Workers of the world, unite!

INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

ORGAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL
UNION OF REVOLUTIONARY WRITERS

№ 4

1933

THE STATE PUBLISHING HOUSE
MOSCOW

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

Address all communications to the editors to Box 850, Moscow, USSR

Revolt of the Peasants of Andalusia — HELIOS GOMEZ

L. Kassil

Shvambrania

From a New Soviet Novel

A Pre-Revolutionary Criticism of the World

Along with the wall of the bonedust works our belief in the security of the powerful tribe of grownups fell into ruins. Horrible things happened in their world, it appeared. We subjected that world to a severe criticism and established that:

Injustice

(1)

Not all grownups but only those that wear uniform caps, good fur coats and clean collars, have a hand in managing life. The others—of which there are many more—are called "unsuitable acquaintances." Their only chance is to discover some new country for themselves, something like our Shvambrania.

(2)

The director of the bonedust works who killed and crippled fifty people of the "unsuitable acquaintance" type, remained unpunished. Shvambranians would never have let a fellow like that even play games with them.

(3)

Oscar and I do nothing (that is except our lessons), while Clavdiushka, Annushka's niece, washes the floors and the dishes for one of our neighbors and only gets pudding for her dinner once a week on Sunday. And she is quite landless: she has no Shvambrania at all....

We completed our inventory of the world's distress by drawing a long and decorative bracket along one side. It looked like a flying seagull. Before the beak of the gull streamed the burning imperative word—Injustice.

Father and Mother worked from morning till night. And we grew up—truth to tell—into a pair of perfect idlers. We were given the usual "Happy Childhood" and derived our ideals from the "Golden Library Series" of books for children. We had a special room for gymnastics, we had toy trains, motor cars and steamships. We were taught languages, music and drawing. We knew by heart Grimm's *Tales,* Greek myths and Russian legends. But all these were dimmed for me when once I had read a book called, I think, *The World Around Us.* It told in simple language how bread was baked, how vinegar was prepared, how bricks and steel were made and how leather was tanned. This book revealed to me the complex fascinating world of things and the people who made them. The salt on the table had come out of a salt works, the iron pan in which our soup was cooked had passed through a blast furnace. Boots, saucers, scissors, window-sills, steam-engines, tea—all these, it appeared, had been invented, obtained and made by the tremendous efforts and skilful labor of people. The story of the sheepskin and the processes it passed through was a hundred times more interesting than the myth of the Golden Fleece. I had an uncontrolable desire to make things, necessary things. But the old books and teachers who recounted the exploits of crowned heroes with such enthusiasm said nothing at all about the people who made

things. Thus we were brought up to be either helpless, useless idlers or members of a caste of haughty, fastidious "brain-workers." It is true that we were sometimes given presents of building blocks, out of which we were supposed to construct pale travesties of machines. Our energy thirsted for an outlet. We rooted up the springs of the couches and beds in our search for the secret of their construction and received for our reward the most terrible scoldings.

We envied one Fektistka, the tinker's pockmarked apprentice. Fektistka despised us on account of our short pants. He was illiterate, it is true, but on the other hand he could make real buckets, scoops, mugs, basins and tubs. Once when we were bathing together, however, Fektistka showed us some very real bruises and wounds on his spotty body; they were the evident traces of his master's stern teaching. The tinker beat Fektistka. He made the boy work for him the whole day, fed him on all kinds of rubbish and offal and thumped the secrets of the tinker's trade into Fektistka's skinny back with his iron fists.

Brain Work and Handicrafts

We ceased to envy Fektistka. We were tormented by riddles to which we could find no answers. Brain workers were subjugated by things and could do nothing with them. The people who made things were ill used and beaten and possessed no things of their own.

Whenever our lavatory was out of order, or the key of the sideboard got jammed in the lock or the piano had to be moved or the electricity seen to, Annushka was sent below stairs to the basement where a worker from the railway depot lived, to ask if "someone would come up." And someone would come. And the things would be subjugated by him. The piano would go in the right direction. The repaired electric switch would click exultingly. The cistern would cough up properly and the lock of the sideboard would let the wards of the key in and out at will. And Mamma would speak of the "handy-men" and count the silver spoons in the sideboard.

If any of these tenants from the lower quarters needed to send a letter to their brothers in the village they would appeal to the people up above. And watching how the latter inscribed at their dictation the first lines of greetings to the family and all its branches right up to the twelfth removed, would express their admiration:

"There you are, that's schooling for you! What's our trade anyhow? just nothing—no brains needed for it at all." But in their souls the two floors despised each other.

"Anyone would think there was some art about it—mending a lavatory," my father would say, stung, as it were by their efficiency. "You just try and do an operation, say—trepanning!"

