The following letter (a rough draft) by Engels to Margaret Harkness, an English socialist writer of the eighties, has never before been published. It is undated, but was probably written early in April 1888, as we may conclude from Miss Harkness' answering letter to Engels of August 5, 1888.

It is well known that Marx had a high opinion of Balzac's work as an artist. He even intended to write a book on Balzac after the completion of *Capital*. The letter by Engels published below shows that he too ranked Balzac very highly, considering him a great artist and realist, and a writer from whom he could sometimes learn more of the time in which he lived than "from all the professional historians, economists and statisticians of the period together."

Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute

Dear Miss Harkness:

Thank you very much for sending me your *City Girl* through Mr. Vizetelly.

I have read it with the greatest pleasure and avidity. It is indeed, as my friend Eichkof, your translator, calls it, *ein kleines Kunstwerk;* to which he adds, what will be satisfactory to you, that consequently his translation must be almost literal, as any omission or attempted manipulation could only destroy part of the original's value.

What strikes me most in your tale, besides its realistic truth, is that it exhibits the courage of the true artist. Not only in the way you treat the Salvation Army, in your sharp repudiation of the conception of the self-satisfied philistines, who will learn from your story, perhaps for the first time, why the Salvation Army finds such support among the masses of the people, but above all in the unembroidered form in which you have clothed the fundamental basis of all books—the old, old story of the proletarian girl seduced by a man from the middle class. A mediocre writer would have attempted to disguise the trite character of this plot under a heap of artificial details and embellishment, and his design would have been seen through, none the less. But you felt that you could tell an old story because you were in a position to make it new by the truthfulness of your presentation.

Your Mr. Grant is a masterpiece.

If I have any criticism to make, it is only that your story it not quite realistic enough. Realism, to my mind, implies, besides truth of detail ,the truthful reproduction of the principle that the emancipation of the working class ought to be the cause of the working class itself. The revolutionary reaction of the working class against the oppression that surrounds them, their convulsive attempts—half conscious or conscious—to attain their rights as human beings, belongs to history and may therefore lay claim to a place in the domain of realism.

I am far from finding fault with your not having written a purely socialist novel, a *Tendenzroman,* as we Germans call it, to glorify the social and political views of the author. That is not at all what I mean.[1] The realism I allude to may creep out even in spite of the author's views. Let me refer to an example. Balzac, whom I consider a far greater master of realism than all the Zolas, past, present or future, gives us in his *Comedie Humaine* a most wonderfully realistic history of French "society," describing, chronicle fashion, almost year by year from 1816 to 1848, the ever-increasing pressure of the rising bourgeoisie upon the society of nobles that established itself after 1815 and that set up again, as far as it could *(tant bien que mal,)* the standard of the *vieille politique française.* He describes how the last remnants of this, to him, model society gradually succumbed before the instrusion of the vulgar moneyed upstart or was corrupted by him. How the *grande dame,* whose conjugal infidelities were but a mode of asserting herself, in perfect accord with the way she had been disposed of in marriage, gave way to the bourgeois, who acquired her husband for cash or costumes; and around this central picture he groups a complete history of French society from which, even in economic details (for instance, the rearrangement of real and private property after the French Revolution) I have learnt more than from all the professional historians, economists and statisticians of the period together. Well, Balzac was politically a legitimist; his great work is a constant elegy on the irreparable decay of good society; his sympathies are with the class that is doomed to extinction. But for all that his satire is never keener, his irony never bitterer, than when he sets in motion the very men and women with whom he sympathizes most deeply—the nobles. And the only men of whom he speaks with undisguised admiration are his bitterest political antagonists, the republican heroes of the Cloitre Saint Merri, the men who at that time (1830-36) were indeed the representatives of the popular masses. That Balzac was thus compelled to go against his own class sympathies and political prejudices, that he saw the necessity of the downfall of his favorite nobles and described them as people deserving no better fate; that he saw the real men of the future where, for the time being, they alone were to be found—that I consider one of the greatest triumphs of realism, and one of the greatest features in old Balzac. I must own, in your defense, that nowhere in the civilized world are the working people less actively resistant, more passively submitting to fate, more depressed than in the East End of London. And how do I know whether you have not had your reasons for contenting yourself, for once, with a picture of the passive side of working class life, leaving the active side for another work?

MARX AND ENGELS ON BALZAC AND ON REALISM IN LITERATURE

This rough draft here published for the first time, of a letter from Engels to Margaret Harkness, an English socialist writer of the 80's and 90's, fills a considerable gap in the hitherto little explored subject of the attitude of Marx and Engels to questions of literature and art, in particular to realism and the work of Balzac. From the conversations of Marx's youngest daughter, Eleanora, who occupied herself much with literature and the theatre, as well as from the reminiscences of Lafargue and others who were intimately acquainted with Marx, we know that he much loved the works of Balzac, whom he ranked very high as a writer. It was mainly on the basis of these statements, but also on the basis of Marx's own works and writings, that Mehring wrote in his famous biography a short summary of the literary tastes of the founder of scientific socialism:

[1] At this point Engels made in the margin a very illegible insertion which cannot be exactly deciphered. It may perhaps read: "The more the opinions of the authors remain hidden, the better for the work of art," but this version is to be regarded only as conjectural. The final text can be established when the original letter is discovered.

"Marx was much delighted with Balzac's *Comedie Humaine,* which reflects an entire epoch as in a mirror. On finishing his great work *Capital,* he wanted to write on Balzac, but this plan, like many others, remained unfulfilled." As regards Engels however, very little was known about his attitude towards Balzac. Only once does he mention his name, in a letter to Marx of October 4, 1852. The letter here published, which was written early in April 1888, i.e., about five years after the death of Marx, shows that Engels' views on the work of Balzac coincided with those of Marx. It may thus be regarded as replacing to some extent that work on Balzac which Marx was unfortunately forced to leave unwritten—just as the article on his beloved poet Heine also remained unwritten. In order better to understand this extraordinarily interesting letter of Engels, we must first pause to explain those questions which gave rise to its being written and those circumstances which Engels has only touched on in passing, and then pass on to consider various essential points which are to be met with in the study of realism and of the words of Balzac.

I

Miss Margaret Harkness, to whom Engels addressed the above letter, belonged to that group of the petty-bourgeois English intellectuals who joined the socialist movement in the 80's of the last century. There were three socialist groups in existence in England at that time: the Social Democratic Federation under the leadership of Hyndman, the Fabian Society and the Socialist League. Miss Harkness joined the first of these. She did not play any conspicuous part in the socialist movement in an active political sense, but her socialist stories, published under the pseudonym of John Low, were very well known at that time.[1] The main themes of her work were: naturalistic descriptions of the distress and inhuman exploitation of the workers and the young working girls of the towns (the City Girls) in various branches of industry, in particular in the East End, the proletarian quarter of London, and, in addition to this, the "work" of the Salvation Army among these people, and the plight of the workers in time of unemployment. Above all, Margaret Harkness took an interest in the lot of the "city girls"—a theme which was very popular in the 80's and which claimed not only her attention but that of a number of other socialist writers of the time, above all the women. Thus, Eleanora Marx-Aveling, with whom Miss Harkness was acquainted and with whom she, in all probability worked in conjunction when she was investigating the position of these girls, conducted the propaganda of socialist ideas among them, organized strikes, etc. Annie Besant, who was at that time a socialist worker, though she later took to mysticism and became, after 1907, an organizer and leader of the International Theosophist Society, also did much work among these girls, together with her husband, in the 80's of the last century, and Miss Harkness shared their labors. The story *City Girl,* on the subject of which Engels' letter was written, was the first outcome of this work. Simultaneously with her book, Miss Harkness published an article on the same subject in Hyndman's paper *Justice.* Emphasizing the fact that not only the socialist but also the factory inspectors, the clergy and all kinds of charitable societies with purely philanthropical aims busied themselves with such "researches," Miss Harkness says that "the views of the employers and the workers on one and the same subject are wholly different from one another," and she comes to the conclusion, typical for such petty bourgeois intellec-

[1] Miss Harkness published the following novels and stories under the pseudonym of John Low: *City Girl,* a realistic story. London, Vizetelly, 1887—1889. *Out of Work:* London, Sonnenschein, 1888—1889. *Captain Lobe:* story of the Salvation Army. London, Hodder, 1889. *Manchester Shirtmaker:* a realistic story of today. Anth. Co-op, 1890. *In Darkest London:* new and popular edition of *Captain Lobe.* London, W. Kelves. 1891.

[2] Margaret E. Harkness—"Girl Labour in the City," *Justice*—organ of the Social Democracy, March 3, 1888.

tuals who strive to view every question in a "supra-party" light, that it is necessary to listen to both sides and steer a middle course between them. Girls, it was found, were employed in two hundred different branches of production and in some enterprises (particularly in the polygraphical, cigarette-making, electro-technical, perfumery and other industries) they were compelled to work from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., there being two categories of wages, one from eight to fourteen shillings and the other from four to eight shillings per week. But while describing the terrible conditions under which these girls lived and worked and the way in which they were exploited, Miss Harkness does not either in her articles or in the story here analyzed by Engels do anything more than give an account of their situation; she does not point to any way out. In *"City Girl,"* Engels writes, "the working class figures as a passive mass, unable to help itself, not even making an effort to help itself. All attempts to tear itself away from the dead weight of poverty come from outside, from above." Miss Harkness handles the problem of the working class from the viewpoint which was habitual among the petty bourgeois naturalistic writers of the 80's and 90's—not only the English but also the German, French, Scandinavian, etc. In this story we shall look in vain for any revolutionary, Marxist formulation of the question, such as were made by Eleanora Marx when she investigated those surroundings of which Engels says: "Nowhere in the civilized world are the working people less actively resistant, more passively submitting to fate... than in the East End of London." But it does not follow from this, as Engels well says, that the revolutionary writer ought only to photograph, only to depict, this state of distress without giving a revolutionary direction to the entire presentation. Eleanora Marx, unlike Margaret Harkness, did not content herself with a mere chronicling of facts but tried to educate the men and women workers of the East End in the spirit of class consciousness.

This petty bourgeois, philanthropical attitude on the part of Miss Harkness may be seen also in her relation to the Salvation Army. Engels in his letter emphasizes the importance of the fact that she reveals the reasons for the popularity of this bourgeois philanthropical, ecclesiastical organization among the masses of the people. But here again, Miss Harkness did not fully realize the anti-working class character of this organization, as can be seen even in her article "Salvationists and Socialists," which appeared in *Justice*.[1] Her sympathies were won over by the fact in a time of economic crisis "the Army" opened many public kitchens in the East End, one of which, for example, served no less than 4,000 persons in a single day. And once, when taking part in a discussion between leaders of the "Army" and socialists, at which the former called themselves "servants of Christ" while designating the socialists "servants of people," she, instead of giving a clear answer, confused the issue by saying: "I do not know what the socialists think of the members of the Salvation Army, but I know that the latter are very well disposed towards the 'servants of people.' Not long ago General Booth publicly declared the respect which he feels for the socialists. It would be a good thing for the two organizations to work more together than they have done hitherto, since they have many common interests. As for us, the 'Army' can give us a good example. It has never split up. It is a broad workers' union."

Despite the petty bourgeois character of Miss Harkness' ideology and literary work, Engels was of the opinion that her "realistic" aproach to questions was highly beneficial for the socialist propaganda of those days, for Miss Harkness was, if we may employ a term from our present day vocabulary, a "fellow traveler" of the English workers' movement of the 80's. And the attitude of Engels—which, it goes without saying, coincided with that of Marx—towards the petty bourgeois "fellow traveler" writers of that time was most characteristic. While acknowledging their services to the

[1] *Justice*, 24, III, 1888.

working class and stressing the correct positions adopted by them in their creative method, Engels, both in the present case and in other ones of which we know, dwelt in great detail upon their mistakes. Moreover, he criticized these mistakes in such a way that his criticism might serve as a real lesson in the training of a political writer—training that is, in the sense of mastering the method of dialectical materialism. And it is no accident that he sent to Miss Harkness, together with this letter, the English edition of the book *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*—he wanted to give this writer the best exposition of the fundamentals of Marxism.

Miss Harkness' *City Girl* was published by Vizetelly, as far as we can judge, at the end of 1887. As Engels writes, the publisher sent him—at the authoress' request—a presentation copy. In view of the fact that Engels kept up his connection with this publisher after this date, and as Eleanora Marx was on friendly terms with him and may even, perhaps, have placed Miss Harkness' book with him, we must add a few words about Vizetelly also.

Henry Vizetelly (1820-1894) was well known in his day as a radical English journalist, publisher and pioneer in the work of forming an English bourgeois illustrated press *(Illustrated London News, Pictorial Times, etc.)* He lived in Paris for seven years (1865-1872) and wrote a book on the siege of Paris in the Franco-Prussian war and at the time of the Commune in 1871.[1] He was also the author of a number of works of fiction. From 1887 onwards he was a special correspondent in London and was mainly occupied in translating foreign literature (Flaubert, Daudet, Cherboulier, Gogol, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy and in particular Zola). In addition to this, he published a number of works by English writers who were his friends, such as Murray, George Moore and Margaret Harkness. And on this occasion Engels, after reading *City Girl* sent him by Vizetelly, not only sends the authoress a letter containing friendly criticism but does all he can to find her a German translator, in order to bring the work within the reach of the German worker,[2] with this end in view, he writes to an old friend of Marx and his, Wilhelm Eichkof, the author of a well-known book on the First International and translator of Morgan's *Ancient Society* and who was then living at Munich, asking him to undertake this translation.

Eichkof, being at that time obliged to serve a term in prison, did as he was asked, and Engels helped him in the translation of difficult words and terms. In a letter of March 18, 1888, Eichkof writes to Engels: "As regards *City Girl,* it goes without saying that my work must be an almost literal translation, as any omission or manipulation would deprive the story of some of its merit; it is a little masterpiece in its way. I have recently been corresponding with I. G. Dietz[3] of Stuttgart who is publishing the *Illustrievtes Unterhaltungsblatt fur das Volk,* and took the occasion to draw *City Girl* to his attention. He asked me to send him the manuscript as soon as possible when it was completed, and I do not doubt he will publish the story in his magazine, as he has only just finished publishing Frau Kautsky's novel *Victoria.* Meanwhile, plenty of time remains for settling the question of a fee, and I have therefore not as yet entered into correspondence with Miss Harkness, to whom I beg you to convey my respectful regards."

In the summer of 1888 Miss Harkness finished her second novel *Out of Work,* which was published in all probability upon Engels' recommendation, by the well-known socialist publishing house of Sonnenschein in London—Engels' own publishers. Even before the novel appeared in print, Engels wrote again to Eichkof asking him to translate it into German. In his letter of June 2, 1888, Eichkof wrote to Engels:

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[1] Henry Vizetelly, *Paris in Peril.* London, 1882, 2 volumes

[2] We mention these details because Engels' attitude to the work of Miss Harkness constitutes an interesting chapter in the history of Engels' literary work.

[3] Official publisher of the German Social Democratic Party.

"Dietz accepted the manuscript of *City Girl* agreeing to a fee of 150 marks for a single printing. The story will appear in July or August in a new magazine, the title of which will probably be *Der Gesellschafter, Zeitschrift für die elegante Welt.*[1] I will then ask Dietz for a dozen copies, and hope that through the medium of the literary bureau, the Union of German Writers, of which I am a member, I will succeed in getting the story published by other German and German-Austrian magazines and newspapers. There will always be time to publish it later on in book form.[2]. I will gladly take on the new story now in print, and as my agreement gives me seven months for the translation of *Ancient Society,* I shall perhaps find a chance to take up this work for a change."

We have not been able to ascertain whether Eichkof translated this book too, as he at this time entered into direct correspondence with Miss Harkness.

We do not unfortunately know what became of the authoress herself after this time. After 1891 she did not publish any separate works of her own. We have likewise been unable to get her books, and have no chance of judging as to whether she carried out in her actual literary work those instructions which Engels gave her in his letter. Some conjectures in this regard may however, be made from her answering letter to Engels. It is dated London, 44 Russell street, April 5, 1888, and reads as follows:

Dear Mr. Engels:

Many thanks for your letter and your book. As for the latter, I have already read it once and am now reading it again, with even greater interest than the first time.

I have always regarded you with great admiration and respect, and never thought I would have the honor of receiving a letter from a man who, like you, is helping to make world history.

Perhaps, when Eleanora returns, you will permit me to pay you a visit. Much of what you say about my little book is very just, especially on the lack of realism in it.

It would take too much time to explain, in a letter, my difficulties in this connection. They arise mainly, it seems to me, from a lack of confidence in my own powers ,and also on account of my sex. Please accept my warmest thanks for your kindness.

Yours Truly,

Margaret E. Harkness.

The fact that *Out of Work,* which was written subsequent to this letter, appeared in a socialist, and not a radical publishing house, gives us some grounds for supposing that Engels' instructions were not given in vain.[3]

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[1] We have not been able to ascertain precisely in what magazine the German translation of *City Girl* was published.

[2] *City Girl* did not appear as a separate book in German.

[3] As regards the life of Miss Harkness, we know that she was the daughter of a London pastor and worked for some time in a military hospital. We know also from the memoir of Ed. Bernstein that she formed one of Engels' intimate circle of friends for a number of years and frequented his house. In regards to the reasons why she, together with the German socialist Gertrude Hielom-Schack afterwards stopped coming to evening parties at Engels' house, Bernstein writes as follows: "One day Engels received a letter from Frau Hielom-Schack, in which she said that she could not visit his house so long as Doctor Aveling was there. He received a similar letter from the highly cultivated English lady socialist who wrote under the pseudonym of John Low and gave in the form of stories a vivid portrayal of the living conditions of the women employed in the Manchester needle industry, of the activities of the Salvation Army in the East End of London and similar social phenomena. Both Miss Harkness and Frau Schack, however, obstinately refused to give Engels a more detailed explanation for their wishing to shun Aveling's company. It is possible that the cause was some insult inflicted by Aveling of a kind about which well-bred ladies do not like to speak."

(Ed. Bernstein, *Aus den Jahren des Exils. Erinnerungen eines Sozialisten 5-8 Auf.,* Berlin 1918, p. 219)

II

Engels' letter to Miss Harkness corroborates in still more striking terms the attitude taken by Marx and Engels towards *"tendenz"* "subjectivist-idealist" and "objective-realist" literature. This attitude had already been outlined by them in a number of writings and laid down in more systematic form in their letters to Lassalle regarding his drama *Franz von Sickingen.* "I am far from finding fault," writes Engels to Miss Harkness, "with your not having written a purely socialist novel, a *Tendenzroman,* as we Germans call it, to glorify the social and political views of the author. That is not at all what I mean."[1]

Here we encounter the same ideas on creative method as were developed by Marx and Engels in the course of their dispute with Lassalle, when they put forward the method of "Shakespearization" as against that of "Schillerization." Mehring, who took Lassalle's part in this matter, was inclined to explain this "dislike" on the part of Marx and Engels to "their private antipathy" and to "ignorance" of, the works of Schiller. In point of fact, however, this question regarding Shakespeare and Schiller had a profound significance in principle. For Schiller in his later period, the "hero" of the work was the spreaking trumpet of a subjective abstract "idea". For him "struggle" was expressed in the pseudo-tragic duels of "universal-historical personalities" which were alleged to reflect the clashes of history and to constitute motive and determining factors in the development of society. Schiller who at that time (the time when *Don Carlos* was written) was obsessed with the idea of an enlightened monarch as representing the solution of the social question from above, did not envisage in the broad masses of the people the motive factor of social development, did not observe the class struggle and therefore sought a way out in the "ethical," subjective-moral direction. To this method of "Schillerization," Marx and Engels contraposed the realistic portrayal of the historical struggle of the broad popular masses as a struggle of classes, as it goes on in actual fact; they demanded that this struggle should be portrayed in literature in such a way as to reveal the real motive forces and historical class conflicts and that this protrayal should not be restricted by subjective rhetorical pathos. Marx saw the elements of such an approach to the question in the method of Shakespeare and demanded a greater degree of "Shakespearization" of Lassalle; while Engels, in his letter to Lassalle of May 18, 1859, emphasized "that a man is characterized not only by what he does but also by how he does it. And from this aspect," he continues, "the true content of a drama would not, it seems to me, sustain any damage if the individual characters were set off somewhat more sharply against one another. The characteristics in the style of the ancients are already out of date in our day, and here you could, I think, not unprofitably take more account of the significance of Shakespeare in the development of drama."[2]

We repeat that it was no accident that Marx and Engels made this antithesis between Shakespeare and Schiller. It is here a question of two creative methods in bourgeois literature: subjective idealization which in the highest degree distorts the objective course of the class struggle, and realism of a kind which reveals insofar as this is at all possible for the bourgeois creative method, since this realism too is in the final analysis idealized—the inner contradictions of capitalist development. And once again it is no

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[1] It must not however be concluded from this that Marx and Engels were opposed to *Tendenz* in literature. No, they were only opposed to superficial *Tendenz,* to "partiality" which distorts the facts and violates their logic. Nothing bears this out better than their attitude to the out and out revolutionary *Tendenz* poetry of Heine, Hervey and Freiligrath. Marx and Engels declared that all great writers, from Aristophones down to Heine, were out and out *Tendenz* writers, but that *Tendenz* ought to be prompted by the work itself.