And the folk below thought:

"You try getting down on your belly beneath a steam engine—you'll find it's a bit different to scratching at a paper with a pen!"

Between our floors and the workmen's basement the same relations existed as between the traveling companions in the story, one of whom was blind and the other lame. Their burdensome dependence on each other strengthened their doubtful friendship. The blind man carried his comrade the legless man, who from his seat on his friend's shoulders surveyed their surroundings, determined the direction to take and managed everything. The point was, however, that all the people belonging to the group of "unsuitable acquaintances" could make things. Perhaps they could have taught us to do them, too, but—we were trained to be "brain workers" and all that remained was to play with the free children's supplements to the magazines, to paste together lifeless models of pasteboard boats and paper factories, consoling ourselves with the thought that on the mainland of the Great Tooth, Shvambrania, all the inhabitants from the least to the greatest could not only remember stories but make them up as well. But even Shvambrania was nothing more than a toy model of the real world.

God and Oscar

Oscar was an astonishing muddler. He learned to read at a very early age and at four could remember everything from advertisements to medical encyclopedias. He remembered everything he read and his head, as a result, was a complete muddle. Incomprehensible new words were twisted until they were quite unrecognizable. People went into fits of laughter over Oscar's remarks. He confused tomatoes with Tartars. Once, instead of asking Mother for bread and butter he asked for Bramaputra.

"Goodness me!" said Mother, "this is some kind of a *wunderkind,* surely!"

A day or so later Oscar announced:

"Mamma! there's a *wunderkind* in the office as well, they keep tapping on it and it prints things!"

He had mixed up *wunderkind* and "Underwood."

He had a shrewd understanding of things, however, and the right point of view. Once it so happened that Mother read him the well known "moral" story about a youth who was too lazy to stoop down and pick up a horseshoe and was afterwards obliged to go about picking up plums that his father had purposely dropped along the road.

"Did you see what the point was?" asked my mother.

"Yes, of course I did," replied Oscar. "It's all to show that you shouldn't eat fruit straight out of the dust, it should be washed first."

Oscar treated everyone like an old acquaintance. He would get into conversation with anybody he met in the street and annihilate them with the most extraordinary questions.

Once I left him to play by himself in the public gardens. His ball bounced into a flower bed. In his efforts to get it he crushed some of the flowers. Suddenly he caught sight of a notice "It is forbidden to trample the grass or pull the flowers" and felt frightened. Then he decided to appeal for assistance. Down a little alley sat a tall black lady with her back to Oscar. Long curls fell to her shoulders from under the straw hat.

"My ball's gone over into the place where it says 'Don't pull the flowers,' " complained Oscar to the lady's back.

The lady turned and Oscar gave a start of horror. The lady had a thick beard. He forgot his ball.

"Auntie!" he exclaimed, "Why have you got a beard?"

"What makes you think I'm an auntie?" replied the lady in a kind bass voice. "I'm a clergyman."

"A clergyman?" repeated Oscar incredulously. "But why have you got skirts on?"

"This," explained the priest with dignity, "is not a skirt, it's called a cassock. I'm clad according to my calling. I'm a priest, you see."

"Oh, yes," said Oscar, recollecting something, "so you're a priest are you? There's a game about it—rich man, poor man, beggar man, priest! Do you know it?"

"Oh-ho, you're a funny little chap," laughed the priest, "You're not Christian, I suppose. Who's your father? Oh, a doctor. I see, yes, I see now—Jewish people. Do you know anything about God?"

"Yes," replied Oscar readily. "He hangs in the corner of Annushka's kitchen and his name is Christ-is-Risen."

"God is everywhere," said the priest in a stern, instructive tone. "At home, in the fields, in the garden, everywhere. He can hear what we are talking about now. He's with us all the time."

Oscar looked warily round but saw no God. Then he decided that it was a new game the priest was teaching him.

"Is he really? or are we just pretending?" he asked.

"Well, think for yourself," returned the priest. "Who do you suppose did all this?" he went on, pointing to the flowers.

"It wasn't me, honestly. They were like that before," Oscar replied, hastily, afraid that the priest had noticed the broken flowers and his tracks.

"God did all that," continued the man, and Oscar greatly relieved, thought to himself —" Let him think God did it, then, it's all the better for me."

"And God made you, too," the priest was saying.

"It's not true!" said Oscar. "Mother made me."

"And who made Mother?"

"Her mother—Grandma!"

"And the first mother of all—who made her?"

"She just came herself," said Oscar, who had been dipping into natural history, "she changed bit by bit from the monkeys."

"Ugh," exclaimed the priest and sweat broke out on his face. "Disgusting, that's what it is—iniquitous to bring children up like that, corrupting the young!"