[2] *Der Briefwechsel zwischen Lassalle und Marx, hrsg. von G. Mayer,* Stuttgart Berlin, 1922 pp. 179-184

accident that Marx's favorite authors were Homer, Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Diderot, Fielding, Goethe and Balzac.

Dickens was also included in this list up to a certain extent, as were also various other less important realistic writers. Thus, for example, Marx wrote as follows in an article published in the *New York Tribune* of August 1, 1854, on the English realists of that time: "The brilliant contemporary school of novelists in England, whose vivid and eloquent descriptions have disclosed a world more political and more social truths than all the politicians, publicists and moralists put together, have depicted all the evils of the bourgeoisie, beginning with the 'respectable' rentier and owner of state bonds who looks down on all sort of 'business' as something vulgar, and ending with the petty shopkeeper and lawyer's apprentice. And how these persons have been depicted in the pages of Dickens, Thackeray, Charlotte Bronte and Mrs Gaskell—full of conceit, prudishness, petty tyranny and ignorance! And the civilized world has corroborated their verdict with the branding epigram affixed to this class, that it is sycophantic in its attitude to those below." It is just this bold and frank revelation of the inner contradictions inherent in capitalist society, this "tearing away of masks," that Marx and Engels valued so highly in petty bourgeois realism. This true portrayal of the social contradictions of capitalism, this great perceptive power of bourgeois realistic literature—this was what they accounted the tremendous advantage of this literature over "subjective-idealist" literature, and that is why they advised the socialist writers of their time to take a leaf out of Balzac's book. It must not be thought, however, that Marx and Engels deemed the creative method of Diderot, Balzac or Dickens to be that of dialectical materialism, that of proletarian literature. No, Engels' judgement passed on the work of Balzac clearly shows that it is just a question of an historical parallel, that the proletarian artist, basing his work on the method of dialectical materialism, ought to portray the struggle of the working class against capitalism with the same realistic power as Balzac employed, in his method of bourgeois realism, to portray the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the nobility. "Balzac," he writes, "whom I consider a far greater master of realism than all the Zolas, past, present or future, gives us in his *Comedie Humaine* a most wonderfully realistic history of French 'society,' describing, chronicle fashion, almost year by year from 1816 to 1848, the ever increasing pressure of the rising bourgeoisie upon the society of nobles that established itself after 1815 and that set up again, as far as it could (*Tant bien que mal*), the standard of the *vieille politique francaise*. He describes how the last remnants of this, to him, model society gradually succumbed before the intrusion of the vulgar moneyed upstart or was corrupted by him. How the *grande dame,* whose conjugal infidelities were but a mode of asserting herself, in perfect accord with the way she had been disposed of in marriage, gave way to the bourgeois who acquired her husband for cash or costume; and around this central picture he groups a complete history of French society from which, even in economic details (for instance, the rearrangement of real and private property after the French Revolution), I have learnt more than from all the professional historians, economists and statisticians of the period together." This definition is strikingly reminiscent of Marx's opinion, quoted above, on the English school of realists. And those passages in *Capital* where Marx quotes the opinions of Balzac, likewise bear out the great similarity between his views and those of Engels. Thus in the first volume of *Capital,* where Marx is speaking of the fact that the withdrawal of money from circulation would mean contraposing it directly to capitalist usage, while the accumulation of commodities in the sense of treasure is pure nonsense, he makes the observation: "Thus in Balzac, who made a thorough study of all shades of avarice, the old usurer Haubsec is depicted as already verging on dotage at the time when he commences to heap up accumulated commodities in his store rooms." And in the first chapter of the third volume of *Capital,* where he is speaking about the cost of production and profit and is

emphasizing that in a social order where capitalist production holds sway, even the non-capitalist producer is subordinated to capitalist ideas, Marx again refers to Balzac by way of illustration and writes: "In his last novel *The Peasants,* Balzac, who is altogether admirable in his profound understanding of real relatives, skilfully portrays how a small peasant fruitlessly performs all possible labor for his usurer in order to keep in his favor and meanwhile fancies that he is not giving anything to the usurer since his own labor does not cost him anything. The usurer, on his part, is killing two birds with one stone. He frees himself from the expense of paying wages and entangles the peasant ever more and more in the coils of his usurer's net, while the latter is ruined the more rapidly by being distracted from work on his own land. . . ." Balzac's amazing knowledge in the sphere of economic science had already been referred to by Marx on a previous occasion, in his letter to Engels of December 14, 1868, where he writes: "In *The Vicar* of Balzac is the following sentence: 'If the products of industry did not possess a value twice as great as the cost of their production, trade would not exist.' What do you say to that?" (Marx and Engels. *Works,* vol XXIV p. 146, Russian edition)

III

But despite the high opinion they held of Balzac as an artist neither Marx nor Engels shut their eyes to the fact that in his view of life Balzac was a royalist and legitimist, i.e., an adherent to the power of the throne. "Balzac," writes Engels, "was politically a legitimist; his great work is a constant elegy on the irreparable decay of good society; his sympathies are with the class that is doomed to extinction. But for all that his satire is never keener, his irony never bitterer ,than when he sets in motion the very men and women with whom he sympathizes most deeply—the nobles. And the only men of whom he speaks with undisguised admiration are his bitterest political antagonists, the republican heroes of the *Cloitre Saint Merri,* the men who at that time (1830-36) were indeed the representatives of the popular masses. That Balzac was thus compelled to go against his own class sympathies and political prejudices, that he saw the necessity of the downfall of his favorite nobles and described them as people deserving no better fate; that he saw the real men of the future where, for the time being, they alone were to be found—that I consider one of the greatest triumphs of realism, and one of the greatest features in old Balzac." Marx wrote to Engels in the same sense in a letter of February 25, 1867. "Apropos of Balzac: I advise you to read his *Unknown Masterpiece* and *Melmoth Reconciled.* They are two little masterpieces, full of fascinating irony." (*Works* Vol XXIII p. 396 Russian edition.)

This appraisal by Marx and Engels of Balzac's view of life and of his work as an artist possesses an extraordinary great methodological significance. They do not divorce Balzac the thinker from Balzac the artist nor contrapose the artist's subjective view of life to the objectivity of his portrayal, as many critics of the Second International and bourgeois literary men do and have done. Engels counts Balzac's realism as something revolutionary, because Balzac, despite his legitimist sympathies, saw how inevitable was the ruin of the nobles and saw the real people of the future, the "representatives of the popular masses" of 1830-36. On the other hand the petty bourgeois writers such as Hugo and Zola (i.e. both the "romantic" and the "naturalist"), attribute this contradiction between Balzac the thinker and Balzac the artist either to purely subjective or else to unconscious causes. Thus, Hugo says of Balzac: "This great man had a democratic heart and a democratic brain. His monarchism was, properly speaking, nothing but a caprice. Given a little more time, he himself would have gone over to the other side, to the fine principles of democracy." And Zola, who considered himself Balzac's "spiritual son," quite correctly pointing to the revolutionary function which his "teach-

ers" work fulfilled, none the less fails to recall the reasons for this function when he writes: "Despite his respect for monarchy which manifest itself under all circumstances, Balzac has found enthusiastic friends only among the ranks of those who are defending liberty together with the younger generation." An incorrect interpretation of this decisive question which now concerns us—the question of Balzac the thinker and Balzac the artist—is likewise given by the critics of the Second International in Western Europe both before and after the war. These critics generally make of Balzac, willy-nilly, a "revolutionary" or even a "socialist," quite regardless of his view of life; they divorce the thinker from the artist, and almost invariably argue as follows: in his view of life Balzac was a reactionary, but in his work as an artist he was, unconsciously, revolutionary and even a socialist. This incorrect and non-Marxist approach to art has its roots in a conception, very widespread, even before the war, among the critics of the Second International, that the artists' creative process is something subconscious, intuitive, "uncontrolled" by a conscious view of life. It was owing to such a conception of art and creative method that Robert Bernier was able to class Balzac as a socialist, reckoning his *The Vicar* and *The Country Doctor* as "pure and absolute socialism."[1] The appraisal of Balzac's work given in an article by Gean Melia[2] also resolves itself virtually into this dual in the world of the aristocracy and the royalist party."

Others, especially the radical petty bourgeois critics, strive to eliminate all contradiction from the works of Balzac, producing all sorts of quotations as proof of the fact that Balzac was a revolutionary even in his view of life, that his monarchist sympathies were nothing more than "quaint extravagances"!

It would, of course, be a mistake to suppose that Balzac was only a writer of the nobility or only an orthodox catholic mouthpiece of the church and the throne, though this view is to be met with often enough among reactionary critics. Engels, we repeat, was perfectly correct in observing that Balzac was a legitimist in his view of life and that his sympathies were to a large extent on the side of the nobility. The young Balzac who came of a family of rank and file intellectuals—his father was a lawyer—came up from the country to Paris like the young Sorel in the famous novel by his contemporary Stendhal, *Rouge et Noire.* He was actuated by the fundamental craving of the rising class of that epoch—the bourgeoisie—the lust for money, for riches and gain, for glory. Young Balzac's motto was: "What Napoleon could not accomplish with the sword, I will achieve with the pen." At first, it is true he met with no little discomfiture in the commercial French literature as a "Napoleon of the pen." In his series of novels entitled the *Comedie Humaine,* which was so highly thought of by Marx and Engels, and in particular in the section *The History of Manners* his approach to social phenomena is not romantic and not subjective-idealist; he does not put the author's personalities in the forefront or make his "heroes" the speaking trumpets of the "spirit of the times," but, working on an extraordinarily realistic, analytical and investigational plan, he gives a broad picture of society as it is. The function of the "investigation of manners" is, in his own words, to "portray all social reality, not omitting any single state of

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[1] Robert Bernier, "Balzac Socialiste" *(La Revue Socialiste,* XV 1892 p 598.) Of other articles by critics of the Second International, see Hermann Wendel, "Balzac" *(Soz. Monatshefte* IX 1905 pp 1037-1042): Franz Clement, "Balzac" (ibid. XIII 1909, pp 583-593): P. C. Korth, "Balzac" (ibid XXVIII 1922 pp 736-738): Ch. Bonnier, "Les Paysans de Balzac" *(Lere Nouvelle,* 1894, vol II pp 139-147): C. F. W. Behl, "Balzac" *(Die Glocke* XI 1925 pp 663-665): Jacques Bonhomme," "Balzac" *(The Social Democrat* vol IX 1905 pp 24-29). Of the articles written by contemporary social fascists, we may refer to a newspaper item by a leader of the Second International, Emile Vandervelde, who incidentally made use of the occasion to slander the Soviet Union (Emile Vandervelde, "Karl Marx et Balzac," *La Wallonie,* Liege, March 25, 1931.)

[2] Gean Melia, "Balzac, der Revolutionar," *Soz. Monatshefte* 1899 vol 8 p 399) and also "Balzac Revolutionnaire" by the same author *(La Revue Socialiste,* vol XXIV, 1899, pp 591-604.)

life, any single type, any male or female group, any French province or childhood or age or maturity of politics or laws or military life. The basis is the story of the human heart, the story of social relations. Not fabricated facts but what is going on everywhere." But Balzac did not confine himself merely to collecting facts. It true that in the preface to the *Comedie Humaine* he says that "French society is making its own history" while he is only its "secretary, making notes of it," but actually he does not by any means limit himself to the "objective" role of the "observer," he reveals the causes of this "history" and gives the "typical individualities" and "individualized types" of the bourgeoisie and the old nobilty. Had Balzac done nothing but record facts and present "realistic characters" from the society of his time, his works would not be very different from Miss Harkness' *City Girl,* and Engels would hardly have held up his method as a model of realistic creation. No, he has something besides facts in his work—something which Miss Harkness has not, and this something is precisely what Engels calls "not only truth of detail but also the truthful reproduction of typical characters in typical circumstances,. . i. e.,typical "circumstances which surround them and condition their actions." Balzac depicted his "heroes" in just the way which Engels demanded in his letter to Lassalle when he said "that a man is characterized not only by what he does but also by how he does it." Behind the mere facts, behind "what goes on everywhere," Balzac also reveals the stage settings, the mechanism of social life. And here, as a writer of the class that was now asserting itself—the bourgeoisie—he understood and knew that the fundamental feature in the class struggle of his time was the victory of the bourgeoisie over the landowning and ancestral aristocracy, and that the key to this victory was money. And sure enough money represents, in the words of George Brandes, "the nameless, sexless hero in the works of Balzac." His *Comedie Humaine*—what is it but the development of the French bourgeois from a hoarder and usurer into a banker? However, if it is incorrect to regard Balzac as a writer of the nobility, it would likewise be wrong to deny his sympathies for "religion and the throne." Balzac himself said: "I write in the light of two eternal truths—religion and monarchy; two necessities of which the events of our day speak and to which every reasonable writer ought to try to lead our counry back." It is well known that he entered the parliamentary elections as a candidate of the royalist party, that he supported constitutional monarchy with a hereditary king and a powerful house of peers for the defense of property. The people, in his opinion, "ought to be kept under the strongest possible yoke in order to benefit by enlightenment, support and defense without being incited to mutiny by thoughts, forms or actions." It is well known how opposed he was to a republic, especially to the revolution of 1848. In a letter to his sister of April 30, 1849, he says that "the calamities brought upon France by the February revolution are immeasurable and not all its consequences have yet appeared. . ." "This ridiculous mass uprising of democracy," he wrote, "with Lamartine at its head, has caused France much suffering, and it will also destroy those who evoked it." This tendency on the part of Balzac to live on peaceful terms with the nobility can be explained by the disposition of that part of the French bourgeoisie of 1815-1848 which underwent a crisis with the victory of the finance and banking bourgeoisie in 1830 and contraposed to the regime of Louis Philippe the bourgeois-noble bloc of the pre-July French monarchy, under cover of which there went on a development of the "honest old commercial bourgeoisie" along with the industrial bourgeoisie in contradistinction to the finance and banking interests. W. M. Fritche in his *Outline of the Development of Western Literature* writes that Balzac was an "ideologue of the old merchant bourgeoisie and therefore an enemy to the financial bourgeoisie which came into power after 1830 and to the whole social and political regime of the July monarchy, built up as it was upon finance capital." This definition does not by any means exhaust the whole content of Balzac's views of life and of his attitude towards the different groups among the French bourgeoisie of that time. In any case he was in

the main a bourgeois ideologue and a bourgeois artist, and it was no accident that his *Comedie Humaine* should have been included in the Vatican's list of forbidden books as a eulogy of science and a calumny of religion.'

IV

In his letter to Miss Harkness , Engels reckons the creative method of Balzac a model of realistic creation. This, of course ,does not mean that the proletarian writer ought to copy Balzac. It is here a question of an historical parallel. The proletarian writer in his creative work (and Engels in this context means the portrayal of the working class' struggle with the bourgeoisie in the 80's) ought to depict the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie wih the same realistic power as Balzac had done half a century earlier when he pictured the class conflict between the bourgeoisie and the nobility. And Engels, if not literally ,then at any rate substantially, points out that the proletarian writer should be armed with the method of dialectical materialism and not with the method of Balzac, the method of bourgeois realism. Engels counts it one of the most vital shortcomings in Miss Harkness' *City Girl* that the authoress portrays the working class "as a passive mass, unable to help itself, not even making an effort to help itself," and that "all attempts to tear itself away from the dead weight of poverty come from outside, from above." And he adds, "But if this was a true description in 1800 or 1810, at the time of Saint Simon and Robert Owen, it is not so in 1887 for a man who for some fifty years has had the honor to take part in the struggle of the militant proletariat and has always been guided by the principle that the emancipation of the working class ought to be the cause of the working class iself." Obviously, a bourgeois writer of Balzac's sort employing his creative method cannot portray this struggle of the proletariat, since there is a difference between the workers' struggle against the bourgeoisie and the struggle of the bourgeoisie against the nobility, and if the bourgeoisie based itself on one set of ideological principles, the best example of which is offered by the creative method of Balzac, the proletariat is armed with another and incomparably superior view of life—dialectical materialism which makes its own creative methods. Marx and Engels we repeat, envisaged Balzac's creative method, revealing as it did the inner contradictions of capitalist development, as the highest achievement of revolutionary bourgeois realism, and the reason why Engels counted Balzac "a far greater master of realism than all the Zolas, past, present or future" was precisely because the realism of Zola was already to a great extent a realism of reconciliation which misrepresented the real motive forces of the class struggle, especially in the second half of Zola's literary career, the period of the accentuation of the struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie.

Engels' letter to Miss Harkness once again bears out the correctness of the way in which Marx, Engels and Lenin faced the question of the cultural heritage of the past. And it acquires an especial interest also with regard to the question of how we ought to learn from the classics and by the way in which it bears out the correctness of a number of artistic slogans put forward by the RAPP. From the judgment passed on Balzac's work by Engels it follows that the former ought to occupy one of the first places among the literary classics of the bourgeoisie, since, as Engels writes, the fact "that he saw the real men of the future.... that I consider one of the greatest triumphs of realism; and one of the greatest features in old Balzac."

Translated from the Russian by H. Scott

NOTE: "Marx and Engels to Lassalle"—letters mentioned in this article will appear in the following (No. 4) issue of *International Literature.*

LETTERS FROM WRITERS

FRANCE

Literature on the Barricades

It is no longer possible for French writers to keep silent in large numbers as they now feel the menace of being assailed by famine in their ivory towers; and if they scrutinize the horizon above these ruins, they are most of the time too near-sighted to perceive the light of the dawn emerging on the East of Europe. They realize quite well that their incoherent protestations will not save them from the anxiety of unemployment. Wherever they turn, the French writers perceive naught save a bourgeoisie determined to defend its privileges with the tenacity of despair, and a petty-bourgeoisie beset with intellectual prejudices, maddened by a crisis which, until the very last moment, it believed it was going to escape, comfortably seated upon its pile of gold, receiving the benedictions of the church and helped by an army which wears its boots and furnishes its arms.

The hope for a "revival" of business, a revival anticipated for the beginning of the current year, has been given up. The so-called success of "library editions," (a circulation of more than 50,000 copies) has affected only two novels: *Le Voyage au Bout de la Nuit (The Voyage to the Bottom of Night)* by Celine, and *"L'Amant de Lady Chatterley" (Lady Chatterley's Lovers)* by Lawrence. De-luxe editions have failed completely. No possibility for the writer to draw any benefits from limited pretty editions printed on choice paper and carefully illustrated, which used to give joy to the book-fancier. Pretty books are no longer purchased, and besides, the drop of the "values" in this domain has been as strong as that of Royal Dutch, Rio Tinto or Shell on the Stock Exchange. Book-fancying has become a prohibited passion.

Days of Despair

The largest publishing firms in France are experiencing tremendous difficulties. They restrict the number of new books, and they cut down circulation figures. Many of the little bookshops are still in existence only because of credit given by publishers. The book selling monopoly of the Messageries Hachette, notably at railway stands, is a tremendous financial force which takes advantage of the straitened circumstances of certain publishers to intervene and to "control" to a certain extent the production of books. It also bespeaks exclusive selling rights of certain authors. Publishers' contracts with writers are revised, and at times cancelled. The monthly allowances of some writers are reduced, or completely withdrawn. . . The rest of bourgeois "culture"—art, theatre, music—shares a similar fate. The French State cannot afford to increase the subsidy of its gem, the lyrical stage, and the Opera Comique has to depend partly on receipts from movie shows, the same as other theatres of the boulevard, the Theatre Pigalle (the glory of the Rothschilds), the majority of the music-halls, the Moulin Rouge not excepted. The Rex Hall becomes the centre of a new taste in movies, that is to say, an ignoble "temple" where it suffices to announce Jeanette MacDonald "in flesh and bone," to swell the receipts by a half-million francs in one week. The mass has no orientation, it is swayed by mere advertizing. The one who shouts the loudest gets the palm. The republican democracy cannot escape the scandals by which it is beset on all sides. Unable to come to the aid of its own "culture," due to its war and police budget, and in order to save its prestige, it announces an International Exposition of modern art for. . . 1937, which, naturally, should show "occidental civilization and bolshevik barbarity" in opposition. . . If only—the despairing ones think—if only this were the end! But it is only—they say —the beginning of the end. . . There was even a special magazine issued under the title: *End of Civilization.* What does this mean? The journals speak openly of a war, which they would have never dared six months ago. A wave of chauvinism, in the name of "French democracy" against German national-socialism, is breaking over France, being carefully fostered by the ruling class. One reads everywhere: "Buy French." Some provide themselves with gas masks. What then about Geneva? Oh, damn it all, MacDonald dons a black shirt and departs for Rome. . . The German refugees, escaped from the hell of Berlin or of Frankfort, salute Paris like a shipwrecked crew saluting the coast, even if it be that of Tierra del Fuego. Everything seems beautiful to them. The city breathes the air of Spring. The chestnut tree has blossomed duly on time, on March 20th. Sumptuous autos glide over the Champs Elysees. There is gilt bread in the bakeries, charming flowers at Baumann's on the Montparnasse; endless discussions along the terraces and sidewalks of the Dome, the Coupole, and the Rotonde. "With God in France," the refugees think. . .