And away he went, his cassock flapping in the dust.

Oscar gave me a full account of his dispute with the priest.

"Such a funny chap!" he would say, "wore a beard and a skirt, just imagine!"

Our family was practically atheistic. My father used to say that there was probably no God at all, while Mother held that God and nature were one and could inflict punishment. God sometimes emerged out of the nightly incantations of our nurse and sometimes entered the flat by the half closed door leading to the kitchen. God consisted of ikon lamp-oil, tolling church bells and the sacred and appetizing smell that issued from freshly baked Easter cakes. But sometimes he appeared as a distant and angry force that thundered in the heavens and paid a good deal of attention to questions of whether it was naughty to stick out one's tongue at Mother or not.

War comes to Shvambrania

Time passed and Lola Kassil was sent to school. He lived the life of the high school now, a life planned according to a time table. When he came home, he would tell his brother Oscar all about the school. The younger boy usually greeted him with:

"Lots of news happened in Shvambrania."

The life of Shvambrania was intertwined with that of Pokrovsk and echoed the events of the latter. Just about that time the World War was beginning to make itself felt there. The schoolboys exchanged their sandwiches with the soldiers in return for empty cartridge cases.

Every bench was in the firing line, a danger zone. Schoolgirls flirted with N.C.O.'s and snipped coquettishly at lint and bandages. Then the shopkeepers and small officials began to demonstrate their patriotism. There was something profoundly repellent and rotten about this bawling crowd.

Real battles took place between the high school boys and those from the Lutheran School. Children played at the great game of bloodshed. The masters knew of this war and tactfully ignored it.

"Children, you know, are quick to catch the spirit of the times," said the grownups impressively. And so the spirit of the times, a very unpleasant one indeed, pervaded the high school.

After the Revolution, the government of Shvambrania changed, tyrants were overthrown and the youth of Shvambrania was split up into several parties.

After the Revolution

The market was no longer held in Pokrovsk. Well known members of the town bourgeoisie could be seen quietly sweeping the square. One of them was the director of the bonedust works. He had been under arrest. A red flag over the high school and a new head, Comrade Chubarkov, recommended himself to the school children.

They hooted him. Then Chubarkov announced that since women had now been placed on a equal footing with men, boys and girls would be able to attend the same school. And that was that!

A Delicate Mission

When the girls' and boys' schools were united the classes swelled to such numbers that they could not all be accommodated in the old building. They were then divided into main and parallel classes, A and B. We organized a special commission to select the girls for our class. I was elected chairman. Stepka was vice-chairman. To start with we spent about half an hour tidying ourselves before the glass in the cloak room. All the fullness in our uniform blouses was drawn carefully to the back and kept in place by a belt which was pulled tight by the strongest boy in the class, Bindyug. Our chests were thus pushed out like barrels. It was almost impossible to breathe, but we stood it very well. Then Stepka wanted someone to spit on his hair for him. Many willing applicants appeared but Stepka would have no one but me.

"It must be a watery spit, though," he insisted. "Don't cough anything up on me."

I spat carefully. Stepka smoothed down his wild hair.

"Oh, boy, you do look smart, though!" exclaimed Bindyug, looking us over. "Nifty's no name for it! The girls'll fall for you at once. Mind you pick the prettiest one, though."

Taking along five more boys as an escort of honor, we started off for the girls' school. The girls were at their lessons. Peace and quietness reigned in the corridors. From behind the class room door faint sounds floated out, names of lakes and rivers, declensions and conjugations. In one corner a lot of old desks were piled on top of one another. Alongside stood a new piano, evidently confiscated from some bourgeois or other.

"What do you say if we take the music along with us?" suggested Stepka.

A Russian language lesson was in progress in the fourth class. A plump schoolgirl was reading aloud with a great deal of expression:

"Who gallops there thro' the cool mists?"

"It's us!" came a voice from the corridor.

The door of the class room burst open and an unusual procession rattled triumphantly into the room. It even exceeded the Shvambrania pageants. At the head of the procession two desks crawled like tanks. Flags had been stuck in the holes for the inkwells. Stepka and I came riding in on the desks, and after us rolled the piano. Five boys were pushing it from behind. Its rollers emitted pig-like squeals. A list of the boys in class A, our class, stood on the music stand. Our caps were hung over the candlesticks and the left pedal was thrust into a peasant's straw sandal we had picked up in the yard.

"Here we are!" announced Stepka.

The girls kept a bewildered silence.

"What is this!" screamed the teacher hysterically. She shouted so loudly that she set one of the more sensitive of the piano strings in vibration. It wailed and would not quieten for some time.