Fascism Comes to Life

The French writers are certain that everything is not yet lost, that the regime can still survive; but their drama is that they know not whether the regime is going to live as long as themselves. The menace is there: on the right and on the left. For an ever increasing number it is a question of choosing between fascism and communism, between revolution and war, for the old rotten civilization or the young nascent civilization. Non-conformist writers are already in a separate group. If one wants to stick to his privileges, one must stand by the side of Tardieu and of General Weygand who are joyfully listening today to the clicking of pitchforks by the peasants of Bourgogne and Beauce and are dreaming of new legions of "blue shirts" (each one has his color); one must applaud Maurois[1] (alias Herzog, millionaire spinning-millowner) who admirably succeeds in utilizing the system of "author's account" practiced by the Grasset publishing firm, and who declares in *Nouvelles Litteraires:*

"I believe that the great statesman is always simple, 'elementary,' and courageous... I believe he must devote himself unreservedly to the nation of which he forms a part. No free individual without a strong State. To re-create in the young French generation the notion of and the respect for the State, this seems to me to be for us, writers, one of the most pressing duties. Yet I am far from despairing of the possibility to fulfil this duty and to emerge from this moral crisis. The youth is full of courage and of good will. It only waits for a doctrine."

This "doctrine" is evidently something like the new ten commandments of fascism, of a fascism which in France, appears to have forgotten the Dreyfus affair... And which would permit the author of *Ariel* to save his fortune and to preserve his "prestige" in the elegant, privileged and rich society with which he minggles in Paris and in London. Andre Maurois no doubt turns his glances towards the well-made review for young people, *Esprit,* which has now been edited for several months by a group of anti-Marxist writers several of whom are Catholic communicants, a pro-fascist review which is gaining more and more influence among the youth in the schools, and in which Maurois recently published an article against the revolutionary writers.

Thus, in spite of all the invectives of Julien Benda, director of the conscience of a portion of the bourgeois elite, the treachery of the "clers" develops at an ever-increasing pace.

While Andre Maurois takes up a position from a political point of view, Andre Gide hails the class struggle and presides over an anti-fascist meeting organized by the Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists, declaring before an audience of two-thousand people who came to hear him: "Comrades, we know that the only fashion to 'make war against war' is make war on imperialism— everyone, every people in its own country; for, every imperialism necessarily begets war." Around the author of *Caves du Vatican* there were gathered that evening, coming from well-diversified literary quarters, writers like Vaillant-Couturier, Eugene Dabit, Andre Breton, P. Nizan, Jean Guehenno, editor of the review *Europe,* Andre Malraux, author of *Conquerants...*

Yes, the "clers" betray. And it is quite symptomatic that Julien Benda believes himself obliged, in the face of such facts, to make a pathetic and earnest appeal to the "European nation," that is to say, to what he considers the intellectual elite (?) of Europe and which seems to him to be a sort of Noah's Ark in the deluge of blood that is going to engulf the world. He preaches a sermon of idealistic unselfishness: "The mark of the Past... you carry it in the external forms, not in the profound reality..." He wants to save Europe by destroying nationalism; nevertheless he believes—this man who considers himself above nationalism—that the supernational language will be French: "for it is necessary," he says, to come back "to the religion of clarity, of rationalism, of apollism..." He affirms, moreover, that the new Europe will be made by "a man of genius," although, as we have seen, he places reason above genius (evidently, according to Benda's idea, such sophistry is permissible in the name of fascism); that the new Europe will signify "the realization of God in the world."

Reaction to the Rescue

In the meantime both young and old people, descending from their ivory tower, dismantle the panoply of arms and meditate. They no longer form literary chapels, but *political groups.*

This is the outstanding, and the novel fact.

Alfred Fabre-Luce, son of the Administrative Councillor of Credit Lyonnais (one of the most powerful banks in France); Pierre Dominique, who has just published a venomous piece of reporting on Soviet Siberia, and Jean Prevost, normalist, boxer, and radical, have jointly begun publishing a new weekly, *Pamphlet,* in which they notably attack what they call the "conversion of Gide" and communism, this "modern puritanism" (sic!), while indirectly eulogizing Mussolini, the new apostle of peace...

Robert Aron and Arnaud Dandieu (authors of *Decadence de la Nation Française)* publish regularly a sheet, *Mouvements,* in which they affirm their opposition to Marxism and declare: "We are not afraid to say it, if today the question of classes still weighs down upon the world, it is because certain political interests, *both com-*

[1] Andre Maurois, like Henri Bergson, pays the publishing expenses of his books from the start Pampered by the bourgeoisie, they are staunch supporters of the system. Mourois has even advanced the advertizing costs on some of his novels, naturally compensated by a high percentage of receipts from subsequent sales.

munist and capitalist, are playing upon the ignorance of our contemporaries in order to perpetuate an evil which has become curable," Robert Aron and Arnaud Dandieu are offering a ready panacea, "in the name of the spirit. . ."

The Bulletin of the *Plans* groups, conducted by Philipe Lamour, sets forth an agrarian program that is based upon the "radiant farm", the chimera of the French kulak, and therein we read that "the epoch is weak," that "public opinion is resigned," and also the following: "The public is eternally occupied with material worries, with bills payable at the end of the month, with personal troubles; so there is a state of laisser-faire, laisser-glisser." *Plans,* therefore, invite the elite to "master themselves" and to think of the future above the difficulties of the present.

All this, which may seem trite at a first glance, is a new phenomenon *in France.* We see the writers taking the floor in ever greater number, and this they do not only in order to submit "literary" programs or manifestoes of "schools." While these new publications, products of the crisis, are born and developed, we witness the agony, or already the death, of various movements which have had their hour of active life. Thus the "Proletarian Writers" who, with Henri Poullaile, are publishing the review *Nouvelle Age,* subsequently *Chantiers;* thus the *Surrealist* group in which a split occurred and a certain number of its members (Aragon, George Sadoul, Pierre Unik) went over to the Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists and today are members together with Andre Breton, Paul Eluard, Rene Grevel, Benjamin Peret, Tristan Tzara, former chief of the *Dada* movement, all of them collaborating in the review, *Le Surrealism au Service de la Revolution.* Neither should we overlook in this survey the crisis of *Monde* in which are now writing such confirmed Trotzkyist elements like Leon Werth, Magdeleine Paz, Aug. Habaru, Henri Martinet, and social-democrats like Monnet and Bergery.

Lastly, of telling significance was the recently published "List of Demands" by the *Nouvelle Revue Française,* in which one reads only the political texts of the young writers whether belonging to the fascist and spiritualist right or to the communist left.

So that it may be said that the division between conformist and non-conformist writers is becoming more and more pronounced. This division, naturally, affects also other categories of intellectuals: scientists, painters, architects, musicians, professors, physicians, etc. . . The boycott of certain publishing houses in regard to revolutionary writers has already begun.

Faubourg Saint-Germain, and the literary salons, no longer know "whom to trust." Certain "glories" that were still apparently well alive yesterday were consigned to oblivion with a single blow, and M. Henri Bordeaux is now to be found cheek by jowl with another illustrious member of the Academie Française, Monsegneur Baudrillart, at the head of a committe which

Leon Moussinac

proposes to award the sum of 50,000 francs for the best anti-bolshevist novel that will be submitted to it during the next few months. At the same time one sees—for the first time— the appearance in a police novel, in hundreds of thousands of copies, of the Man-with-the-knife-between-his-teeth. Love adventures in "choice" books assume a symbolical significance; the bourgeois fatherland calling upon her devoted sons to rally. . . The signs of decomposition rapidly become signs of death. It is no longer a question of *art for art's sake.*

Literature and Revolution

The Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists has now a membership of 550. It has the names of writers like Aragon, Barbusse, Rene Blech, Jean-Richard Bloch, Andre Breton, Paul Eluard, Eugene Dabit, Elie Faure, Georges Friedmann, Frevilla, Louis Guilloux, Henri Lefevre, P. Nizan, Louis Paul, Georges Politzer, Stefan Priacel, Jules Rivet, Romain Rolland, Sadoul, Charles Vildrac, Paul Vaillant-Couturier, and also the names of a large number of architects, painters, cinema workers, photographers, and theatrical workers. The Association has also won the sympathy of even a larger number of noted personalities in letters, sciences, and arts.

About this there can be no mistake.

Characteristic is also the fact that a Workers' University was held last December in Paris, with considerable success, in which eminent masters collaborated under the chairmanship of Professor Prenant of the Sorbonne. Other outstanding facts: the creation of the Theatre of International Action; the formation, after the Amsterdam Congress, of an Association of Physicians Against War which has been joined in France by upwards of 400 physicians and medical students; the development of the Circle of New Russia which assures contact between French intellectuals and Soviet intellectuals, whose sec-

tions (the science section presided over by Prof. Wallon of the Sorbonne, the literature section presided over by Charles Vildrac, and the art section presided over by Paul Signac) have lately multiplied their activities.

One last observation: on the occasion of the burning of the Reichstag and the outbreak of fascist terror in Germany, the Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists published two "Red Leaflets." One entitled *The Fire* contained notably the protests of Andre Gide, Henri Barbusse, Romain Rolland, Jean-Richard Bloch, Jean Painleve, Elie Faure, Eugene Dabit; printed in 6,000 copies, it was distributed in Paris in a few hours. The second leaflet entitled *Red Front* contained, aside from the aforementioned protests, also those of the writers Luc Durtain and Andre Viollis, of the painters Fernand Leger and Ozenfant, and of the musician Darius Milhaud; printed in 12,000 copies, it was distributed in a few days. This was done in preparation for the grand mass-meeting presided over by Andre Gide.

In the life-and-death struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, in which we communists hold firm positions, the voices that were silent yesterday, are raised today, mingling with our voices and ringing with decisive passion.

The French writers have the floor. The revolutionary proletariat appeals to them for loyal support. No one has the right to keep silent. Each one must recognize his own.

Leon Moussinac

May 15, 1933

GERMANY

Writers of the Third Empire

The new powers that be would make it appear they are determined to draw a sharp line between conviction and expediency in literature as well as in government; they would sternly reject converts—the socalled "February Nationalists," and intend to recognize only those writers "who raised their German (!) voices when it still required some civil courage to do so."So when the new regime is established at the Academy of Poetry the *Berliner Boersen Zeitung* on May 7th writes: "We are particularly gratified that the Minister of Education Rust called on those poets who bound up their fate with that of Germany when it was still fraught with danger to stand for the Spiritual International." And R. Holbaum, the literary critic,writes in the same issue of this newspaper: "Writers like Kasimir Edschmidt who now suddenly come out to declare their flaming faith in Germany, after only a month or so ago singing the praises of Heinrich Mann and Madame Collette as the best authors should be rejected utterly."

"Draw the line between conviction and expediency!" Ye Gods! I hate to put the tactless question as to how then should such writers as Max Bartel, member of the Executive of the German Writers' Union and most flagrant example of mental prostitute be treated. Compared to Edschmidt, Bartel is a white crow.

But take Hans Heintz Ewers—officially appointed leader by Goebbels himself, author of the choral piece staged on the official literary evening in honor of Hitler's birthday,—a figure by no means under suspicion!

And about this saint of Fascist literature Adolf Bartels writes as of one of the creators of "modern perversity and exoticism" and that he is unfortunately a "spoiled modern" who gloats on decay and is an addict of "stylish pose."

But this does not give an adequate picture of the staunchness of conviction of this paragon of Fascist virtue. In Ewers' article on the Jewish Question (appeared in 1912), we find the following gems:

"I do not admit that all races are entitled to equal rights. Quite the reverse—I am fully aware of the superiority of my race. I consider the yellow, especially the Negro races inferior, I do not even consider the Roman race on a par with mine... The only race I can admit to equality with mine—is the Jewish race.

"It should be made easier for Jews to change their names... Let the Jews become officers, lawyers, give them the opportunity to make carreers as officials or in the diplomatic service. Make them citizens in the widest sense of the term. The sooner this is done, the sooner will the Jew feel himself a German."

But perhaps Ewers could crawl out of this claiming it was written way back in 1912. So let us see what we find in his preface to Israel Zangwill's book *Voice of Jerusalem* in 1922.

"I take special joy in introducing to German readers this book of my old friend Israel Zangwill... A confirmed foe of militarism for many years (!) he wrote a play in verse in 1910 entitled *The War God*... He was an untiring fighter during the war... He fought for peace, for a better understanding of peoples... The Frank, open character of this fighter will always be recognized as he has never swerved from what he has once found to be right. People acting thus are sufficiently rare nowadays, when he has it best who can keep his nose to the wind."

O you prescient angel Hans Heinz Ewers!

Such specimens of "high mentality" however, are to be found not only among the authors but also among the literary critics of the "Third Empire." Such is the case of Dr. Max Wiser. Doctor Wiser only two short years ago published W. Marholtz's *History of Literature,* extended and revised by himself. From these very extended and revised portions we shall indulge in a few quotations giving Doctor Wiser's views on some living writers.

On Heinrich Mann: "An ideal soars over his keen satire of the Germany of Wilhelm. A Humanistic European that is the noblest flower of the culture of the white race... In him

(Heinrich Mann) the neo-humanist tradition of Goethe and Nietsche comes to life."

On Stefan Zweig: "A keen psychologist," "excellent language," "successful, masterly constructed tales," (p. 1001)

On Arnold Zweig: "A writer of exceptional subtlety," "melodic phrase" etc. (p. 432)

On the pacifist war novels: "A cleansing process of the German mind," "it (the war ed.) must not recur: this is the ethics that lives in these books."

Why all these quotations?

For their war on books, you know, the National-Socialists have formed a general staff—a central committee. This general staff is to purge all the libraries in Berlin of Marxian and pacifist literature as well as of "asphalt," literature. Among the works the libraries are to be purged of are those of Heinrich Mann, Arnold and Stefan Zweig, and the pacifist war novels.

The commission that is to do the purging is headed by Doctor Max Wiser, the same Wiser we quoted!

As the *Berliner Boersen Zeitung* has it—"Writers that suddenly... must be rejected utterly."

Must this new born proud association then lose all members?!!

Hans Günther

May 10, 1933

USA

In the next few years

Literary and publishing conditions in America are the worst in the history of the country. Harper's and Brothers, for example (one of the oldest publishing houses in the United States) has cut the wages of its employees unmercifully, six times in the last year. They are doubling up on work. A stencil cleaner in the circulation department also serves as a reader on novel contests, for instance. And for the same wages. They publish no poetry, few novels and some economic treatises on *Fascism?* crossed out, *Communism?* crossed out, *Capitalism?...*"

A book that sells three thousand copies is a "best seller" in America at the present time. And, in the meanwhile, writers actually starve or live precariously upon charity. Erskine Caldwell. A young writer of some renown. Five books in three years (four novels, one book of short stories). And he sells his fifteen "free" copies in order to be able to buy a meal.

For the workers there are soup and bread lines, dives on the bowery where beggary is systematized. All the money the destitute beg is turned over to a saloon proprietor in return for which each man is given three slops of food a day and a couple of shots of *smoke* (meaning the wash of bars, that liquor which spills over from glasses, or merely "canned heat"—a poison that makes unconscious the drinker for at least twenty- four hours, and, during that time, he is good for "nirvana").

A capitalist depression affects writers as well as workers. And most of them know this. But when one is worrying about food, creative endeavor is difficult. Where is the paper forthcoming, the stamps, the rent of a typewriter?

The Viking Press has recently brought out *Union Square,* a novel by Albert Halper. He wrote three books, all of them sincere and straightforward. They couldn't be published. So he wrote *Union Square.* Not only was it accepted, it was taken by the Literary Guild. Michael Gold characterized it as a vicious malignment of the revolutionary movement. But Halper was starving. Perhaps, he is not now?...

But, although the publishing of novels and volumes of poetry is impossible, the revolutionary sheets cannot be suppressed. In the last few months, in America we have witnessed the birth of five new revolutionary magazines to take the place of those extinct, due to the lack of finances. *Left* is dead. Many others. They could not make the grade. They did their share of work and then "departed," but now we have *Left Front* (published by the John Reed Club of Chicago to take the place of *Left), Blast* (a mimeographed sheet, the value of which cannot yet be determined), *Dynamo* (published by Spector, Funaroff, and few others connected with the *Masses* tradition), *Contact* (which was formerly a bourgeois esthetic journal edited by William Carlos Williams, but which now under the direction of Norman Macleod is an earnest of revolutionary writing), and the *Anvil* (a descendent of the old *Rebel Poet.)*

There are new indications as well.

Jack Conroy's novel of mid-western working stiffs, *The Disinherited* is soon to be published by Covici-Friede. Robert Cruden has a good working-class novel about the automobile workers of Detroit. Kalar has almost completed a another on the lumbermill workers of Minnesota. There are other indications.

And as for myself, I have also finished a picaresque, destructive book built largely from autobiographical material. Lumber workers in Montana, strikers in the coal mines of Pennsylvania, life on sheep and cattle ranches, in smelters and oil fields, anarchists in Los Angeles, the communist movement in New York and elsewhere, political imprisonment in France. It is not the book I wanted to write (and I can do that yet), but it is a beginning.

In the next few years...

Norman MacLeod

May 15, 1933

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

VLADIMIR GERMANOVICH LIDIN

I was born in Moscow on February 3, 1894. Of my childhood I remember hanging lamps with green flat shades over the office desks; the hammering of packing cases as they were being broken open; the smell of tea, furs, felt, boots, the broad breath of Siberia. My father departed in a post chaise for Irbit in Siberia. He carried state money in a linen bag hanging from his neck. From a belt over his shoulder hung a hunter's flask full of whiskey. A sack of frozen meat dumplings *(pelmeni)* flapped against the sides of the sledge cart. The Great Siberian Highway was being born. The Far East was just entering the orbit of the world's upheavals. Children, we accompanied the caravans departing for the Manchurian fields—we got to know Port Arthur and Tsusuma. From this life smelling of mail coaches, I carried away an inclination to know the world, a "wanderlust."

Then spacious, resounding halls of the Palace of Abamalek, the gloomy dining rooms and the bobbed eastern heads of Armenians and Georgians of my own age in the Lazareu Institute of Occidental Languages, in Moscow. My first student years were spent here, here it was that I drank my first fill of literature, Gogol, Dumas, Grigorovitch, Lermontov, Tchekhov and boyish attempts at writing in between, but all these, by the way, were burnt. In the 5th class our students' magazine. Then, the university followed by the war. Then, the Revolution. My favorite authors, from my childhood have been Scandinavian—Hamsun; my favorite Western author, Guy de Maupassant and my favorite Russian authors, Tolstoy and Tchekhov.

The childhood of my generation bears the stamp of the Russian Japanese War and the first Revolution. The youth of my generation—that of the October Revolution. We witnessed the fall of the Empire and the birth of socialism. As young men we went into the Great War in order to learn to hate for ever all wars waged for conquest and enslavement. We recollect the first flights of Utotchkin over the Hodinski Fields in Moscow and we remember the German planes dropping bombs on our houses. We saw a world in which decadent youths, with eyelashes painted blue, froze to the melody of the Tango and we joined the Red Army to defend the Revolution. We knew old, provincial Russia and we witnessed the rise of Volkhovstroi and the Ural giants. Life inimitably placed creative material into the artist's hands. But we still remained for a long time captives of literary traditions and ancient notions as to time. Tradition demanded moderation of the epoch so that stagnancy in its wonted lackadaisical manner might continue to feed the artist. And this was an exclusively energetic epoch, full of the hot movements of life and the artist, for whom the revolution once more lit his art, was hastily forced to reconsider the regularity of decayed tradition. The revolution taught. In spite of the fact that we had not yet worn out our old idealistic attitude towards the world, and which our yesterday's teachers and priests had carefully thrust upon us, we once more set to learn. These old conceptions continued for a long time to take their ferocious revenge. They narrowed the perspectives and the horizon of our outlook. Our books written during the period of military Communism did not reflect the future so much as they did glances at the past and the absence of any internal valuation of events of the day. We got along without any world outlook (phi-

V. Lidin

losophy) depending upon our intuition and our individual artistic talents. When the time came along for a general reorganization, this apolitic artistry suddenly turned reactionary. Ideas changed and the live artist, the artist thinking and moving with his epoch, had to review all the idealistic steps of his evolution, because one not only climbs upstairs but also falls downstairs. Genuine literature must be a living literature.

I spent the years of the civil war in the Red Army in Siberia, on the Mongolian frontier. These years gave me a new attitude towards life. They likewise taught me to use my pen in a new way. These years I reckon as the commencement of my real literary career. Then I have traveled a good deal on land and sea—Europe, all over the Soviet Union, the Near and Far East and from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. In my themes, Europe ranks second. Too acutely do I feel the alarming fall of this ancient culture, and the historical wind over the past and future battlefields, and I want to write about this.