"This is a peaceful delegation," I said and began to play the *Waltz of the Manchurian Hills.*

Then the teacher slammed the door and the girls quietened down a little.

A Staring Match

The girls introduced a great many novelties into the class. The chief of these was "staring out." Every single one in the class took up this attractive game. A couple would begin to stare at each other attentively. Whichever of the players was the first to get tears in his eyes from the strain and turn them away lost the game. We had bulging

eyed champions of both sexes. A tournament was organized in which the champion starers were to take part. Lesson time went by so merrily that we scarcely noticed it.

The match to decide who was the champion starer lasted throughout two lessons and part of the long recreation interval. The whole class took part in it. Lisa-don't-you-tease-her and Valodka Labanda were competing. For two and a half hours they never took their eyes, which expressed the most violent hatred, from each other. For once there were no dances during the physics class. The teacher was struck by the extraordinary hush in the class. As soon as he tried to say something, gestures were made for him to keep silence and he heard a threatening "Sh-sh!" In a shy whisper he explained the construction of the level and then went out on tiptoes.

Towards the close of the long recreation Volodka Labanda covered his inflamed eyes with his hands and gave in. Lisa went on staring at him from under her brows and did not move. The other girls wanted to give a school yell. And we mournfully stopped our ears.

But Lisa-don't-you-tease-her sat, her head drooping strangely, her eyes still fixed on one point. The two Shpingaletka girls looked closely into her face and started back in fright. Then we saw that the whites of Lisa's eyes were turned up. She had fainted away long since.

The Rights and Duties of a New Boy

I learned the alphabet from shop signs,
Turning the pages of iron and tin.
(Mayakovsky)

Oscar was to start at our school. He got his name down.

Kotchergin who was a house and sign painter acted as the head of the lower classes in the school. He wrote out the following resolution with regard to Oscar's acceptance.

"Although there are not nearly enough children of his age to form a class, he should be accepted on account of his ability. He can read small print already."

Mother came home from school and called Oscar to her in an excited voice.

"They've accepted you!" she cried proudly. "What a pity they've given up the school uniforms now."

"What a lot of sugar we'll get!" said Oscar dreamily. "I'll be getting a ration now."

I then read Oscar a short lecture on the subject of "The New Boy, His Rights and Duties," or "How to Avoid Beatings."

Oscar started school in my old uniform cap. The cap was nice and loose and twisted round his head of itself.

"What have you got a cap like that on for?" asked the acting headmaster, peering under the peak.

"It's the uniform," replied Oscar.

"You're such a little kid, after all," said the house-painter, shaking his head. "What can a tiny chap like you do in a school?"

"And you're as big as Peter the Great and a fool for all that," rejoined Oscar, who was so offended that he muddled up all my instructions and used them in the wrong place.

"Oh, you won't have to be as rude as that," cried the astounded Kotchergin. "A doctor's son, too. So that's what they call 'nicely brought up,' is it!"

"Oh dear, I've gone and mixed everything up," said Oscar apologetically. "I didn't mean to say that, I wanted to say—good goods in small parcels."

"And is it true that you can read small print by yourself?" asked the head in a respectful tone. "Yes, of course, I can," replied Oscar. "And I can read big letters out loud from right across the street—if it's a shop sign and I know them all off by heart."

"Shop signs?" said the former sign painter, interested. "What a clever little chap! And so you know them off by heart, do you? Well, now, what's the sign over the shop at the corner of Khorolsky and Breshka Street?"

Oscar thought a moment and then, in one breath recited: "The Ararat Fruit and Wine Store, P. Batrayev, Stove Repairer and Chimney Sweep Commit no nuisance."

"I did that," said the master modestly. "That's my work."

"Very clear and easy to read," said Oscar politely.

"And what does the notice on the Exchange say now?" asked the head.

"Exchange is crossed out, there isn't one any more. It's Liberty House," replied Oscar without a moment's hesitation.

"That's right," approved the head. "Now you can go to your place, laddie, we'll let you come to school."

"New boy, greenhorn!" shouted the class when it caught sight of Oscar.

"I'm not so green as I'm cabbage looking," retorted Oscar, hastily remembering the password I had taught him.

The class was astonished. Oscar did not get a beating.

The school began to wander from place to place. The fact that the front was within close proximity forced the town under martial law. The school was occupied by the staff of the Fourth Army. Our school was transferred to the buildings of the diocesan school. And a couple of days later we were transferred again to a small house with a watch tower.

As the school traveled Shvambrania traveled with it. The latter country was always in a state of disorder, due to changes in the government.