It was just about post war Europe that my last book *The Unknown Soldier's Grave* was written and my book *Great or Lowly* about the remaking of a man in the furthermost outpost of our country in the Far East.

In glancing over the shelf of the books I have written I hope that the best and ripest are still to come.

LEV NIKULIN

The childhood and the youth of my generation stretches between 1905 and 1917, between two revolutions.

This generation witnessed the bloody battles with Tsarism and also the warfare of the bolsheviks against the liquidators. We were 14 years of age when we greeted the 1905 revolution. And reaction overtook us at an age when youth only just begins to understand the significance of events and of his environment. It would be naive to imagine that my contemporary of intellectual extraction grasped the materialistic conception at once. There were a few who did, but I frankly confess that I, as an individual and *homme des lettres,* had to wade through the errors of my circle and generation before I was able to find the one and only true conception of the universe.

A young man springing from the intelligentsia circles, surrounded by liberal literati, actors and artists, I experienced all the forces of mystic and liquidatory influences of the epoch of reaction and underwent all the mood changes which in those years embraced such a great part of the Russian intelligentsia.

The terror and reaction of 1907 had various effects upon my contemporaries. Some sheered off into the misty spheres of "pure art," got stuck in estheticism and mysticism; others clamored for direct action, which they saw in acts of individual terror. Sometimes these influences wove themselves into unbelieveable and fantastic patterns.

My literary biography in the years preceeding the revolution was that of a young man dabbling in prose and poetry; but these poems and essays had absolutely no spiritual or artistic worth whatsoever. Therefore I count as non existent everything of mine published prior to 1918, in spite of the fact that even during the epoch of the Great War I attempted to give reign to feeble anti military thoughts—everything was overshadowed by Epigonian and esthetic decorations.

What would have become of me as a writer if I had not lived in the epoch of the greatest revolution in the history of mankind?

I would not have existed as a writer but would have disappeared in narrow minded, high faluting nonsense and egoism.

I do not think that there is anything unexpected or accidental in the life of a literary participant in the civil war on this side of the barricades—in the life of a literary intellectual drawn into the revolution. Those who faithfully cherished the memory of 1905, of the May Day mass meetings, of street demonstrations, those who still remembered the heroism of 1905—it was they who sided with the revolution. The other half of my generation was swept back by the whirlwind of revolution and was doomed to physical and spiritual destruction. They had long borne those prejudices which later on developed into counter revolutionary convictions and which doomed them.

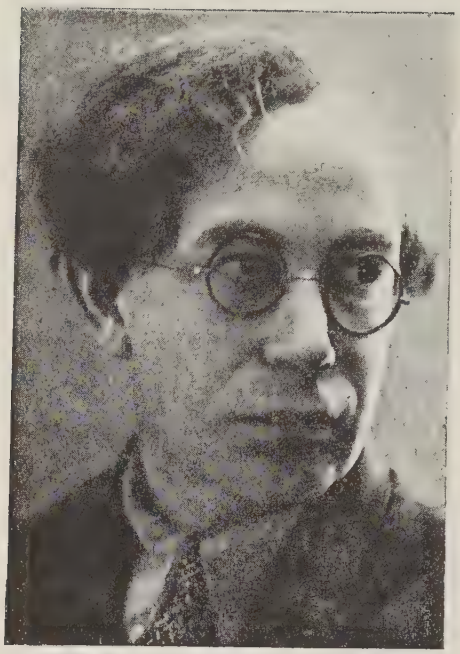
The dream of the dead and the dream of the living generation was at last coming true. Autocracy and Tsarism had ceased to exist. And this was the beginning. New battles were yet ahead. And suddenly I was aware of a feeble lisp, cries of distress and complaints about the "violence" of the lefts, who had confiscated the printshops —complaints as to the "extremism" of the lefts. The gentlemen in beaver coats still wore the red cockade, but the breakup had begun.

I had no axe to grind, neither secret nor open with the revolution. The revolution did not deprive me of annuities nor of any title to land, nor of a landlord's income, nor of a reputation as "Parliament Spellbinder" nor of thousand ruble checks. I knew what it was to starve, both at home and abroad; slept more than once on chairs or on the floor at my friends. The Secret Service (Okhrana) had refused to certify my political trustworthiness.

And this still calls forth in me a feeling of pride.

Now I wish to tell you how the revolution trained a young radical and drew him into revolutionary battle and helped him find the one and only correct world outlook.

I spent years in the Red Army and Navy. I both witnessed and participated in fights with the white, yellow, green and blue bands. I witnessed and took part in defeats and victories, re-



Lev Nikulin

treated from and returned to towns deserted by the whites, followed the tracks of bloody pogroms and buried the bodies of tortured and executed comrades. I saw the death of a scout—a nineteen year old farmer's boy wounded in the stomach. He didn't know whether that bearded old man, Karl Marx, whose bust amateurs loved to make out of plaster of paris—was alive or dead. He didn't understand the difference between idealism and materialism but he died for the banner which bore the inscription "Workers of the World" and "All Power to the Soviets." And next to him lay dying from typhoid fever a chap who used to recite by heart whole pages of Engels and Lenin. And, going along the historic Kronstadt ice fields, wandering in the rear of the Basmachi along the Afghan border, in our worst minutes we remembered our comrades, living and dead; their example trained the man and the writer in us, worthy of our time. Then I had not entirely forsaken literature, but that which I did write was written as an official task (at breakneck speed) as we say in the army. I wrote politics, agitational stories and in six days, wrote a three act play and two one act plays for the General Army Training Week. I wrote the editorials for the *Red Baltic Fleet* and fighting articles with headlines chiefly in the imperative mood: Stand on Guard, Do not Lower Your Rifle, Keep a Sharp Lookout, etc. etc.

And when I compare these naive but full of energy and temperament literary essays with my rewritten and repolished verses written in 1913-1916, then I see quite plainly that they were written by different persons.

The revolution had remade a 20th century young man. It gave him no chance to look round —it threw him from the Finnish fjords to the heart of Afghanistan—Kabul, to the Musulman middle ages, where one could continue one's literary experiments to the tune of the jackal's howl and the whistle of the tropic desert winds.

In 1922 I returned to Moscow and shared the doubts and fears of many in the epoch of the Tactical Retreat of the New Economic Policy. This year is reflected in my novel *Time, Space, Motion.* A demobilized political Commissar and Foreign official betook himself to literature. As a matter of fact he commenced his literary work from the beginning. He started with real spade work—ethnolographical and political features of Afghanistan published in *Izvestia* and feuilletons in *Crocodile.* Afghanistan supplied me with material for my novel *A Diplomatic Secret.* This novel is important for me because here my creative biography draws near those of many of my comrades. Gorky sent me an approving and warm letter, praising me for my honest work in such a compromising genre as adventurous novels, at the same time he pointed out the weak spots of my other attempts in this line.

I consider my narrative *Sailors' Calm* as my literary debut. Then followed a fairly long interval, and then my play *Engineer Mertz.* This marks the commencement of a long series of plays about honest specialists, and as it presented to the playgoer a correct and interesting solution of an actual problem, my play *Engineer Mertz* is still on the boards.

In 1930 I made a long trip to the West and was one of the first Soviet citizens to enter Spain. As a result of this voyage I published *Letters About Spain.* I attempted to convey the color and the character of this country which has nothing whatever in common with the Spain of the opera and the ballet. Apart from this, there are some forecasts in this book on the Spanish revolution; it should be remarked that I was in Spain during the epoch of Primo de Rivera's fascist dictatorship. This political forecast would have been impossible for a man and a writer who had not graduated from the great school of the civil war and the following periods of the October Revolution. About this time I thought of writing a large biographical work relating the history of a young man of my generation. It would have covered 20 years from 1909 to 1930 and would have shown to the reader the career of a man of intellectual extraction, it would have shown practically platonic sympathies of the revolution of one who later on became a fellow traveler and then a participant in the revolution. *A Wayfarer's Notes* was written for this purpose, it was mainly dedicated to the memory of the late Larissa Reisner. This woman author and revolutionary also fostered the

decisive change of views of the author of *A Wayfarer's Notes.*

A Wayfarer's Notes is continued by the autobiographical novel *Time, Space, Motion.* I think that neither of these books would have had any importance had their author not attempted to find his own style, form and composition.

I strove to find a melody, recitative for a narrative and at the same time to solve the problem of writing a novel which would be organically woven into a narrative—to solve the problem of writing a combined literary portrait and landscape—the background for a narrative. I passed a difficult test when I commenced my description of 1921 Afghanistan. Most of all I kept clear of the "exotic beauties" of the socalled colonial novel. On the other hand. I did not wish to take the path of lowering and modifying my perceptions.

What do I consider as indispensable for the creative birth of a writer?

An accurate and steady world outlook. My epoch and the revolution helped me find this.

Then continued labor over form, language, style and composition.

Books and travel. Travel and books.

Some facts regarding myself. I was born in 1891. My father was in the composing room of the *Odessa Page* print shop. My mother was a teacher in a two class school.

N. Pogodin

NIKOLAI POGODIN

I am 32 years of age. I was brought up in Rostov on the Don where my mother had taken me to live with relatives. We had left the Don Cossack settlement to seek better prospects in the town. But our relatives in the town it appeared, lived no better than we had been doing. Those were gloomy days in Russia after 1905 when people of our class could not hope to live well.

My childhood was that of a half-vagabond, but it was a gay one, since I had no tutors and could do whatever I pleased. I learned to read when five years old, that is, before we came to town. The first author I read was Pushkin—the *Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish,* of course, and *The Drowned Man.*

It is an extraordinary thing, but even 27 years of life have not succeeded in dimming the impression left by those poems.

I learned to write much later, I do not remember when. I was about 12 years old when I was sent to an elementary school. I was placed in the top class and came through it well, but unfortunately, I was unable to continue my studies further. I became an errand boy for various shops and offices.

My career as a writer began early. I imitated Igor Severianin, composed verses for the school girls round about. These compositions were generally entitled "The Sun" or "My Favorite Book." Once I was sent for by a girl's parents since it appeared from the poem that the author liked to go fishing at dawn and had anything but innocent notions about love.

In 1920 I began to work on a newspaper. I did the "news in brief" column and verses. The "news in brief" I did quite well, the verses—very badly.

The day of this naive versifying was soon over. The Rostov papers were reorganized, new editors came. V. G. Filov, the editor with whom I worked for four years after that, having discovered that I had a lively style and a turn for descriptive newspaper reporting drove me to the factories and the villages.

Thus began the first, decisive period of my newspaper work, that was to determine my literary fate. My article on the payment of the food tax was reprinted in *Pravda.* The latter newspaper offered me the job of their Don correspondent. In three years time I went to Moscow and worked for about five years as traveling correspondent for *Pravda.*

It is said that newspaper work devastates a writer and ruins him for literature. Maybe even this indisputable rule has its exceptions, or maybe it needs some qualification nowadays; be that as it may, the fact remains that newspaper work not only did not devastate me but on the contrary greatly enriched me.

I do not like moving about. One glance at a railway carriage makes me infinitely weary. And yet how much I have traveled up and down our republics! In 1928 I covered exactly 25,000 kilometres.

The vast quantities of notes that I made of my impressions became, when brought into order,

a fund of knowledge. I learned to find my way about in life. I suffer neither from naive admiration nor ignorant contempt for things seen. It is simply that I have seen a great deal and therefore, can comprehend certain things. I have a practical knowledge of the Soviet Union and its people.

Once—at the very beginning of the Five Year Plan—it occurred to me to write a play called *Tempo*. I fancied the title—*Tempo. I* went on a trip down the Volga, visited the place in Stalingrad where the huge Stalingrad Tractor Works now stands. The rate at which the work was going on fairly astounded me. I had seen nothing like it till then. Like many other young folks of my kind I had never felt any particular interest in building. The Tractor Works awoke something unusual in me, something that I had only vaguely recognized in construction work.

The great purpose of enthusiasm was before my very eyes. My comprehension of things changed. The seasonal laborers, workers from faraway forest villages taught me through their work to appreciate the Revolution.

Why I began to write a play about them I do not know. I am terrified of prose. I had got nothing good of it for a long time. But to write a play, in spite of being completely ignorant of the technique of play writing was possible if one had a great inspiration and some fatalism. Added to this, I was risking nothing. The nine days I spent in writing my first play were glorified by what peasants call the satisfaction of listening to myself. I laughed as I wrote. It was in the same lighthearted mood that I took the play to the theatre, but I felt extremely nervous when I read it at Seifulina's in Leningrad. Writers spoke with caution of it. All the scenes that I had drawn from life met with approval and all those I had invented were turned down. I got a fine lesson straight away. That evening Seifulina wrote to A. Popov, the producer of the Vakhtangov Theatre, Moscow, and my play was subsequently accepted and produced there.

So journalism is over for me. For Always? I do not know. I left the newspaper with many regrets. I had gone outside the familiar circle of my life and I did not anticipate any very flattering results for myself in this vague world of the theatre which I did not know at all. People can say what they like but there is nothing particularly cheering about starting at the bottom of the class when one is thirty and learning to make strokes and pot-hooks, not even letters.

I am learning now.

Since *Tempo* I have turned out three plays, three examination papers, that have been put on the boards. In collecting the material for *My Friend,* in writing it and seeing it rehearsed, I learned a great many things that were quite new to me but well-known to Shakespeare. That's the way it goes—you make a new discovery of great antiquity, and there is nothing funny about it. For me to make a discovery means that I am learning "how to do it." I know how styles are concocted but I cannot get the final concoction yet.

I read a great deal, love a few things and believe in very little.

To a dramatist who is engaged in disclosing the behavior of mankind life is the source of talent, mind and knowledge. A play must present enormous exaggerations but these exaggerations should always be learned by the living, the vital, the essential, the irrefutable.

That is what I think. That is how I work.

MARIETTA SERGEYEVNA SHAGINYAN

My father had a habit at the end of each day, of asking us to show him and tell him about what we had done. This inspection was one of the strongest educative factors in my life. In every child the possessive instinct comes out in a different way, either in toys, collections or affections. With us it came out in the form of wanting to store up the artistic or manual work that we had done each day, to let no day go by without having something to show for what had been made or what had been learnt. We used to keep records of what we had given in, and these records representing the results of our work and efforts developed with me later on into a diary the writing up of which became as much a matter of course as washing myself every morning. My father had a way of making us love our work by just saying one or two words. He was a doctor, one of the best of his time, and also one of the first Armenians to be given an assistant professorship at the University of Moscow.

My father's death greatly effected our young lives. During his lifetime we were well off, but after he had gone we were overtaken by absolute poverty and had to live on the charity of rich relations of my mother. We therefore had to start earning our living very early, at the age of fifteen.

My sister and I were left to finish our schooling in Moscow in L. F. Rzhevskaya's gymnasium. When I had reached the 7th class I was already earning. I used to get orders to write things for the Katkovski Lycée. I wrote a libretto for an unsuccessful composer of operettas, copied out dramatic parts, and gave lessons, the latter being the most difficult of all as at fifteen years I found myself getting deaf.

In 1904, still a young girl, I got a satire in verse into the *Black Sea Coast* magazine. In 1905 my "Song of a Workman" and a story about a strike were published in a magazine called *The Artisan's Voice* and the Moscow paper *The Language of Labor,* and in 1906 I began working regularly for the paper of the Priasov Area. I spent twelve years with them learning editorial routine, but this work was always a thorn in my

flesh as it took me away from study and literature.

My sister and I both paid for our college education out of our earnings. I passed my exam at the Moscow Institute for Higher Studies for Women in the faculty of History and Philosophy in 1912 (under Professor Vinogradov). I later spent a year and a half at the Shanyavski University studying mathematical physics and passed my exams at the Town Textile school at Anapa when I got there by chance in 1918. I went to Heidelburg to write a voluminous work on Jakob Droschammer. I was there when the imperialist war broke out. In 1915 I returned by the southern route (through Greece and the Balkans) to my mother in Nakhichevan on the Don, where I remained until the Don District came under the Soviets. In 1929 I moved to Leningrad. On the Don I taught in the conservatory (esthetics and the history of art) and after the revolution organized the First Soviet Textile School where I lectured on wool and sheeprearing and was chairman of the governing body. At the same time I gave courses on raising the qualification of workers and national school teachers, and as educational instructor of the Don Region and director of the textile section I had to travel about from one district to another establishing lower textile schools and spinning and weaving shops. In Leningrad I lectured at the Art Institute where I gave a course on the Borderline between Poetry and Music.

Now a few words about my career as an author and about the different phases I have gone through as regards my outlook on life. In 1907 while I was still a student I got mixed up with an orthodox society run by a certain Novoselov, who carried on the most intensive church propaganda among the students. I used to walk through the monasteries praying and spent hours standing in churches with bowed head. After a while my orthodoxy gave way under the influence of the ideas of Merezhkovski who made an attempt to combine religious predispositions with revolutionary, and for some time I used to meditate on terrorism "a la Kalyaev" and assasinating, cross in hand. In 1911 under the influence of the Meonerov family and a return to Goethe, a love for whom had been instilled into me by my father, I freed myself from the hypnosis of Merezhkovski's ideas and returned to the realms of "pure art." But not one of these three phases of my prerevolutionary development were able to give me full satisfaction. I was drawn to Novoselov by the need for a "church," that is, the need for being part of a living community. But when I saw what orthodoxy was, when I saw the dead and horribly false world which it advocated, based on a repudiation of progress and a repudiation of culture and how it bowed down to autocracy, I threw over Novoselov in disgust. Merezhkovski's teaching promised some kind of synthesis. They were forming a "new church,"

Marietta Shaginyan

and were combining revolution with art. But as soon as I realized that there was nothing real here either and that it was only playing at socialism, mere self deception far removed from actual life and living on it like a parasite, I broke away from it as completely as from the first.

"Church," revolution, and culture in the only living sense in which I understand these words, that is to say an organic live community, membership of which is felt as a compelling duty without which nothing of any value can be brought into being, the fight for to-morrow in the course of to-day and the taking to oneself of the intellectual treasures of the past which have been directed to an end and making use of them for building up the future; all these I found united for the first time only after the October revolution, in the teaching of Marx and Lenin.

I have never refused to recognize any of the phases I have passed through, I have never exercised any coercion over myself, but have always put myself heart and soul into the search for the right path and I know that my present outlook on life is based on my past, is the result of that thirst for the concrete, that unity of word and deed, of philosophy with practical life, which urged me forward from one phase to another.

CHRONICLE

The Soviet Theater Today

The main force in Soviet life is construction—not just construction, however, but Socialist construction. Concretely, this means the five year plan (now the second one).

The main problem of this Five Year Plan is the dialectic coordination of "construction" and "man." And the new man—for this vast land undergoing reconstruction is not simply man working—but man in the process of work, asserting in his life and in his consciousness the new social system.

Hence, the main problem of art in Soviet Russia is the one of transformed people.

A play having a run in a Soviet theater presents man not personally but socially, which is most highly appreciated by the masses and is most conducive of establishing in the consciousness of people this new social order. That is why the question of dramatic art has come to the fore and dramaturgy itself has become the vanguard of Soviet art.

In this field there is much discussion raging, spears and pens are broken and the arena has become a seething cauldron. Everything is in motion seeking expression. There is a revolution of plays, a groping for new ways, self criticism of the old. People talk passionately of their failing because they have nothing to fear: the future is for them. The most important has been accomplished—what's firm has been separated from what's flabby.

Soviet dramaturgy steps out on the proscenium because all roads are open before it. It is entering a period of expansion just because it set itself the problem of capturing contemporaneity. This is a very difficult problem—it is also a supreme problem—because what is to be captured is—a new social order.

The Theater and Dramaturgy

The journal *Soviet Theater* in number one of the current year has started a symposium on the subject The Theater and the Dramatist.

The discussion began with an article by the critic B. Alpers asserting that the theater today is more conservative than the dramatist.

"In the analysis and evaluation of plays we still give the theater first place. The theater impresses us with its complexity, external expressiveness and brilliance of its artistic panoply. The fate of the Soviet dramatist on the stage has many dramatic elements. His road during the past 15 years, from the first simple agitational pieces met by disdainful ridicule on the part of the professional theater, to the complex dramatic compositions of later years, has been one of continuous heroic, if secret, battle with the theater for a new intellectual content of the show, for the birth of a new theater.

"In an artistic sense the theater is much stronger than the dramatist and the latter was naturally more timid. But in the evolution of even the most conservative theater there is a destinct forward movement, and the part played by the dramatist in this process has been tremendous. The Soviet dramatist has been particularly active in this respect in the theater that lacked a well established artistic credo. It was easier here for innovators to disregard canons and it was here that the galaxy of Soviet dramatists grew up: Faiko, Romashov, Bill-Belotzerkovsky, Kirshon, Glebov, Afinogenov and others.

The dramatist N. Pogodin says he, "fears the bold life of the stage." He wants diversity and full bloodedness.

"We dramatists, want schools. We need trends. General heavenly harmony amounts to a crisis in art. We want creative battle. This may seen elementary, but an artist that puts an experience into a 'numbered box' acts very egoistically, very respectably but not in the interests of art. Such an artist will be 'customary' and 'comfortable' but he will move nothing an inch forward.