The louse crept into Pokrovsk and became an established fact. Spotted typhus set a red cross on everything. Oscar insisted on the introduction of mortality into Shvambrania. Lola could not very well object. True statistics demanded deaths. And so a cemetery was instituted in Shvambrania.

Entrance from the Street

Typhus walked the streets, keeping time to the measured tread of the ambulance men and the grave diggers. Typhus was loud in delirium and quiet in funeral processions. The coffins were drawn by camels from the Army Transport Office.

The school was transferred again.

Shvambrania wandered about in search of a true foundation, changing its governors, climate and latitudes regularly.

And only our house, our ship stood firmly in her moorings in the old latitude and longitude. She had grown rusty, she stood rooted to the river bed, she was no longer a steamer but a heavy barge that had been silted up and become an island. Storms could not penetrate her any more, for Mother was afraid of draughts and kept the windows closed.

But some changes did take place after all. My father wore an army tunic, instead of an ordinary jacket. The red cross on the pocket flaps indicated that he was an army doctor. He worked in the evacuation hospital. Then there was the fact that the people who had formerly been condemned as "unsuitable acquaintances" to the use of the back door only began as if by agreement to use the front door. Even the water carrier, for whom it would actually have been much more convenient to enter by the kitchen door rang imperatively at the front. He tramped in through the whole flat, leaving dirty tracks and a watery trail. His buckets overflowed with dignity. Oscar and I welcomed this new use of the front door. A current of mutual disrespect arose between kitchen and the front door. And we crossed out Point One in our inventory of the world's deficiencies (that relating to "unsuitable acquaintances.")

The first people to ring at the front door after the Revolution were the locksmith and the carpenter. Annushka opened the door to them, asked them to wait and came in to tell Father that "Somebody wanted to see the Doctor."

"Who is it?" asked Mother.

"Some ordinary men," replied Annushka. (She divided patients into gentlemen, men and country folk.)

Father went out into the corridor. "We've come to see you," said the visitors, calling Father by his full name, "and we'd like you to listen to what we have to say."

"What do you complain of?" asked my father, taking them for patients.

"Of the want of class sense," answered the locksmith and the carpenter. "In Kerensky's time the damned peasants closed the hospital and now it's a big blow to the workers. We've been appointed commissars."

Father could never forgive Kerensky for the fact that during his short reign the wealthy city fathers, out of sheer meanness closed down the free hospital. "No demand for it," they had declared.

And now Bolshevik commissars appeared and announced that the Soviet had given orders for the hospital to be opened again as soon as possible and had appointed my father as the head.

The Three Aunts

Father gave the commissars tea. After they left he tramped up and down the flat and sang merrily:

"Mary took a drop of poison."

"That's something like a government!" said Father. "You can see signs of culture. What's your old Constituent Assembly in comparison? It's no better than our village meeting. The city fathers and their 'No demand' on a wide scale."

"Your Constituent Assembly" was said specially to annoy the aunts. Starving aunts had descended on us from all parts of the country. One came from Vitebsk, the other had run away from Samara. These two were sisters, both wore pince-nez with black cords attached and greatly resembled each other except that one always pronounced 'r' like 'l' and the other 'l' like 'r.'

"My sympathies are with the socialist revolutionaries," said the Vitebsk aunt.

"I don't care for Levolution, I sympathize with the ploglessive views of the Populal Socialists," said the Samara aunt.

Father called them the "Constit-Asses." And we called them Aunt S.R. and Aunt P.S.

They were both incredibly well educated and carried on interminable discussions about literature and politics. If any of their statements proved to be at variance with the information in the encyclopaedic dictionary they said that it was simply due to a misprint.

Then a third aunt arrived from Petrograd. She declared that she was within a hair's breadth of being a Bolshevik.

"And when will you be quite a Bolshevik?" asked Oscar.

But days and weeks and months went by and Auntie was no nearer being a Bolshevik. But she no longer said she was within a hair's breadth of Bolshevism. She now asserted that "in many ways she was practically a Communist."

The Petrograd aunt went to work in the Army Transport Office—Aunt S.R. and Aunt P.S. in the District Food Commission. In their free time they recounted "incidents from life," argued about politics and assisted in our upbringing. At that time our school was completely disorganized. Lessons were suspended. The aunts insisted on our being taken away from school since in their opinion the Soviet school only crippled the children of the intelligentsia, impressionable types like us (that is how they expressed it, I believe). Then the aunts took it upon themselves to educate us.

They regarded themselves as experts on child psychology. We were quite worn out with their instructions. They even poked their noses into our private business and our games. They smelt out Shvambrania and it was threatened with invasion and the yoke of the Aunts.