"We make souls. The Socialist revolution placed a great task before the writer for the theater. Man can be transformed, reeducated, inspired by his own 'I' unfolded in the glory of the heroic grandeur of our life."

The dramatist B. Romashov thinks that if the older traditions had "at the base of the theater the triangle: stage manager—actor-dramatist, the new conception requires another angle—the public. That is why the list of requirements to the dramatist has become truly tremendous."

"No so long ago it seemed modern drama can dress in the same varnish and tinsel. But isn't our construction both higher and deeper than the pompous heroics? Of course higher and deeper. The new hero, not a hundred-per-cent' and exmely many faced comes as a new personage into a new drama.

". . .Nearer to the cauldron of life. Deeper into political contemporaneity."

The writer L. Nikulin when temporarily leaving prose work for dramatic art dreams of a play

SOVIET CARICATURE BY THE KUKRINIKSI

(These caricatures of Soviet theatrical workers and critics, as well as others of literary workers on following pages are drawn by the Kukriniksi, three soviet artists (Kuprianov, Krilov, and Nikolai Sokolov—the names are combined) whose joint work has become well known throughout the Soviet Union.)

"The last Supper in Moscow to Preserve the Literary Heritage of the Past." From left to right: V. Vishnevsky, playwright; N. Ravich, critic; B. Romashov, Playwright; M. Lividov, playwright; Bazilevsky, writer; A Afinogenov, playwright; A. Glebov, playwright; S. Dinamov, editor and critic; S. Amaglobely, writer; N. Pogodin, playwright; Yuzovsky ,critic; M. Rossovsky, writer; Yuri Olesha, playwright, novelist

which "would not be 'seasonal,' for a day, and would approach, even approximately, a picture of the shifts in human character and human relations that took place during the 15 years after the revolution."

Nikulin thinks that "the writers that came to the theater (V. Ivanov, Babel, Kataev) did their work. They compelled the dramatists, writers of the stage, if one can say so, to brace up and write not theatrical, schematic sketches for stage managers, but real full blooded plays."

The dramatist A. Glebov is of a different opinion: "The 'guest from foreign lands'—from 'big literature' will not save the drama. With the exception of Gorky, Babel and Selvinsky not one play given by the 'venerable' writers can compare not only with what is needed but even with the main work produced by these writers. It is also untrue that the 'professional' playwright writes poorer stuff than the 'venerable' writers. It is, however sad but true that neither the ones nor the others write as the epoch requires."

The dramatist V. Vishnevsky, confesses he serves as an "exchange between a whole group of theaters producing my plays *Battle on the Western Front* and *Optimistic Tragedy*. I have my hand on the pulse of everyone of these theater and inform the stage managers of what the others are doing with my plays.

"I must say this gives one interesting insight into theatrical 'stage managers' secrets' and forces one to take a rigid attitude towards one's text.

"One begins to handle words as carefully as a jeweller handles small details of a watch."

"But this is the field of pure technology. It is more important to grasp the influence of social and cultural changes that took place not only here but also in the West. I am powerfully drawn to the West—to its culture and materials. Because dialectics tells us: through the dead can life force its way .

"As soon as I have fully verified my work, after the first nights of *Battle on the Western Front* and *Optimistic Tragedy* and have acquainted myself with the work of Olesha, Pogodin, Tretyakov, Afinogenov and Kirshon that they are now engaged on I shall try to summarize the results of the struggle between the two main trends in our dramaturgy."

The Problems of Our Dramaturgy

The journal *Soviet Art* also carried a discussion on dramaturgy in its number five and six of January 26 and February 2 of this year.

The poet I. Selvinsky speaking of drama in verse comes to the following conclusions:

"If the playgoer has once become reconciled to the fact that army commanders and captains walk about the stage talking in verse it was because he recognized this as a convention of play and a convention is always unreal."

Finding himself always within a sphere of strictly technical art definition, Selvinsky considers the new term that has been coined—"Socialist realism" not all it should be.

"The word 'Socialist' next to the word 'realism' has a meaning similar to the commissar attached to the military specialist during the civil war.

"The problem of Soviet dramaturgy is to reorganize the world, portraying living life in its general tendencies. The methods by which the

V. Kirshon, playwright

A. Tairov, director of the Kamerny Theatre

dramatist attempts this portrayal, whether realistic or symbolic, are entirely his own business."

The fiction writer L. Slavin, author of the play *Intervention,* confesses that of all dramatists he likes best "Shakespeare, and of his plays *Hamlet.* In the latter play, of all scenes—the grave digger scene. I have a great regard for this mixture of jesting and philosophy and cultivate it."

"In the work I am planning there are the problem of fathers and children in our conception, the problem of love and bolshevist victory over death, the problem of the new man—these are what I am writing about in my new play for the Vakhtangov Theater."

The writer L. Nikulin poses the question: whom is one to take as teacher? And answers:

"The classic writer that is nearest to you, the one that contains the movement of human thought, the battle against reactionary principles. Schiller and Shakespeare, Gogol and Tolstoy. One must learn, first of all, the singularity of style that is not to be duplicated and the extraordinary skill in the use of language for characterization of persons on the stage. We must admit Soviet dramatic art is lacking in this respect. It is imbued with the high spirit and valuable ideas of Socialist construction, but the ideas are expressed in lifeless images and the language is colorless. The dramatist must have his own language. M. Gorky's *Igor Bulichev* was an excellent lesson in this respect."

A. Vesely author of the novels *Russia, Washed in Blood* and *Revelling Volga,* the last of which he has dramatized, takes a more critical view of the classics.

"Pushkin, Tolstoy, Gogol—they are the quintessence of the culture of the aristocracy. To follow them blindly, copy them carefully as do Fadeyev and Lesnov—that is not art but consciencious exercise in caligraphy."

Brought up under the influence of the famous futurist poet V. Hlebnikov, Vesely recommends to dramatists this teacher. Speaking of his own work further he says:

"I am finishing a play on the theme of underground revolutionary work behind the Denikin lines entitled *Iron Brotherhood.*

"I have long been interested in the theme of underground revolutionists. This powerful fighting clan sacrificed their lives for the revolution at a time when there were no achievements, no victories. It is them however we have, in a great measure, to thank for the success of the October Revolution."

N. Nikitin announces he is working on a comedy *Contest of the Wily* on the theme "of old feelings of modern man, of old instincts, of that shameful tail which hangs on modernity like a shadow.

"I wish to show how this accomodates itself to modern life, lets its roots into all crevices, like moss on a stone wall.

"I am building the comedy on dialogue and situations.

"My problem is more complicated than that of the old comedy writer... Gogol only exposed.

"We expose and assert... We strike at the old to clear the field for the new.

"I venture to hope my comedy will sustain this double load."

P. and L. Tur return, somewhat late, to the problem of "living man," enraptured that in Ermler and Yudkevich's movie *Counter Plan* and Pogodin's *My Friend* positive heroes "do a few things." Such a development of the living man theme is to their liking. These authors are inclined to play with the trivial. Their intent is thus akin to the Chekhov play.

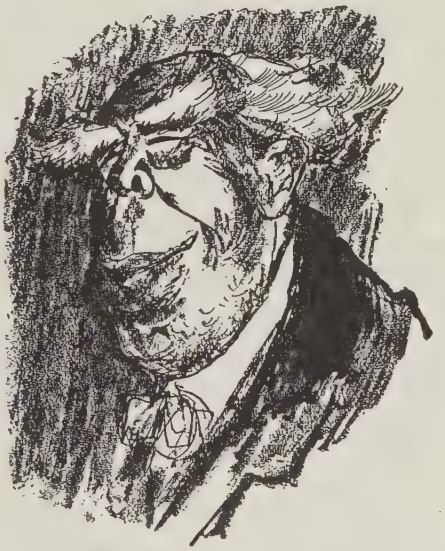
"It is necessary," they say, "to penetrate into the intimate music of human relations, master the art of conveying the halfsmile, semitones, hints, expressions of the eye, the deepest undercurrents, the smallest nuances of word and feeling, the faintest tremors of the human heart, *i.e.*, all those subtle and intimate nuances, undercurrents which make up one of the specific phases of true art."

N. Pogodin propagandizes for Shakespeare.

"The Shakespeare heritage is a world university for dramatic writers. Freed from ideological limitations, strengthened by a materialist conception of the world, the writers of Soviet land can profitably study at this university."

Speaking of romanticism, Pogodin considers this a more flexible method than realism. He says, "Yes, romanticism can be revolutionary, bolshevist. This is clear to me. The epic of socialist competition at Dnieprostroy was a romantic epic of a new social quality and people with the sober eyes of realists will never tell the story of Dnieprostroy either. To us or to future and the future will be compelled to evoke these bolshevist romantics from reports and figures."

V. Meyerhold, director of the Meyerhold Theatre



K. Stanislavsky, director of the First Moscow Art Theatre

The Dramatist and His Theme

At the club of the *Literary Gazette* the dispute ran along somewhat different lines. The discussion assumed more of the character of *conversation dell'art* pursued vividly and wittily.

N. Pogodin, to begin with told a story:

"A man comes to me and says 'I wish you would write about love—this subject bothers me a good deal.' 'What subject?' I ask. 'You see,' he says, 'suppose everything has been built, all the electric stations, all the Magnitostroys. And I am stirred by the thought, how do people love at these Magnitostroys. The subject actually torments me.'

"This quited my fears as to the mood of my visitor—but," adds Pogodin, "to work this way will give nothing worth while."

S. Tretyakov says what interests him mostly in the theater is the problem of the burning questions of the day. "What is needed is that the play should be able to roll under the morrow, lift it and roll it a step further.

"The trouble with our drama is that it is a drama of today. There is no prognosis. Not enough prognosis. *Man With a Portfolio* is a play of great divination. It stepped over the 'question of the day' phase as soon as it was put on the boards.

"The play *Roar China* was put on unwillingly under pretext that it was a trivial episode. It, however, 'rolled up' to the historical period of 1926-27."

Tretyakov further spoke of three plays of the German dramatist B. Brecht which he has translated and reworked to the extent that they differ fundamentally from the author's original.

A. Afinogenov, playwright

One of these he is now completing. It is *Joan of Arc of the Chicago Jungle*.

"Brecht uses a minimum of argument on the emotional plane. He attempts to use as arguments the syllogism, theses.

"How often we abuse the emotion business! A character is given an agreeable exterior, accessories and the public is favorably impressed. But Brecht says: Prove him to me... The playgoer is not finally satisfied—this is what troubles Brecht. The playgoer leaves anxious..."

Usovsky: "A perplexed playgoer?"

Tretyakov: "No. A thinking playgoer."

Amaglobely: "Isn't the playgoer a thinking one to Sophocles?!"

Tretyakov: "The problem of the playwright is to lift the playgoer out of his equilibrium so that he will not leave serene, but ready for action."

V. Vishnevsky dwells on Shakespeare.

"I was surprised at the association of the conceptions 'Shakespeare' and 'realism.' Shakespeare is hyperbolical, immoderate, often arbitrary. Compare the records of the wars of those times and Shakespeare's chronicles... But here we approach the problem of art generally.

"The dispute between the drama of intrigue, treachery, blood, etc., and that of 'simple feeling' is curious. Isn't it a dispute of the character of whether the sign of the cross is to be made with two or three fingers? In the end what determines is the trend. And all these problems have their actuality today: the remains of the old consciousness must be rooted out."

A. Afinogenov explains that he wrote his play *Fear*—"it seems, for the first time, without stopping to think of the theme. The fundamental and guiding line in picking the characters, determining the life processes which interest them, was to me the thought that it is only then worth while to occupy oneself with art when it is a second life to one... if one takes it as seriously as party work or business or any other work."

J. Olesha proposes to define accurately the word "realism." "If Shakespeare means realism then take, for instance Macbeth—the blood spot that will not out, the witches, somnombulism, the spirits. Is this realism? We do define precisely—it is all very loose.

"In what sense is one to understand realism? In the sense of form, content, thought, conclusion? Marx says that in *Chagrene Skin* Balzac gave him a better idea of the society of the time than all scientific research. And *Chagrene Skin* is a fantastic story...

"Realism is therefore, not reality in itself but the truth about reality... It seems to me innovation in literature, in out times is tantamount to raising naturalism to an art."

Levidov: "Bringing art down to the level of naturalism."

Olesha: "Down with art as naturalism—long live naturalism as art."

Basilevsky announces a play on the commanders of the Red Army.

"There is none of the usual blather of a battle play," he says. "I looked for no theses. The people in the Army become my friends. I came to reality and tried to draw from the depths, as widely as possible. But the characters of my play proved stronger than I and it is difficult to complete the play just because its heroes are deeper and stronger than my abilities."

More Shakespeareanism

Under this heading appeared a problem article by S. Dinamov in the *Literary Gazette* No. 12 of March 11, 1933.

The author points out that "Marx and Engels considered Shakespeare the greatest of realists and advised La Salle to study him." Marx and Engels "in their estimate of Shakespeare did not consider the external aspects of his realism—what was important to them was that Shakespeare did not take an idealistic view of reality like Schiller, that by intent, by content, by the very nature of his work he was a realist, that utilizing the most diverse literary dramatic forms and genres, going from comedy to tragedy, from tragedy to light tale, he never made objective reality a simple reflection of "spirit," that his

basis was fundamentally the surrounding world, the existing and not the invented."

S. Dinamov thinks "Shakespeare was an up to date artist of his time and responded promptly to contemporary questions. He rose in the England of the 16th century to give his creative response to those life and death questions which his class faced at the time. He was an artist philosopher, thinking hard, seeking the truth, and answering the questions of his day, solving the problems of his age.

"He eagerly looked for a new basis of life, he estimated and evaluated the entire practice and history of his class, attempted to find bases for cleansing and freeing life from the old, hampering life, creating in his works a gigantic encyclopedia of morals and manners."

Shakespeare, to Dinamov's mind, tried to grasp all that was best in the bourgeoisie. He was now "evaluating Feudalism from a humanist point of view in *Romeo and Juliet,* trying to inoculate his class with a new viewpoint;" now "presenting the England of the middle ages in his chronicle as a world of wars, blood, intrigue and lawlessness," now bringing out a verdict on this England in *Coriolanus.* But the apotheosis of Shakespeare is to be found in *Hamlet* where the principal hero "is weighed down by a feudal duty of vengeance not by lack of will power or inactivity. What weighs him down is the entire middle age world compelling him to a duty repugnant to his entire nature of a humanist and philosopher."

"For the Soviet writer to Shakespeareanize," concludes Dinamov, "is to be capable of finding live real images to express the development and movement taking place. To Shakespeareanize is to be of one's time, be of today growing over into the future. To Shakespeareanize is to rise to the heights of the thought of the age, master science, knowledge, culture, the teachings of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin so that the richness of thought shall be inexhaustible, that the content of art shall be both clear and complex as the dialectics of life is both clear and complex. To Shakespeareanize is to be a passionate fighter for one's class, arm it with art. To Shakespeareanize is to be in the foremost ranks of life, fighting and creating, making and struggling. To Shakespeareanize is to seek new and more powerful forms of artistic creation, rejecting the empty ornamentalism of 'innovationalism,' creating an art perfect in thought and form."

Decennial of the Theater of the Revolution

At the beginning of this year the Moscow Theater of the Revolution completed the 10th year of its existence. This theater did not come over to the proletariat as a heritage of the past like the Big and Little theaters but was a product of October.

V. Mlechin in *Rabotchaya Moskva (Workers Moscow)* (21-II-33) calls this theater a "child of the revolution" and considers "political purposefulness" its distinguishing feature.

"The two trends which marked the development of this theater—the romantic and realistic —remain more or less distinct up to the present. The romantic trend begun by Vishnevsky's remarkable play *First Cavalry* full of revolutionary passion and produced by A. Dicky, was continued in Zarkhy's *Joy Street* and even more so in Vishnevsky's later play *Battle on the Western Front.* Pogodin's plays are on another plan."

This theater was one of the first to take advantage of the achievements of Soviet dramaturgy and had its own say later under the leadership of the stage manager A. Popov.

Three shows produced during this period—*Poem of an Ax, Joy Street* and *My Friend*—brought this theater into the foremost ranks of Soviet theatrical art.

In *Soviet Art* No. 3 of January 14, 1933, in an article "A Theater of Social Thought," stage manager A. Popov the present leader of the Theater of Revolution formulates his intellectually-creative position as follows:

"1) The actor and stage manager cannot be thought of otherwise than as the intelligent man of the time and the thinker of the era. What was once the lot of individual actors (Stchepkin, Martynov) becomes exigent to every conscious artist of the theater of our time.

"2) The stirring emotion which inspires the stage characters are the result of a deep cognition of life. The actors agitation and temperament are born of thought. Hence 'excitability' and 'temperament' in actor and stage manager are to us conceptions not only technical but also of a social character.

"3) In the theater of social thought the prime factor is the word—the speech of the author, but this does not mean that we are opposed to visually plastic expression.

"4) The old conception of 'ensemble' playing is developed to an intellectually conscious collective creation. The theater is collective art in the true sense of the term.

"5) The actor as a unit of society is aboil in the furnace of class passion. From our view point the actor's excitability is directly associated with his social temperament."

A. Popov concludes that he wants a performance that is " based on agitation by thought."

A Child of the Moscow Proletariat

The M.O.S.P.S. Theater completed its tenth year of existence in April of this year. This theater is only two months younger than the Theater of the Revolution and is the creation of the Moscow Trade Unions for the worker. (M.O.S.P.S. stands for Moscow Regional Association of Trades Unions.) Managed by E. Lubimov-Lansky it puts on only new plays, not having gone back once on this principle of basing itself on the contemporary dramatist. This is one of its merits.

Scenes from plays given in the past season at the Children's Theatre: (Upper Left) A. Puppet Play; (Upper Right) from The Negro and the Monkey; *(Two lower scenes) from* Travels of Little Katya Over the Map of the Pyatiletka *(Five Year Plan)*

The theater caters to the organized playgoer—this is its second merit which, according to E. Beskin *(Soviet Art,* No. 17 of April 8, 1933) will be kept so. Its third merit is the organization of the first public art counsel.

A. Winer*(Soviet Art,* No. 17) points out that *Storm* by Bill-Belotzerkovsky was the first stage of the Soviet theater for only with this play Soviet dramaturgy really begins.

Storm was the first play on the subject of the civil war, and *The Rails Hum* by Kirshon was the first play in which the new characters of builders of socialism appeared while in this play also, for the first time, there is a reference to the "wreckers" (saboteurs) exposing them with great and with the full wrath of the party. This play was put on just when the Shakhta trial was on which lent its political purposefulness added strength."

N. Oruzheinikov (*Soviet Art* No. 17) referring to the characters presented by the actors of the M.O.S.P.S. theater asks himself the question: Why does the worker public love the actors of this theatre? And answers:

"The novelty and contemporariness of the dramatic material determined the relations between actor and public in this theater... The actor of the M.O.S.P.S theatre is contemporary with his public not only because of the date of the performance, not only by the external features of the role enacted, but also by virtue of the creative personality of the actor."

Landmarks at the beginning of the activity of this theater were Bill-Belotzerkovsky's *Storm,* Furmanov's *Mutiny* and *The Rails Hum* by Kirshon, and at the end of the decade Furmanov's *Chopaev,* Wandursky's *Raban,* and Pogodin's *Snow.*

The Children's Theater and Nathalia Satz

Who is Nathalia Satz and why is she so well known to the children of Moscow? She is less than 30 years old and is already celebrating the 15th year of her activity.

Nathalia Satz is the art manager and producer of the Moscow Children's Theater. She began this work when she was about 14 and showed remarkable abilities as organizer.

"This work," writes N. Ognyov *(Literary Gazette* No. 13 of March 17, 1933) "is a continuous chain of victories and defeats, flights and falls, achievements—it is real work.

"Satz's first production was the Japanese Theater suffering yet from estheticism. Then came *Pioneria, Pickaninny and the Monkey, Robinsons of Altai, Cracking* and others. Her work was appreciated beyond our borders. In 1931 she produces the opera *Falstaff* in Berlin, in 1932 she is invited to Buenos Aires, Argentine where she produces *Marriage of Figaro* and does laboratory work on the *Ring of the Nibelungs.*"

Concluding, N. Ognyov writes: "What a wonderful beginning of life! Organizer of mass pageants at 15, director of a theater at 20 and a famous producer at 28."

A. Kassil, in *Izvestia* (March, 1933) recalls that N. Satz as the daughter of a famous composer connected with the Moscow Art Theater "grew in an atmosphere of cues and arias. Vakhtangov, Suleryitzky and Moskvin stage managed her childhood."

Until the October revolution there was no real children's theater anywhere in the world. Only the land of Soviets found itself equal to the task. This task was accomplished with the help of N. Satz.

"In the theater created by N. Satz," writes Kassil, "were found the bonds of friendships between Communist pedagogy and Soviet art. This is the result of 15 years of work of a young producer... Such a celebration as that of the 29 year old Nathalia Satz is possible only here in the Soviet Union, because 'Aunty Natasha' was brought up by the revolution and because only the proletarian revolution raised the curtain of the only children's theatre in the world."

Model of a Blooming Mill on Theatre Square, one of the decorations on Moscow streets for May Day, done in striking colors and beautifully illuminated at night

Plays on Western Subjects

There are two plays now running in Moscow in which European life is viewed in a new light. They are *Battle on the Western Front* by V. Vishnevsky and *Introduction* by J. German. One is produced by the Theater of the Revolution, the other by Meyerhold's Theater. In addition the Second Art Theater has prepared V. Kirshon's play *Trial.*

Introduction has proved a poor play, weakly constructed from a dramatic angle. The critics claim this play has not confirmed the leading role of the dramatist in the theater but quite the reverse has played right into the hands of the stage manager, in this case such a tried and experienced one as Meyerhold (A. Matzkin in *Izvestia* of March 27, 1933). But rejecting the dramatist, Meyerhold "himself came.... to the drama and to complete the biographies of the heroes in haste."

The political idea in the play is the portrayal of the crisis of the West European intelligentsia.

"In order to show this crisis the author takes the central figure, the great scholar Kelberg through a full course in capitalism, makes him seethe class struggle in practice, and in this connection revalue all of the political and cultural values of the old world." (O. Litovsky in *Soviet Art* No. 7, February 8, 1933)

No one in the play shouts crisis but—

"During the entire play the public is immersed in the atmosphere of the crisis, feels its 'aroma,' is oppressed by the nightmare of the cultural relapse of the capitalist world." (ibid)

Battle on the Western Front has not been thoroughly appraised yet, but D. Zaslavsky (*Soviet Art)* has put this play to the credit of the dramatist as well as the production to the credit of the Theater of the Revolution. The play deals with the Fascist offensive and develops before the playgoer the treacherous role of Social Democracy in full.

Shaw a la Soviet

The Moscow theater managed by Zavadsky has produced G. B. Shaw's *Devil's Disciple.* The production of the famous melodrama on the topic that "the English soldier will never conquer while under the leadership of the English ministry of War" is a success.

The Moscow production has an epilogue added by the translator A. Deitch. In this epilogue Shaw appears and quoting himself comments on the characters ironically.

A. Matskin in *Soviet Art* (No. 10 of February 26, 1933) finds, that Zavadsky has given an original Shaw—"whose characters are not bent on being witty and paradoxical at any cost. Zavadsky has understood that there is another Shaw than the one invented by bourgeois literary critics—there is also the wrathful publicist that cares little for parliamentary wit."

According to the critics, Zavadsky's actors work with the word. "Their lines are tensely intelligent... The word sounds polemically keen. There is no sense of the chamber, not a hint of didactic monologue; instead vivid speech, passion—every word a verb."

A. V. Lunacharsky in *Izvestia* of March 1, 1933 also praises the production.

Deitch's epilogue he considers "apt and suitable."

"True," says Lunacharsky, "one can say that the comments in the epilogue do not uncover any social thought which would bring the play really close to our problems, to our time. But the play itself has not got this. It is a play of free thought, rebellion, a play of protest against philistinism. It is a radical middle class play, written however, by a man so clever that he frequently rises ironically above his own premises."

The Komsomol Stage

The Komsomol writer M. Kolosov has written *The Road* a play on the younger generation. It was produced by the Moscow Worker's Theater. It is uneven, but meaty and principled.

It consists of separate pictures and scenes from the life of the Komsomol from the time of their organization to the third congress. The pictures are connected by the unity of the characters and intellectual conception.

G. Korabelnikov in the *Literary Gazette* (No. 15 of March 29, 1933) thinks that the "dramatic conflict in the play is made up of the fates of that section of Soviet Youth that has not succeeded in overcoming completely their conceit and vanguardism although they gave promise of good human material for the formation of bolshevist character."

Izvestia considers the crux of the play to be the " way in which revolutionary youth was formed and the inherent 'growing pains.' What is referred to is that know-all, arrogant, self-assertive attitude which has more than once been the subject of severe criticism on the part of the leaders of the Komsomol themselves."

Was the author successful in this? *Izvestia* answers—only half satisfactorily. He succeeded at any rate in showing youth. It "moves, lives, works, and thinks on the stage and the best of Soviet youth struggles. It must be conceded that the portrayal is on a higher intellectual plane than in many plays where youth is featured."

A Cheerful Show

L. Slavin's play *Intervention* the latest production of the Vakhtangov is acclaimed by the critics as a cheerful play full of the joy of living.

L. Slavin came to literature from newspaper work and made his debut with a novel *The Heir of Odessa,* a satire.

Intervention is also a play on Odessa—but the Odessa occupied by the enemy. Hence—centrally placed in the action is the underground bolshevist organization doing a tremendous job of undermining the army of intervention. The work of the bolshevist organization is opposed by the Odessa bourgeoisie—one of the last nests of counter revolution.

It must be conceded that this bourgeoisie represented by the composite "Madame Ksidias" and her son are most vividly portrayed by Slavin. The bolshevist underground organization is much more dryly done. This is comprehensible. Slavin has a keen eye for carricature. Hence the satire, the liveliness, and variation of type in the play.

J. Usovsky in *Soviet Art* (No. 14 of March 20, 1933) says "the entire canvas of intervention in Odessa is painted with a brush controlled by a clear sighted, serene, perhaps too serene, artist. It is all in joyous rhythm, almost musical, almost a song of transparent rhythm without any sharp transitions. These sharp transitions are perhaps what the playgoer misses—the dramatic chords, the heartrending tragic tones which disturb, stir, take away the breath and rend with the heroic epic of 1919."

The Season's Best Play

N. Pogodin's *My Friend* at the Theatre of the Revolution has this season taken the leading position held last season by Afinogenov's play *Fear* at the Art Theatre. But if Afinogenov's play according to J. Olesha, "has revealed the Soviet public in its widest sense" this play has defined it.

That this play of Pogodin's is the best of the season is the unanimous opinion of the writer S. Tretyakov, the critic J. Usovsky, the old bolshevik A. Soltz and the theoritician of the theater B. Alpers.

B. Alpers, in *Soviet Theatre* No. 1 of this year is happy that *My Friend* is not "a chronicle with a superficial review of our present day doings, but a drama integral in design. It has its basis in a strong feeling of the dramatic, the supreme seriousness and importance of the events in the country tending to create a new type of people.

"It shows the course taken by the people of our age, people of the most various social origin and class temper."

Pogodin's play is one on the Soviet industrial man. According to the critics, the author "does not minimize the difficulties encountered by the hero of the play Guy. It is by the process of overcoming these difficulties that the new man of our era grows out of the play."

From Intervention *by L. Slavin*

Pogodin's play is thus not only a play on the Soviet industrial man, but on the new Soviet man. A. Saltz in *Izvestia* of March 2, 1933 points out that "the main hero of the play is the Communist Party and the working class building the Five-Year Plan.

"There is much chaos and fuss yet in our life, a good deal of stuff yet for satire and indignation but it could hardly be expected to be otherwise as we are engaged in an entirely new thing, we are putting through an entirely new road, because no one has done this before and there is nowhere to learn the way.

"Various branches of our economy, this or that plant, one or another factory is being managed by a member of the Communist Party and each must struggle for the success of the industry entrusted to him as if it were his own and only then is the member of the party worthy of this high calling. This is what the play says of the Soviet industrial man."

The writer S. Tretyakov gives the following estimate of *My Friend*. As if polemizing with an imaginary opponent he gives him an opportunity of reproaching the play on the score of being schematic: "The builder-director easily jumps over all difficulties and leans heavily on the higher authorities. The play does not dwell on the actual difficulties of picking your men, coordinating the parts of such a complex mechanism as a Soviet construction job. A hysterical chap runs about the stage and that's all. . ."

The author of the review answers his "opponent" thus:

"Your truth is unjust, my friend! And you were not able to see all those excellent things in the play on account of which even double the errors are pardonable. . .

"Listen attentively.

"The fundamental problem of our plays is the one of the Hero of Our Times. Such heroes of our time in recent plays have been the worker-udarnik and the communistically educated rank and file worker in Socialist industry. The problem of that other hero of our times—the captain of industry has not been tackled yet.

"All these Winters, Gugels, Frankfurts—they are really Chapaevs only of the civil war front but on the front of the Five-Year Plan.

"The captain of construction with all the incumbent temperament and all the difficulties facing him is first to be found in this very play of Pogodin's.

"What is important in the second place? The figure of the 'manager'.

"When the director is reproached that he 'slyly obtained so many thousands of pair of boots for the workers' it affects our risibilities. But when the 'manager' says that tomorrow he must have half a million pairs of boots and millions of metres of cloth not for one plant but for a series of them, then a spirit of tremendous seriousness descents upon us for we participate in the tremendous task of the Five Year Plan.

"And finally the third point. The play shows excellently something similar to intercellular metabolism in the course of which directions flow from man to man. It is shown how, overcoming the psychological resistance of the individual mass will is created."

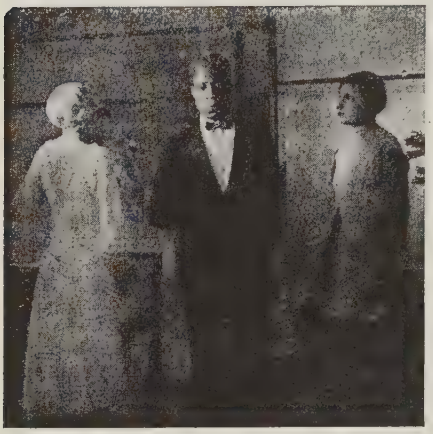
This is the idea of the play.

P. Nizmanov

THE LIBRARY OF FOREIGN LITERATURE

Ten years ago the State Central Library of Foreign Literature was a small room with a few books, a staff of three workers and a great

A scene from the past season's great success My Friend *by N. Pogodin, part of which appears in this issue*



Wayland Rudd, American Negro actor with the Meyerhold Theatre in a scene from Introduction

will to contribute to Socialist construction. That was in 1932.

Its greatest achievement since then is not the fact that its staff has grown from 3 to 89 members. Nor that its one room has become a library of many rooms in two Moscow buildings in which there are 150,000 volumes in German, English, French and other languages.

Its greatest achievement since then is not the Library of Foreign Literature now walks about the country keeping step with the huge strides of socialist construction. It now has 280 branches which include another 160,000 volumes for the foreign worker, specialist and the Soviet worker from Karelia to Siberia. These branches have appeared wherever a new industrial giant was born: in Magnitogorsk, Dnieprostroy, Tagil, Berezniki, Donbas, Stalingrad and Gorky.

New books are continuously being sent to these libraries. Notes on these books are included. Recommended lists of books are issued in English, German and Russian.

Foreign workers and specialists are active in these outlying branches. They keep in touch with the Moscow center; they offer suggestions.

The bi-monthly *Bulletin* sent to all branches grew out of a wall newspaper which hangs in the Moscow center.

Periodically, staff members go from Moscow to the various branches over the country to guide work, receive suggestions, devise plans for improvement together with the local workers.

This is all part of the "mass work" of the library conducted with the close co-operation of the All Union Central Council of Trade Unions. (VZSPS)

The Moscow central library also receives a wide range of foreign magazines and newspapers. You will find here American weeklies like the *Nation* and *New Republic* and monthlies including the *Bookman* and the *New Masses*. Here are not only the *Times* of both New York and London but also *The Daily Worker* of both countries... and their comrades the *Rote Fahne* of Berlin and *Humanité* of France. In the reading room you are likely to meet friends and comrades here whom you haven't seen since you have been in New York, London, Berlin, or Paris. This room has become an international meeting place.

2

There is a bold sign on the wall of the Central Library in Moscow which reads: "A Foreign Language is a weapon in the struggle for life"—Marx.

A staff of instructors sit near the sign and assist trade union members in mastering foreign languages daily from 2 to 9. Foreign workers can learn the Russian language here.

As with books, the Library brings the study of foreign languages directly to the factory. Instruction is given at the very lathes at which the students have been working. This activity of the Library is growing rapidly. In Electrozavod, for example, the 1,266 lessons given in 1931 rose to 6,038 lessons by 1932. In the Stalin Plant, for the same period, the figures rose from 1,831 to 3,875. The staff of language instructors is maintained by the Library of Foreign Literature and works closely through the Trade Union committee of the factory.

3

All this does not complete the activities of the Library of Foreign Literature.

There are lectures given here by noted American, English, German and French writers and poets. Among those who have spoken here or read from their works are: Charles Ashleigh, Langston Hughes, Michael Gold, Paul Vaillant-Couturier, Louis Aragon, Johannes Becher, E. E. Kisch and others.

There is a wide range of other lectures given on literary and political subjects.

Bibliographies are compiled by the Library: of Maxim Gorky, Sherwood Anderson, John Dos Passos, James Joyce and others.

Special exhibits are arranged on occasions, as they were for the 40th anniversary of Gorky's literary activities, Walter Scott Centenary, Rabelais 400 years since Pantagruel, etc.

The Library Reference Bureau answers all questions of its readers and all inquiries received by mail. It supplies information to writers and critics. Very often without request the Library will send information newly received which they feel would be of interest to particular writers, scientists or students. The list of special activities is in fact, much longer.

This is only a bare outline of the many functions of a library which only ten years ago was confined to a small room in Moscow with a few books, a staff of three members and a great will to contribute to Socialist construction.

Today the State Central Library of Foreign Literature under the Peoples Commissariat for Education of the RSFSR walks in huge strides all over the Soviet Union carying out its slogan: "Foreign Languages to the Masses!"

Walt Carmon

Demyan Byedni, noted Soviet poet

AMERICAN ARTIST EXHIBITS IN MOSCOW

An exhibition of the latest work of Fred Ellis, noted American revolutionary artist, formerly staff artist of the New York *Daily Worker* was held from April 17 to May 15 at the Museum of Western Art in Moscow. This proved one of the outstanding events of the season arranged by the International Union of Revolutionary Artists who in this instance had the cooperation of *Trud (Labor)* Moscow Daily of the Red trade Unions where Ellis has been staff artist for the past two years.

The exhibit was opened with a public discussion of the artist and his work led by a speech by comrade Bela Uitz, secretary of the IURA. Comrade Tumarkin, editor of *Trud,* Alex Keil, secretary of the revolutionary artists of Germany, Charles Ashleigh an editor of the *Moscow Daily News,* Walt Carmon, of *-International Literature,* Mendelsohn, author of the recently published novel *Much Bread,* and comrade Chernovitz, director of the Museum of Western Art took part in the discussion.

Fred Ellis received an ovation when he rose to speak a few modest words of thanks for the honors granted him.

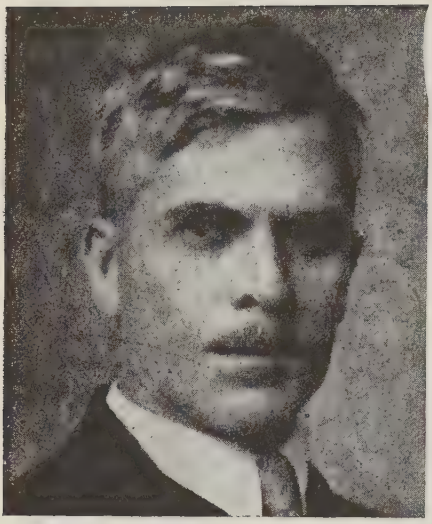
The exhibition itself was a striking one. Around a huge drawing of the Paris Commune, the banner in bold red, grouped about 150 cartoons and sketches in black and white, done in crayon, pen, charcoal, and dry-brush. All these are the work of the last year and a half. A feature of the arrangement was a display of work at various stages: from first sketches, through work in progress, and down to the final completed drawing.

One wall of the large central room of the museum where his drawings were hung was covered with sketches and ideas for cartoons. The other three walls were covered with finished political cartoons on practically every event of importance in the past year. American subject matter was very prominent: the Scottsboro case, the chains gangs, Hunger Marches, unemployment and many more aspects of the American scene. A catalogue of the work on display included a history of the artist and an estimate of his work both in America and in Moscow.

The exhibition was noted widely by the Soviet press including special reviews with reproductions of the artist's work both in *Sovietskoye Iskustvo (Soviet Arts)* and the *Vechernaya Moskva (Evening Moscow).*

On May 12, further honors were heaped on Fred Ellis in a dinner-discussion arranged at the Artists Club in Moscow. Leading soviet artists as well as foreign guests, including the Polish playwright Wandursky, took part in the discussion. The evening turned into a review of not only the many virtues of the artist but also of his 20 years of service as an artist of the revolutionary working class.

Following the Moscow showing the exhibit was taken to Elektrostal where it remained for a month. Meanwhile many of the best drawings were acquired for the permanent collections of the Museum of Western Art, the Museum of the Revolution, the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute and other organizations. Eight drawings were selec-



Fred Ellis, noted American revolutionary artist, whose work was recently exhibited in Moscow

ted for a large edition of postcards. Following this a book of 50 selected drawings is being issued in Moscow extending further recognition to this American revolutionary artist whose work has become so well known to Soviet workers in all sections of the country. (A Biographical sketch of Fred Ellis, "An American Artist In Moscow" by Walt Carmon, together with 7 full page reproductions of his drawings appeared in the No. 1, 1933 issue of *International Literature.)*

Against Fascism

GERMANY

The newspaper *Arbeiter Zeitung* publishes the following protest by Oskar Maria Graf:

BURN ME!

"In common with nearly the whole of the left, socialist wing of the German intelligentsia, I too have experienced all the boons of the new regime: during a chance absence from Munich, the police came to my home in Munich to arrest me. They confiscated manuscripts that cannot be restored, a great deal of laboriously gathered materials, and the greater part of my books. All this will probably be publicly burnt. Thus I was forced to leave home, work, and what is perhaps worst of all, my native land, in order to escape the concentration camp.

"But the most stunning surprize was yet to come. As reported by the *Berliner Borsenkurier* I am included in the WHITE list of writers of the new Germany, and all my books with the exception of my basic work *We Prisoners* is RECOMMENDED FOR READING!

"So, I am called upon to be one of the exponents of the 'new German spirit'!

"I cannot make out why I have merited such dishonor.

"The Third Empire has banished from Germany nearly everything of value, has discarded genuine German creation, has compelled its most outstanding writers to seek refuge in foreign lands, and has deprived them of the possibility of being published in Germany. The supercilious myopia of writers following where the wind blows, and the irrepressible vandalism of the present rulers, tend to uproot from our literature and our art everything that is of world importance, and to substitute the concept of 'German' by that of die-hard nationalism. It is the kind of nationalism that curbs the very least manifestation of revolutionary thought, by whose orders all my staunch comrades-socialists are being subjected to persecution, imprisonment and toture, and which either kills them outright or drives them to suicide!

"And now the representatives of this barbarrous nationalism, which has nothing whatever in common with allegiance to the German nation, has the temerity to consider me as a supporter, to include me in their so-called 'white list' which in the eyes of the whole world can be nothing else but a black list!

"Such censure I did not merit!

"The whole of my life, the whole of my creative work, entitles me to the demand that my books shall be consigned to the pure flame of the stake, that they shall not fall into the hands of the brown-shirt hands, and shall not penetrate into their rotten brains!

"Burn the fruits of German creative thought! It will live forever, the same as your ignominy!"

Against Fascism

In response to the brutalities of the fascists, the revolutionary cultural organizations of all countries have joined in a mighty campaign of protest against the fascist terror.

FRANCE

The Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists of France (affiliated to the IURW) published two special issues of the *Red Leaflet* which was sent to all the French newspapers and to German embassies. 6,000 copies of the *Leaflet* were sold out in two hours. The leaflets contained the manifesto of the Association as well as statements by individual writers on the fascist terror. The Manifesto says, in part:

"*The Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists of France* (AEAR) ardently protests against the fascist provocations in Germany, against the burning of the Reichstag, against the terror. The members of the Association—writers and artists belonging to different parties—appeal to all the toilers for a united front in the struggle for the defence of the German proletariat. In

Germany, as in Italy, thousands of writers, artists, physicians, and lawyers, have been jailed. All these comrades are in grave danger. Let us unite to save them! We call upon the entire intelligentsia to organize protests against the terror in Germany and against the Treaty of Versaille. In the proletariat alone is the future of civilization!

"We appeal to all writers to join in our protest, we appeal to all representatives of public opinion in Europe and America, to all who, irrespective of party affiliation, are imbued with the feeling of indignation at the outrage of the fundamentals of human dignity and with a sense of solidarity with those who are struggling against the terrorist reign of unbridled reaction in Germany."

Romain Rolland: "The 'brown plague' promptly outdid the black plague! The Hitler fascism in the course of four weeks did more violence than its prototype and teacher—Italian fascism—in the course of 10 years. The burning of the Reichstag, used as a clumsy pretext to justify the terror, is an act of crude police provocation. We denounce before public opinion throughout the world this lie of the fascists and all their crimes: the capture of the power of the State by the most reactionary party, the official legalization of the crimes committed, the crushing of every freedom of word and thought, the arrogant political interference everywhere, even in the Academy, chasing out writers and artists having the courage of their opinions, arresting the most honoured people, and proclaiming martial law throughout Germany."