Then the Shvambrania strategists thought out a plan. They lured the aunts into the Shvambranian hinterland and there during the process of initiation we painted the aunts with water-colors, forced them to crawl in the dust under the beds, confined them in caves with wild animals, that is locked them in the box room with the rats (which were certainly wild enough) and ordered them to sing our hymn about ten times.

"Hurrah! hurrah! cried the brave Shvambranians," sang our weary, painted aunts in the darkness, "Hurrah, oh something ran over my skirt just now! Hurrah! hurrah! and fell — tu-ba-ri-ba-see!"

But later, when we explained to them the rules of wrestling and ordered them to wrestle on the carpet allowing them no quarter, rest or interruption until the results were quite clear, the unfortunate aunts could endure it no longer. They decided that Shvambrania was a kind of game and a stupid country, utterly unworthy of well brought up boys. Upon this the well known Shvambranian poet (who seemed to have been influenced by the older poets) wrote a verse in Aunt P.S.'s album beginning:

The Aunts came down like wolves on the fold —

Around the Sun

The individual ceased to be for us the center of the universe. We were swept away by the whirlwind of events both in the street and at school. But the centrifugal forces could do nothing with our home. There it stood, the immovable axis of our lives. Everything else, it seemed to us, revolved around it like a swift and dangerous merry-go-round.

And so life went on until the day when a stocky man entered the vestibule, during surgery hours. He wore thick black worsted boots thrust into rubber overshoes and carried a briefcase and a pistol-holster. Annushka knew him for a commissar at once.

"You'll excuse me, citizens, I hope," said the commissar, addressing the patients, "and kindly let me in without waiting for my turn. I've come on business."

"Everybody's here on business!" the waiting room shouted in one voice. "Don't think you can walk in first just because you have a briefcase with you."

"Pretending to be somebody special," said a fat farmer's wife from the corner. The sack on her knees stirred restlessly. The duck she had brought as an offering quacked loudly.

The sound of water gushing into a washbasin came from the surgery. Then the door opened and a patient came out fastening the collar of his shirt. The commissar darted into the surgery.

"Excuse me coming out of my turn," he said, "but business of the Revolution, Comrade Doctor... You must make allowances for me since I'm the Commandant of the Town."

"Sit down, Comrade Ussishko," said my father, recognizing our former shoemaker. "What's up now?"

"The thing is you'll have to clear out of here, Comrade Doctor," said the Commandant. "You've got to leave your flat. The Army Transport Office is being extended and there's not enough room where it is at present. Sorry to trouble you, but you'll have to leave in two days' time."

Father thought for a moment. So it had got to that. Then he said, putting the red cross straight on his pocket:

"Comrade Ussishko, I shall protest against this. I won't permit anyone to throw me out on two days' notice, as if I was some rich bourgeois or other. It seems to me

that the working intelligentsia has the right to demand a little more consideration from a government with which it works in close contact."

"Alright, we'll give you another day then," said the commandant. "But no more. And I'm not questioning the fact of your working in contact. For my part, I've found you a nice little place to live in—in Kobsareva Street. It's on what used to be Andrei Eugrafitch Pustodumov's house. Decent little flat. Of course we'll pay the costs of moving."

"I ought to have a look at the flat first, I suppose you'll permit that, at least," said Father.

"Look as much as you like!" answered the commandant. "No extra charge for looking. So we'll send the carts round on the sixth. Well, goodby for the present."

He was about to leave when his eye fell on Father's boots.

"Well, so you're still wearing them?" said the commandant.

"Yes, I am!" replied Father angrily.

"And the left one doesn't pinch you?" the commandant inquired anxiously. "No? See now, I told you it was only at first they seemed tight and that after a while they'd be loose enough."

"I must tell you frankly, Comrade Ussishko," said Father, "that you make better boots than revolutions."

"Depends on how you look at it, doctor," the commandant chuckled. "Your boots were made to order, and the revolution, if you'll permit me to say so, wasn't made to your size. Like as not it'll nip you somewhere."

The news that we were to change our living quarters came as a shock to Oscar and me, shook us to our foundations. We saw plainly that the center of the world had shifted. History had not been ordered to fit our flat.

Probably the contemporaries of Copernicus were in the same position. They had been accustomed to think that man was the salt of the earth and the earth the center of the universe. And then the earth proved to be merely a grain of sand among thousands of similar grains. It was subordinate to laws that were not of the earth and it moved around the sun.

The New Geography

An unusual caravan wended its way along Breshka Street. It consisted of ten camels from the Army Transport Office bearing all our worldly goods. Curtains and portiers resembled furled banners. The beds with their shining brass knobs clanked like the steel of a warrior band. The armor of the samovars gleamed. A big cheval glass lay like a lake and Breshka Street danced on its head in the shining depths. The springy jelly of the mattresses started and shuddered.