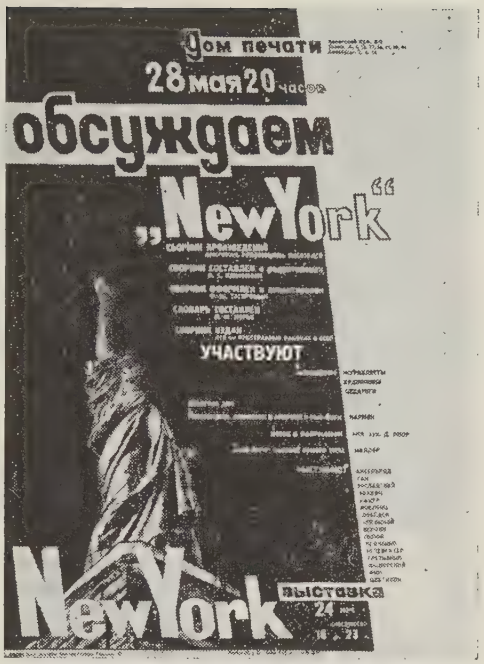
Andre Gide: "Germany affords an appalling example of the terror, the road of which is inevitable for a country seeking salvation in nationalist madness... Those who wish to avert it will be bound in the long run to admit that the class struggle alone—I mean to say, the struggle against imperialism within every country—can avert the new conflict which is being prepared."

Henri Barbusse supports the protest "against the monstruous machinations," against "provocation, lie, and violence," and appeals for "closing the ranks in the face of the hideous wave of fascism."

On May 21st a meeting of protest was organized by the AEAR at which Adre Gide was chairman.

"So large were the crowds eager to hear Andre Gide that the whole of the Rue Cadet was thronged with people. The street was guarded by reinforced police squads, as though the authorities were afraid lest the eloquence of the author of *Vaults of the Vatican* might draw the crowd into an assault on capitalism." (From the reactionary literary publication *Les Nouvelles Literaires).*

"Andre Gide burned all the bridges linking him to the bourgeosie. He went over unreservedly to the side of the struggling proletariat," says *L'Humanité.*



Poster for a symposium held in Moscow recently on the occasion of the publication in English of the book New York, *compiled by I. Kashkeen, and including the work of leading American writers and artists*

The same meeting was also addressed by Eugene Dabit the writer who spoke of "the wrath of French writers hailing from the working class" and of their readiness to fight side by side with the proletariat; Dr. D'Alsace, one of the leading physicians of France and a specialist on questions of eugenics who made public the declaration of 400 French physicians and medical students about their readiness to fight against German fascism and French chauvinism; Henri Malraut, a prominent figure among the younger writers, who declared that "in the event of war, all those who defend human dignity will turn to Moscow, to the Red Army," and by a number of other prominent intellectual workers. The representative of the German writers, who was received with stormy ovation by the audience, appealed in his address for a united front in the struggle against fascism.

The speeches of Andre Gide and the other writers, artists and scientists who addressed the meeting, were published by the Association in a separate pamphlet.

L'Humanité published the manifesto of the national committee of preparation for the anti-fascist congress, appealing for active support to the forthcoming congress. The manifesto was signed by Barbusse, Rolland, Andre Gide, Gabriel Duchesne, Guy Georam, Francis Jourdain,

Exhibit of German revolutionary posters at the Museum of Western Art in Moscow

by the International Organization of Educational Workers, and others.

The Committee of struggle against fascism, organized in Paris under the chairmanship of Romain Rolland, has launched a public appeal to possessors of German books to hand over copies of books burnt in Germany to special "documentary" departments of public libraries in France.

CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

The newspaper *Leva Fronta* organized in its columns a sort of protest-meeting against fascist terror. Contributions were made by numerous representatives of the progressive Czech intelligentsia.

For the poet Witeslaw Nezwal, leader of an important poetry group fascism is "the expression of the total decay of the imperialist period of history, and this fascism can be overcome only at the price of the total destruction of decaying capitalism."

"Poetry is in danger," declares a whole group of poets artists: E. Filla, A. Hofmeister, I. Stirski, Tojon, and others. "German poetry and culture is being driven away where competition goes on among nations. In this we see danger also to ourselves. The shadow of fascism in all its majesty of stupidity falls also on our country. In the struggle for the supreme achievements of European culture, our place is in the ranks of the working class, the only force which will decide the fate of the world."

The appearance of Adolf Hitler on the screen in a movie theatre at Tesin was the cause of stormy protest by a working class audience. The management had to apologize and to remove the offending item of the "cinema chronicle" containing the Hitler portrait.

At the Prague public library an exhibition was arranged of books burnt in Germany. Over the entrance to the exhibition is the inscription: "Middle Ages."

HUNGARY

The seizure of power by Hitler in Germany had a peculiar repercussion in Hungary. The noted bourgeois publicist and critic Ignotus, the founder of *East* one of the weekly reviews that are distinctly hostile to revolutionary literature, made a speech before a large audience in which he designated victorius fascism in Germany as "the beginning of the epoch of barbarism in Europe" and appealed to every "fair-minded" writer to fight against German, Hungarian, and international barbarism. This speech met with a huge response. The celebrated Hungarian novelist J. Moritz, who in his public speeches and in his work was always on the same side as Ignotus, withdrew from the editorial board of *East* and published an article urging the young bourgeois writers to struggle against the reaction that disguises itself behind the theory of "art for art's sake."

SWEDEN

The Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nuneter* printed a letter from distinguished representatives of science, art, and literature in Sweden protesting against Jew-baiting in Germany. The letter was signed, among others, by the President of the Union of Swedish Writers Stierastedt, by the winner of the Nobel prize, prof. Svedenborg, etc.

The Communists moved a question in the Lower House of the Riksdag whether the Swed-

ish Government would and could offer work to scientists who on political or racial grounds were denied the possibility to continue work in Germany. A debate ensued on this motion. Communists, social-democrats, and members of the Swedish National party denounced in exceedingly strong terms the persecution of Jews and Marxists by the German Government.

HOLLAND

The Holland section of the IURW issued in the beginning of May a manifesto containing an energetic protest against the burning of books in Germany and appealed to libraries, reading-rooms, and booksellers organizations in Holland to arrange exhibitions of revolutionary literature.

The manifesto was published in the whole of the Dutch press and met with wide response: numerous book stores arranged window displays of books burnt in Germany. At the same time the journal *Links Richten* appealed to the Dutch Writers' Union and to the "Literature Society" to protest against the burning of revolutionary literature by the German fascists.

The Dutch section of IURW organized an exhibition of revolutionary literature from May 27 till June 7 and an evening of German revolutionary art to raise funds for the benefit of art workers who emigrated from Germany.

The Section issued a special anti-fascist number of *Links Richten.*

DENMARK

A number of executive members of the "Danish-German Cultural Movement Society" withdrew from the Executive Committee as a protest against the anti-semitic actions of the German embassy. The immediate cause of this step was that at a meeting of the Society the Viennese actress Lili Freud Marle, a niece of the famous psycho-analyst Siegmund Freud, was forbidden to appear because she was Jewish by birth.

BULGARIA

At a recent underground meeting of the Bulgarian Union of Revolutionary Students a resolution was passed to fight against fascism and against the menace of imperialist war. The meeting was also attended by delegates from the students of France, Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland.

USA

In New York, three revolutionary organizations: the John Reed Club, the League of Professional Groups and the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners joined in a broad campaign to rally American cultural workers against the fascist terror raging in Germany.

Letters were sent to all mass cultural organizations and individual writers, artists, scientists

At the International Exhibition of Revolutionary Artists held in the Museum of Western Art in Moscow. One of two rooms devoted to the work of the American revolutionary artists of the John Reed Club.

Harry L. Potamkin—secretary of the New York John Reed Club, died July, 1933. Comrade Potamkin was only 33 years of age, a writer, poet cinema critic. He was a member of the American delegation at the Kharkov Conference of the IURW, a contributing editor to *New Masses.* With the death of Harry L. Potamkin ,the American revolutionary cultural movement has lost one of its most active and able comrades.

and others calling for immediate action. Conferences, public meetings and wide spread publicity followed immediately, reaching various sections of the country at the initiative of nearly 30 John Reeds Clubs throughout the United States.

The campaign was carried into the various revolutionary, liberal and bourgeois publications by the writers, critics and artists who joined on the issue: "Against Fascist Terror and Reaction."

"Immediately after Hitler's assumption of the chancellorship, the *New Masses,* in a letter sent out on March 3 asked a number of American writers to send in protests against German fascism."

These protests are gathered in a symposium in the April issue of this leading American revolutionary cultural organ, and includes such prominent figures in the American literary world as Newton Arvin, Heywood Broun, Lewis Corey, Waldo Frank, Michael Gold, Horace Gregory, Granville Hicks, James Rorty, Edwin Seaver, Isidor Schneider and others.

Included also is a protest of the Revolutionary Writers Federation conducting the fight through its affiliated organizations and publications: The John Reed Club Writers Group, Proletpen, Hungarian Proletarian Writers Association, Burevestnik, Ukrainian Proletarian Writers and Worker-Correspondents Association, Japanese Cultural Federation, Finnish Cultural Federation, Lithuanian Literary Dramatic Group, Jack London Club, Pen and Hammer and the *Student Review.*

The issue of *New Masses* including this material also carries a leading article by its editor Joseph Freeman on "The Background of German Fascism."

According to recent news received by the American *Daily Worker,* Henri Barbusse, internationally known author and opponent of imperialist, war, has accepted an invitation from the American Committee Against Fascist Oppression in Germany, to come to the United States to lecture against the Fascist Hitler regime.

Revolutionary Literature Grows

USA

The coming of Hitler's fascist regime in Germany, prevented the publication of the book *To Make My Bread* by Grace Lumpkin, which some months ago was given the Gorky Prize, a yearly award, made by the Revolutionary Writers' Federation in America. It is being published in England, Sweden and the USSR.

Georgia Nigger by John Spivak, another recent American novel is also being published in the USSR in both Russian and English.

We Gather Strength

Of the young revolutionary poets gathered around the *New Masses* in America none has as yet published a book.For very obvious reasons. In the first place, no revolutionary poet in the States is wealthy enough to finance the publication of his verse (even granting that he wished to do so.) And the bourgeois publishers: they ... Well, even such a well-known poet in America as Robinson Jeffers has had his last manuscript of poetry refused by the firms in New York that occasionally print a book of verse "to round out their list."

There simply is "no money in poetry" in America.

However, in the course of the last month one volume of revolutionary poetry has appeared written by four poets and published by the Liberal Press that prints the *New Masses. We Gather Strength* is not an anthology nor does is pretend to be one. It does not cover the field of revolutionary poetry in America. It merely attempts to present the work in essence of Herman Spector, Joseph Kalar, Edwin Rolfe and S. Funaroff. But due to the limitations of space, *We Gather Strength* can only be a taste of the work of these separate poets, for they are each different in approach, orientation and treatment of revolutionary subject matter.

Michael Gold gives a comradely preface to the book, but in a manner which suggests that he has not made definitive his reactions to the poems in the volume.

Herman Spector and Joseph Kalar have been writing for the *New Masses* for five years. Edwin Rolfe and S. Funaroff are more recent additions, the latter having written in the revolutionary press for a comparatively short time.

Spector published a poem, "Anarchist Nightsong," in the first issue of the new *New Masses* after Michael Gold had taken over the sheet with the purpose of giving it a disciplined revolutionary line. It was a good poem, but in it were exemplified many of the faults that have been so far inherent in Spector's work. Speaking of New York, of Union Square at midnight, he says *O Lord of desolation and bleak murder strangle this sick asleep chorus girl city, smash press your thumb down lightly, smudge into nothing the gross abomination of men's possessions... kill the lousey bastards in their beds as graves! wreck the damned machines to which all men are slaves!... let me know no more New York... O Lord of loveliness and ugly death let all nights cease upon your last chill breath!*

You see, it is a good poem, but there is nothing but destruction and wish fulfillment for annihilation in it. But it has hatred. All of Spector's work is either bitter irony or revolutionary hate.

It all comes down to one thing in the case of Spector: *I am the bastard in the ragged suit who spits, with bitterness and malice to all.* But he continues, *I am dissolved in unemotion, won by a quiet content, the philosophy of social man... The high hat gods go down the aisles. I am at one with life.*

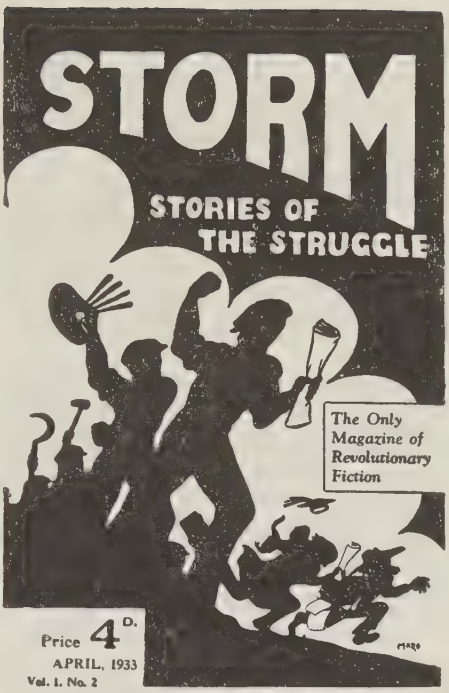
Spector, as you can see merely indicates, implies. But he has all of the possibilities of a major poet. It he would continue with the expression of his detestation of the bourgeoisie, adding to that as adept an expression of the activative needs of the proletariat, he could be the best revolutionary poet in America so far.

Joseph Kalar has not written much poetry. Lost in the lumbermills of Minnesota because of unemployment *who could believe it? who could believe it?* he has not written as much as he should and could. Perhaps, because he should write prose... But in any case, he has a warm feeling of the soil in his work that Spector will never have. The beauty, desperation, strength of the proletariat in the "sticks" of America is all given expression... Two poems of his in *We Gather Strength* one never forgets: "Now that Snow is Falling" (which gives an impressionistic interpretation of a jobless, homeless worker walking on the roads of Minnesota) and "Invocation to the Wind" (which is a symbolic revolutionary piece utilizing physical phenomena to express the condition of workers in America).

Edwin Rolfe and S. Funaroff it is harder to speak of since they have not written as much.

But their work promises a lot to revolutionary poetry in America, and they together with Spector and Kalar will "Gather Strength" as they have already done in the past.

Norman Macleod



Second issue of a new English revolutionary magazine

ENGLAND

First British Revolutionary Literary Monthly

The first three issues of *Storm* a new monthly issued in London are at hand. They are full of promise and vitality and are thoroughly saturated with genuine revolutionary working class spirit. A Bulletin arriving with the second issue appeals "To All Socialist Writers, Artists and Intellectuals" and says in part "While the blows of the economic and political crisis lay more and more bare the exploiting reality of the structure of present day society, while Fascism triumphs in country after country, attacking intellectuals, artists and workers in a mad orgy of reactionary oppression, we are forced to realize the worthlessness of our art if it acts only as an amusement for the oppressers or as a palliative to the struggling oppressed. We must take sides and our side is the side of the oppressed. We must struggle and fight with them. These considerations have led to the founding of *Storm* the only magazine of Socialist fiction, verse and art in Britain."

A following letter from Douglas Jeffries, editor in chief of the *Storm* editorial board advises of the steps taken to establish *Storm* among British workers and intellectuals:

"Circular letters were sent to all who had written verse or prose fiction for the *Daily*

Worker asking for help, and a number of contributions, mostly of low standard were received. These were put together in the first issue, a poor production, very amateurish in appearance, chiefly due to the ineptness of the printer, who let the group down very badly. The sale was in the region of 1,000 copies.

"The response was out of all proportion to the sale. Letters came from workers in every industry and centre in Britain acclaiming a magazine of working class fiction and verse. Offers of help were received from miners, dockers, busmen, railwaymen, seamen, intellectuals and over 80 contributions, many of a high standard, were received for the second number, that you have seen.

"For this number we went to the Utopia Press and had it well printed. We included, despite cost, illustrations, all by working class artists. We appealed, organizationally, for guarantors and shock-brigades in all the main centers. Letters continually pour in congratulating us and offering help. Over 120 contributions are in hand for number 3 and two areas—Glasgow and Manchester—have overfulfilled their plan of guarantors. The print of 2,000 copies is all but sold out.

"Several have sent us donations to help carry on and have offered to write for us (offer accepted) and we are now approaching leading intellectuals. We hope to follow it up with a symposium of short replies to a questionaire, sent to leading left writers.

"Organizationally, we are trying to get a group in every centre, with members in every other organization of a left character, (youth, political, intellectual, cultural, etc.) that will discuss the magazine, hold meetings and discuss manuscripts, reasons for rejections, etc. These will be used in all the Party and united-front press.

"Our actual shock brigaders now number some 50. All are very enthusiastic. We are aiming at extending our influence into the reformist youth organizations. We wish to get a mass sale for *Storm* by the autumn.

"Cultural conditions are damn bad in Britain. A number of writers have allied themselves to the anti-War Committee. Better results are obtaining with the German Relief Committee Against Fascism, as even H. G. Wells and Louis Goulding have been unable to remain nuetral.

"There is no really proletarian art in Britain. None of the proletarian writers or established authors can be said to really support us, except Shaw, who is taking a very good left stand on. War and the USSR. Of the poets there is a school growing up in Bloomsbury that is very promising. Much under the influence of T. S. Eliot and the decadents (Too interested in form, confused between open-air life and industrialism and the causes of the present discontent, main reaction against prostitution. Very subjective.) They published an anthology *New Signature* recently. Not bad. We shall review it.

Meanwhile a delegation from Britain is bringing you posters done by Weaver, head of the Workers Posters Service, one of the cleverest of our young artists. They should be of interest."

HUNGARY

A. Barta has completed a novel on the crisis in Hungary, *Without Mercy*. He is at present writing a poem on socialist construction on the basis of materials gathered by the author in the course of a sojourn of six weeks in the Urals with an international writers' brigade.

Sandor Gergel is working on a novel about the Soviet Republic at the present time.

Bela Illes has begun a series of stories on the crisis under the title *Contemporary Europe*.

ROUMANIA

M. Kahana is completing an anti-war novel *The Story of a Soldier for a Soldier*, describing revolutionary activity in the Roumanian army in time of peace.

SPAIN

Pla-i-Beltran, a young revolutionary poet, has issued in Valencia a book of *Proletarian Poems*. The basic theme of the book is the call of the struggle for proletarian rule throughout the world.

Ramon Sender, eminent writer of Spain, author of the novel *The Magnet*, has completed and submitted to the IURW a new novel *Seven Red Sundays* for Soviet publication.

Soviet Books Abroad

FRANCE

A French translation of Furmanovs' novel *Chapayev* was issued by the EIS publishing firm.

"This is a simple book. Its lyricism is the lyricism ingrained in the toil of the masses. Heroism in this book is just as ordinary a phenomenon as poverty, famine, or death, and self-sacrifice is as common as treachery or victory."

The same firm has published *Hydrocentral* by Marietta Shaginyan and will soon publish *Hate* by Shukhov and *Broken Virgin Soil* by Sholokhov.

D. Fibich's book *Fumes* has been published in French translation by L'Eglantine, the title being changed to *The Emancipated*.

Azeff, the play by A. Tolstoy and P. Scegolev, has appeared in a French translation.

The weekly review *Lu* of recent date contained Babel's story *The Awakening* translated by V. Pozner and I. Duchambe, and also Yurgin's *Episodes of the Civil War in Bokhara*.

In a recent issue of *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, under the caption "Russian Youth"

were published talks, letters, and diaries collected by I. Ehrenburg for a new novel he is now writing about the "new people created by the Revolution."

GREECE

Vsevolod Ivanov's *Armored Train No. 14-69,* translated by L. Biniatoglou, has appeared in the series of "Best Post-war Novels" published by Enossis.

CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

A Czech translation has appeared in Prague of Gorky's *Life of Klim Samghin* (2 volumes) and of his *Reminiscences of Lenin.*

A translation of D. Byedni's pamphlet *On the Work of the Writer* has been published.

ITALY

An Italian translation of Babel's *Red Cavalry* was issued by the Francibelli publishing firm.

"... Isaac Babel is a lyricist, yet the lyricism is of flesh and blood, a muscular lyricism.

"... Babel is a colossus nurtured by the classics. In his school years he had read voraciously the works of Flaubert, Rabelais, Maupessant, and this very attachment to tradition has led Babel to the ultra-modern expressionist form of literature that is impregnated with brilliancy and color, to the form which is now tempestuous and rich in colors, now timid and as though glowing, to the form which has rendered Babel into a genuine artist of Bolshevik ideology..."