In the next cart bentwood chairs rattled along with hobbled legs like colts. The piano in a white overall rode standing. From the side it looked like a surgeon in his white coat, from the front, like a trotter in a horse cloth. The cheerful driver drove with one hand and thrust the other through the slit in the white cover. He was trying to pick out *The Dog's Waltz* as he went.

Things looked somehow indecent. Even the ever-vertical wash-stands and sideboard lay flat on their backs with their doors wide open. People stared at us. All our most intimate domesticity was made public. It was awkward; we would have liked to have repudiated it all. Father walked alongside on the pavement, trying to look as if he was not with us. But Mother marched heroically at the head of the caravan. She tramped wearily, joylessly behind the first cart, like a widow behind the coffin. A funeral list of the things was in her hand.

Oscar went ahead of all this with the cat in his arms. Annushka sat atop of the first cartload like a rajah on his elephant. The leaves of the potted palms fanned her lightly. In her left hand she held a stuffed owl, in the right another companion of the

night! I followed, carrying our precious Shvambranian grotto with the chess prisoner. Shvambrania was being transferred to a new place on the map. The procession wound up with a column of aunts.

The new home met us coldly and hollowly. A mocking echo teased us.

The carters dragged in the heavy bookcases. Father diluted a little vodka in a test tube and treated the men. They remarked to each other:

"Eh, vodka! That's the medicine for us. Clears your head in two shakes. It's as good for the head as castor oil for the bowels."

"Cap'n, go round by that side, will you! Lord, what a heap o' books! Books and books! Mother o' God! What does he want with all these?"

"Well, what do you think? You think you can poke about in folks same as you poke your nose? I expect you can read thousands of books and still make a mistake—maybe get into the wrong gut or something!"

The aunts followed the carters about and watched in case they should steal anything. People nowadays, the aunts said, were much too free with other people's property.

In one room there was a large, stylish chandelier with a fringe of imitation jet. It had been left there by Pustodumov. The aunts coveted it instantly.

"What! You've got your own chandelier up already," cried the commandant, happening to come in at that moment.

"That's a fancy sort of thing! That'll be from Petrograd, I suppose?"

The aunts were embarrassed. I was just opening my mouth to explain whose chandelier it was when Aunt P.S. stepped in front of me and cut off my view.

"That's right, comrade," she explained hastily. "It's a Petloglad chandelie."

When the commandant had gone, the aunts slightly confused, assured me that they had really behaved quite honestly. No one would ever give the chandelier back to Pustodumov now and the state could get on perfectly well without it.

Lost! The Following Documents!

The walls of the new flat had lost their icy aloofness. The rooms looked lived-in. All the cosiness of the old home had been restored at the new address. As we sat at supper Father said, gazing dreamily at the chandelier:

"The Revolution — (Oscar, are you eating up your carrots, they contain heaps of vitamins) — the Revolution, I say, has a cruel justice about it. Who should this flat belong to by right? A merchant with a fat purse or a doctor? My opinion is, that the proletariat and the intelligentsia could find a great deal in common."

"Good gracious! Who of us isn't a Communist at heart I'd like to know!" exclaimed the aunts.

A couple of days later the piano was taken away from us.

The Army Transport Office was preparing for some celebration or other. A choir of army boys was practising. They needed a piano for a week and mobilized ours.

Mother was not at home at the time and she had taken away with her in her purse the paper given by the District Educational Department which granted her as a music teacher the right to the piano. Father made a speech to the gang who came to seize it. It was a short speech on the intelligentsia, the proletariat, and their capacity for working together. But it was of no avail. Then he said that it was not the piano he was really worrying about but the principle of the thing; he would certainly not leave things like that, but would protest if necessary to Lenin himself. Thereupon he sat down to write a letter to *Izvestia.*

The piano was borne away like a corpse. Annushka delivered herself of loud lamentations and the aunts wept. When Mother came home and learned of this deed, she went very pale. She sat down, blinked violently and then asked briskly:

"And did you have time to get it out?"

Father flopped on to a chair. The aunts sat turned to stone. It appeared that Mother had tied a package to the inside of the piano-lid. It contained four bars of imported soap and a wad of perfectly useless paper money remaining from Tsarist days. Then Oscar and I remembered something and were equally appalled. A week before we had been watching when Mother was preparing the package. We understood that it was to be hidden in some safe place. We also had possessions that were not meant for an outsider's eye. As soon as we got a chance we slipped our Shvambranian documents into the parcel. There were maps, secret plans of campaigns, Brenabor's manifestoes, coats-of-arms, letters belonging to the heroes, Sinechdoxi's appeals and other secret manuscripts from Shvambranian headquarters. Now all this had disappeared into the Army Transport Office. Shvambrania was in danger. Any piano tuner might discover our secret.