Pantaleimon Romanov's *Tovarisch Kisliakov* has been published in Italian translation under the title of *Three Pairs of Silk Stockings.*

BRAZIL

The intelligentsia of Brazil is being drawn more and more towards Marxism. Thus, there were published in Portuguese: Marx's *Capital* in abridged form, the *Communist Manifesto,* three brochures of Comrade Stalin, Grinko's *Five-Year Plan,* and John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World.*

At the same time there is a growing interest in the USSR and in Soviet literature. There have already been translated into Portuguese: Lebedinsky's *A Week,* Fadeyev's *Debacle,* Kolontai's *Soviet Women,* and Ehrenburg's *Julio Jurenito.* Krupskaya's *Reminiscences of Lenin* will appear soon.

There is a great demand for books about the USSR. Thus, the book of Ozorio Cesar on his trip to the Soviet Union, entitled *Where the Proletariat Rules,* is already coming out in its fourth edition, 16,000 copies having been sold out in six months.

The appearance of every Soviet book is noted even in the bourgeois press of Brazil. For instance:

"Ehrenburg is a reporter with a great technique, and he is superb satirical novelist." *Journal do Commercio.*

The same newspaper writes about a concert of Russian music given at Rio-de-Janeiro: "In a country where everything is grandiose, art must also be grandiose."

About The Soviet Union

FRANCE

The *Mercure de France* recently printed a review of Soviet magazines.

"At the present time," says the writer of the review , M. V. Bienstock, "the Soviet magazines appear most regularly, assuming more and more the character of the pre-revolutionary publications and gradually acquiring the importance in the intellectual life of Russia that was held in olden times by magazines like the *Sovremennik* of Chernishevsky, the *Otechestvennye Zapiski* of Schedrin, the *Vestnik Yevropy* of Stasiulevich, and so on."

In *Novi Mir* Bienstock notes *Madagascar* by Novikov-Priboy, *How the 14th Division Went to Paradise* by Demyan Byedni, and especially *O. K.* by Boris Pilnyak:

"Truth to tell ,this work—perhaps the best ever written by this eminent writer—is not a novel, but this does not render it any less attractive. The description of the life of American cinema workers is a real masterpiece. Many pages of Pilnyak's book are devoted to the misery of the unemployed, of which the writer gives an appalling picture."

"*Krasnaya Nov,*" Bienstock writes, "published a novel by Ilya Ehrenburg *Moscow Trusts No Tears.* Alongside of Katayev, Pilnyak, Leonov, Ilf and Petrov, Ehrenburg is at the present time one of the most prominent writers of Soviet Russia. He has an excellent knowledge of the Parisian bohemia—the bohemia of Montparnasse and in his novel (its action unfolds in this milieu) gives amazing pictures of the life and sufferings of sundry luckless bohemian folks."

Bienstock goes on to Lidin's *Grave of the Unknown Soldier* printed in the same magazine, adversely criticizing this story, and to the next item, *A Film Comedy* by Ilf and Petrov—joint authors of *Twelve Chairs* and *Golden Calf*—to which he gives unstinted praise.

Bienstock also reviews the contents of three "exceedingly interesting" numbers of *Literary Heritage* and observes the "excellence, even the sumptuousness, of this publication."

CANADA

The *Masses,* organ of the revolutionary Progressive Arts Club of Canada, has issued its March-April number, the first since December, 1932. Due to financial difficulties this commendable little publication will be issued as a bi-monthly. The latest number includes an

Cover of the Nankai Student *which was suppressed by the reactionary Kuomintang*

article "A Significant Turn In Soviet Literature" by Jack Lind, in which the position of this publication and the organization sponsoring it is presented clearly:

"Today, in every capitalist country, bourgeois literature presents a picture of advanced decay, while proletarian literature in the Soviet Union, and some capitalist countries, is achieving ever higher degrees of artistic perfection.

"True, in Canada this latter is not yet the case. But Canada is, culturally, an exteremely backward country. It has not produced a literary figure corresponding to a Dreiser or a Rolland. Its writers—such as they be—are highly unproductive, and speaking of literary trash, much of what is lauded as "Canadian Literature" could fittingly be described by that term.

"But precisely this condition, plus the deepening economic crisis, growing political crisis, mass misery, mass disillusionment, mass struggle, and the ideological decay in the bourgeoisie itself constitutes the starting point for a proletarian literature in Canada.

"*Masses* expresses the conscious effort to do what the objective situation dictates. Far from renouncing its role as pioneer of proletarian literature on Canadian soil, it must continue to fulfil it more and better. It must draw proletarians into the literary field (some successes are registered already) without at the same time relinquishing the task of winning over every sincere Canadian writer to the cause of the proletariat."

The latest number includes articles on Karl Marx, editorials on the Cultural Reaction in Germany, verse, drawings, short stories and book and cinema reviews. A well balanced number and a continued growth of another and welcome publication of revolutionary literature.

CHINA

The tenth issue of *The Nankai Student* organ of the revolutionary students organization of the Nankai University Middle School was suppressed, and was followed by the expulsion of 50 of the most militant students among the many who rose in protest. This issue proved particularly objectionable to the reactionary Kuomintang authorities because of an article on the work of Ting Ling, a leading member of the Left Writers League of China.

According to the *China Forum,* Lu Sin, China's foremost writer and leader of the Left Writers League visited Peiping to see his mother who was seriously ill. He had taught in this city for ten years earlier in his life.

When his presence in the city became known, he delivered lectures at five different schools on the direct request of the students. He spoke first at Peking University, later at Poo-Jen University, The Women's College of Arts and Sciences and Peiping Normal College.

The first two lectures were delivered indoors to small audiences. But the news spread among the students and the three remaining lectures had to be given outdoors to audiences each over three thousand in number, while classrooms were left empty.

In his last lecture Lu Sin said:

"Literature with fighting force is bound to be suppressed by force. Side by side with this use of force the ruling class tries to be weasel-like and buys out writers whose pens are always available where the coins clink. This method has proved as unavailing as force. The lessons of the past years have taught that nobody reads the mouldy rantings of the paid hacks so the ruling regime has to fall back on the sole use of naked violence. We must unite and fight for the existence of these first tender shoots of the newly-flowering literature. We must guard them as carefully as a mother tends her new-born babe."

Lu Sin's comrades urged him to leave Peiping after this lecture fearing for the safety of the famous writer in this city ruled by Kuomintang reaction.

The Arts and the Crisis

FRANCE

Painters

The French reactionary literary newspaper *Les Nouvelles Litteraires* proposed to representatives of three largest art exhibitions in Paris to state their views on the subject of "the painter and the crisis". Here are their statements:

Francis Jourdain (Chairman of the Autumn Salon): "With sadness, if not with despair, I reply to your questions. It is already three years that our Salons are suffering from the crisis which was especially severe for us during the last year. Attendance has dropped tremendously, sales have fallen off 50%, the artists have to name far more modest prices than in previous years; nevertheless, in spite of this, buyers are very scarce. The Government comes to the rescue of big financial companies and grants millions to them, while for the artists it could not spare even a hundred thousand francs, the sum required to cover the deficit of the painter's associations and to ward off disaster."

Andre Dochet (Chairman of the National Fine Art Association): "Since the Spring the crisis is growing more and more severe; from day to day the number of painters finding themselves in straitened circumstances grows. Many are destitute. This year pictures were sold only to the amount of 42,000 francs whereas last year sales amounted to 350,000 francs. How can this state of things be altered? I am afraid that this is impossible, because the evil is rooted in the disease from which the whole world is suffering."

Amant-Jean (Vice-chairman of the Tuilleries Salon) observes not only an economic crisis but also a "moral" crisis. It is characteristic that he sees a way out in reducing the number of "art producers".

Scientists and the Crisis

The eminent scientists Emil Piquard, member of the French Academy, Permanent Secretary of the Academy Sciences, and President of the "Society of Friends of Science", issued an appeal for assistance to numerous scientists and their families now destitute.

"Cases of acute distress among scientists are becoming more and more frequent," writes the newspaper *Comedia* in commenting on Piquard's appeal. "What is still worse, they meet with general indifference. As rule, we not only do not know about their merits, but we do not even know the names of our scientists—such is the attitude of negligence now prevailing in France in regard to those who should claim our utmost attention."

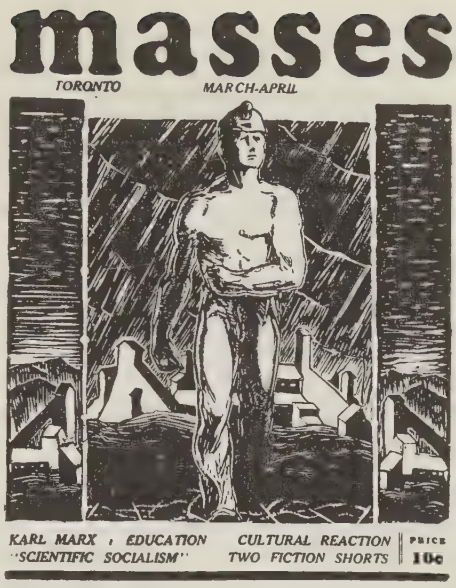
AUSTRIA

The Conservatory of Vienna, being faced with bankruptcy, is forced now quite often to lease its auditorium for boxing matches.

"Boxing is knocking out music," Viennese musicians complain.

HUNGARY

The company of one of Budapest's leading theatres now on provincial tour, after vain efforts to get an audience to pay money for admission, has announced that it will accept payment in kind—in flour, lard, etc.



The cover of the March-April, 1933 number of the Canadian revolutionary bimonthly Masses.

ENGLAND

Theatrical companies are jumping out of their skins in an effort to enliven public interest in the theatre. Thus the latest sensation—a play without a title, and the author and actors without names. By the language and the style of play the spectators are to guess the names of the author and of the actors. The masks are to be taken off, and the title and names revealed, only after the tenth performance of the play.

USA

American publishers continue to stagger under the effects of the crisis.

Latest reports bring the news of the bankruptcy of Liveright Inc., publishers of Dreiser and Sherwood Anderson among others. Long & Smith has also failed and Brentanos, publishers with two large New York bookshops are the latest victims.

Meanwhile other American publishers totter on the brink. Farrar & Rinehart employees work only 3 days a week, under a "stagger" plan by which only part of the staff reports daily. Meanwhile Longman's, Green have again reduced wages 10% although the firm had cut wages previously.

Putnam's who also had a New York bookshop were forced to close it.

Statement of the League of Left Writers of China

The Kuomintang has climaxed its six years' betrayal of the Chinese masses with the open and shameless surrender of Manchuria, Jehol, and North China, to the Japanese imperialists. Kuomintang signatures have already been affixed to the bill of sale. Japan gets recognition of all the fruits of her imperialist conquest. The Kuomintang gets a brief respite, during which it may continue to draw its tribute, like a leech draws blood, from the heavily-burdened, exploited, toiling masses of China.

Today, with the ink not yet dry on the latest surrender pact to imperialism, the campaign against the masses of Central China intensifies and in the cities where the Kuomintang holds sway by grace of the imperialist powers, the terror against workers, students and intellectuals grows ever more barbarous, more brutal, more shameless.

China's writers divide into two classes — those who are the lackeys of the present ruling classes and those who have everlastingly dedicated themselves to helping the masses blaze a new way to freedom. The first class waxes rich and fat. We revolutionary writers become "criminals" to be hunted down, thrown into filthy jails and lynched. Our organizations are under constant attack. Our books and magazines are suppressed. Books from abroad are kept from us. Publishers do not often dare to take our work. Our lives are at stake every wild, living moment.

This terror has taken a heavy toll of life among us. The best of the youth of the land has been drenched in blood, among them some of the most promising and talented of the newer generation of artists. One of the outstanding barbarities in the long saga of Kuomintang terror was the fate meted out to six of our comrades at Lunghwa in February, 1931, when Hu Yeh-ping, Jou Shih, Feng Kang, the girl writer, Yin Fu, Li Wei-sen, and Tsung Hui were buried alive by the Kuomintang militarists.

Now the Terror has stretched forth its dripping talons and carried away three more of our comrades, Ting Ling, wife of the martyred Hu Yeh-ping, Pan Chu-nien, and Ying Shu-jen, all well known writers.

Ting Ling is China's outstanding girl writer and one of the finest exponents of the new revolutionary literature. Her struggle for intellectual and artistic clarity reflected itself in all her work, which was only now reaching a mature plane of development. That work has been brutally cut short. The mystery of Ting Ling's fate remains shrouded in the secret graveyard of some Kuomintang torture chamber.

Together with Pan Chu-nien, she was kidnapped on May 14th from her home on Quinsan Road. While these two were rushed off in an automobile ,a struggle followed inside the house between Ying Shu-jen, another man, and their captors. During the struggle Ying was killed and the fourth comrade made good his escape. It is through him that the world knows anything at all of the fate of Ting Ling and the others.

It is from him that we learn the kidnappers and murderers were officers of the Shanghai Bureau of Public Safety, acting, however, under the direct orders of Chiang Kai-shek's "Blue Jacket" organization in Nanking. It is from him we learn the details of the new Kidnapping organization which has been functioning in Shanghai since May Day — with its headquarters a hotel in the International Settlement!

Since May Day other men and women have disappeared, leaving no trace whatever behind them. We appeal to the friends and relatives of these victims to bring the facts to public attention! We know definitely and here state that this organization of thugs and murdererers is connected with the Greater Shanghai Bureau of Education and Social Affairs. We charge, moreover, that it operates in the International Settlement with the tacit understanding and consent of the imperialist police whose only demand is that no news of its activities leak out.

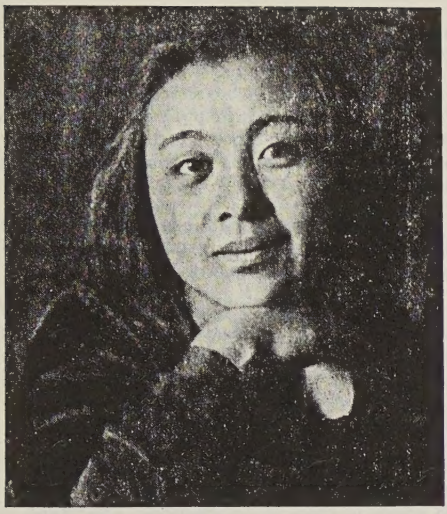
Has Ting Ling been murdered? Ying Shu-jen, we believe, *was* murdered. Pan Chu-nien has been swallowed into the labyrinths of the Terror in Nanking. These barbarous crimes have been made possible by the same imperialist-Kuomintang understanding which has been the staunchest pillar and weapon of the White Terror during the past six years.

We call upon the toiling masses of China and of the whole world to hear and know once more the crimes of the Kuomintang terror regime. It shamelessly sells the country to the imperialists like a piece of chattel goods and at the same time sends its mad dogs loose among the population to kill and maim and torture.

We demand the immediate liberation of Ting Ling, Pan Chu-nien, and all class war prisoners in the dungeons of the Kuomintang! We call upon workers, peasants and intellectuals all over the world to support our demands by joining in mass action against the White Terror of the Kuomintang!

We firmly delare before our own toiling masses and before the entire world that this Terror cannot succeed in stifling our struggle toward light and freedom, side by side with the workers and peasants of China and of the whole world. We send our greetings to comrades fighting the Fascist terror in Germany and against opression in all countries. With them we shall realize our own strength and in solidarity with them march onward to the triumph of the World Revolution!

China League of Left Writers
June, 1933, Shanghai, China.



Ting Ling

Ting Ling (pronounced Ding Ling), the most noted woman writer of China, disappeared on June 16, 1933 in Shanghai. She was one of the founders and executive members of the China League of Left Writers, and has been one of the leaders of the cultural struggle in China. Until it was suppressed, she was one of the editors of a monthly literary magazine *The Polar Star*.

Ting Ling is 26 years of age, daughter of an old feudal landlord family of Hunan Province. She first appeared as a short story writer when a girl of eighteen, when her stories were printed in the *Short Story Magazine*. Her early stories dealt with ideas and problems of the student world—conflict between old feudal and modern ideas, about women, love, literature, social problems. She was an individualist, petty bourgeois writer during this period. But even then, she became known because of her rough, powerful style which some called "masculine".

About four years ago she met Hu Yeh-ping, also one of the founders of the China League of Left Writers. He was a short story writer and an educator, a member of the Communist Party and later, one of the Preparatory Bureau in Shanghai for calling the first All-China Soviet Congress in Kiangsi. Hu Yeh-ping and Ting Ling were married, and under the influence of Hu and his comrades, Ting Ling turned more and more to the Left, toward Communism and the Communist Party. On February 10, 1931, Hu Yeh-ping was executed in Shanghai, together with 24 others, all members of the Preparatory Bureau. Of the 24, 5 were members of the League of Left Writers, and of the 24, many were buried alive ,and all went to their death singing the *International*. At this time Ting Ling was also sought by the police and would have been killed because she was the wife of Hu. With her baby born a short time before, she fled to her home in Hunan and lived in hiding for a time. She left her baby there with her mother and returned to Shanghai to continue the struggle, living a semi-legal existence. She was known to all the bourgeois as well as revolutionary writers and all regarded her as a writer of remarkable talent who had a great future before her.

In 1932 Ting Ling published a short novel, built around the great Yangtze floods which were caused in part by the fact that money earmarked for the repair of dykes always found its way into the pockets of the officials. Much of her material was used in a motion picture on floods, and she became one of a small nucleus of left writers and artists trying to develop a new social cinema in China. In 1931 and 1932, her magazine *The Polar Star* was published, but was suppressed at the end of 1932. She had hoped to go to the Soviet Union to study for a time, but when, in 1932, she joined the Communist Party, she was drawn into its work deeply and was unable to carry out her wishes.

In 1932 Ting Ling started work on what she hoped would be a historical revolutionary novel. It was to picture the rise and fall of a feudal landlord family—that is, it was to be the story of her own family—which should reflect all the social forces at work in China, including the germinating ideas of the social revolution. She worked on this whenever possible throughout 1932 and down to the date of her disappearance in 1933.

Her arrest by the Chinese Reaction has been assisted by the foreign imperialist police in Shanghai for she lived in foreign territory. Her disappearance has also struck down the most talented woman writer of China, a woman who in a few years would have taken her place alongside the most noted writers of Europe and Soviet Russia. Behind her name stand long lists of men and women arrested, tortured and killed in secrecy by the Chinese Reaction.

Editor-in-chief **SERGEI DINAMOV**

IN THIS ISSUE

Louis Lozowick — American revolutionary artist, painter and lithographer of note, is an executive board member of *New Masses.*

Charles Ashleigh — English journalist, poet, author of the novel *Rambling Kid,* is at present a member of the editorial board of the *Moscow Daily News.*

N. Ognyov — noted Soviet author of the *Diary of a Communist Schoolboy* and other books, published in many countries as well as in the Soviet Union, contributes to this issue from his new novel *Three Dimensions.*

Lev Nikulin — Soviet writer, in author of *Notes of a Fellow Traveler* and other novels. The chapter on Mayakovsky in this issue is from his latest book *Time, Space, Motion.*

Walter Snow — formerly on the staff of the American *Daily Worker,* is author of the forthcoming first novel *The Magnificent Marchetti.*

N. Pogodin — is a Soviet playwright, author of *Snow, Tempo* and *My Friend,* one of the most successful plays of the past season in Moscow.

Maria Cresshoner — is a young revolutionary writer of Germany.

Jack Conroy — author of *The Disinherited,* an autobiographical novel of an American worker-writer, is editor of *The Anvil* new revolutionary quarterly, and contributor to leading American publications.

Joseph Kalar — is a lumber worker, contributor to the *New Masses, Left, Rebel Poet* and other American revolutionary publications and one of the permanent contributors to *International Literature.*

Sergei Tretyakov — Soviet author of a number of plays, including *Roar China* produced in many countries, is author of the bio-interview novel *Den-Shi-hua* to be published soon in the United States.

Jef Last — writer and poet is one of the editors of *Links Richten,* organ of the revolutionary writers and artists of Holland.

Langston Hughes — American revolutionary writer, is author of the novel *Not Without Laughter* and a number of volumes of verse and children's stories. He has just returned to the United States after a year's stay in the Soviet Union.

Sergei Dinamov — Soviet critic, is editor of the Moscow *Literary Gazette,* five-day weekly, and editor in chief of *International Literature.*

A. Lunacharsky — is the internationally known Soviet writer, and Academician.

Sergei Einsenstein — Soviet cinema director of the world famous *Potemkin,* and other films, records his impressions of Hollywood in this issue.

Granville Hicks — young American critic, is author of *The Great Tradition* — An Interpretation of American Literature Since the Civil War to appear this fall.

Emi Siao — Chinese revolutionary poet, is editor of the newly established Chinese edition of *International Literature.*

F. Schiller — is a well known Soviet critic and research worker in the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute in Moscow.

№ 4. INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

Shvambrania— A story by L. KASSIL. *Fortune Heights*—Scenes from a play by JOHN DOS PASSOS. *The Fall of Shangpo*—A story of China by AGNES SMEDLEY. *Vive la Republique!*—A story of France by LEON MOUSSINAC. Negroes in Moscow—An article by LANGSTON HUGHES and stories, articles and poems by A. FADEYEV, LOUIS ARAGON, ILYA EHRENBURG, SERGEI DINAMOV and the letters of

MARX & ENGELS TO LASSALLE

INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

C O N T E N T S

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Editorial Assistant WALT CARMON