Mother rose with a determined air, wiped her eyes and started out for the Army Transport Office. I offered to accompany her. She was touched by this little attention on my part. She never suspected that we were setting out to rescue the Shvambranian documents.

A Concert in the Army Transport Office

When we got there Mother told them that all she wanted was to get out a packet of letters that were kept in the piano. The commander, who had long moustaches, winked knowingly and said: "Love-letters! Alright!"

The piano stood in a big hall crouching timidly in a corner. Red Army lads were sitting all round it chewing sunflower seeds. Two of them sat on an upturned box trying to pick out the *Dog's Waltz* together. When they saw us, they stopped. Mother went up to the piano and trailed her fingers lovingly over the keys. The instrument neighed softly like a horse at the touch of his master. The army lads watched us curiously. The commander took out our package and handed it to us with another wink. Love letters....

("Hurrah, Hurrah, cried the Shvambranians") and I left the hall beaming with satisfaction.

We were already halfway across the square when a shout came after us.

"Stop! Come back, madame!" The commander was running after us. Mother clasped the package to her breast and started to tremble. The ground shook once more under the Shvambranians' feet.

"Come back, citizeness!" said the commander breathless. "The boys are at my throat now. They say you've spoilt the piano on purpose so we can't make use of it. They say you've taken out one of the most important parts so that it won't play for them. It's stopped playing now."

"But this is nonsense, Comrade!" said Mother. "It's simply that you don't know how to play."

"It played alright before you came and as soon as you took your things out of it, it got out of order," said the commander. "You'd better come and put everything back."

We returned to the hall.

The army boys greeted Mother with a noise that boded ill for us. They crowded around the piano, leaned on it, shouted that she had deliberately spoilt public property, that it was sabotage and that she ought to be shot for such a thing.

The commander tried to calm them. "Be sensible, boys, be sensible," he said, but he was evidently very upset himself.

Mother went up to the piano with an air of assurance. The men ceased shouting. She played a loud chord—but the piano did not respond in its former ringing tones. It emitted a muffled groan that rolled away like distant echoes of thunder. Mother gave me a bewildered despairing look. She struck the keys once more with all her

strength but there was only a whisper in response. The men began shouting angrily again.

"She's spoilt it!" they yelled. "She'll answer for this before the Cheka! What kind of a trick is this, anyhow!"

"Mother," I said suddenly guessing what was the matter. "It's the muffler." When the commander was taking the package out of the instrument, he had accidentally touched the muffler and it had dropped on to the strings. Mother pulled up the muffler and the piano rang out so loudly that it seemed as if we had taken cotton wool out of our ears. The mens' faces brightened. To make sure, however, they asked us to put the package back. We did so. The piano would not play loudly any more. Then they allowed us to take out our package. After that they asked with some embarrassment if Mother would play them something, something jolly.

"I don't play polkas," she said severely. "You can ask my son to do that, if you like."

The lads appealed to me and I climbed on to the box. They showed their white teeth in broad smiles as they crowded round me. Since my legs did not reach to the pedals from the high box, one of them offered to step on them for me. He stood on the loud pedal with all his might and kept it down till the end. And I played with all my might too all the marches, dances and songs that I knew, one after another. A few of them began to stamp their heels. Suddenly a young lad jumped up, flung his arms wide as if he was about to fly and tapped carefully with his heel to try the floor. Then he crouched down and—danced away around the ring that formed as if by magic. He threw back his head and sang in a high voice:

What a shame, such a shame!
What a damned disgrace,
Nowadays the bourgeoisie's
Shoving in it's face.

The commander pulled the boy up sharply. Then he turned to Mother and in a pleading tone asked:

"Madame, that is—citizeness! For the lads' sakes and mine would you yourself play something more sensible for us.... Say, the overture to one of the operas or something like that."

Mother took her place on the box and dusted the keys with her handkerchief. My pedal specialist expressed himself ready to help with his foot again. But Mother declined and said she would manage somehow without it.

She played the overture from *Prince Igor*. She played seriously and well. The silent army lads crowded around the piano. They leaned on each other as they watched Mother's fingers. Then she raised her hands slowly and carefully from the keys and the long final chord seemed to be drawn after the raised wrists like a clinging cobwed. They all drew back when her hands lifted but waited a few seconds listening to the dying notes. And only after they had finally died away did the storm of applause break. The men clapped with outstretched arms, clapped right under Mother's nose. They wanted her not only to hear but to see their applause.

"It's the devil's own gift with you, that's clear," sighed the commander. "And there can be no higher praise than that."

The applause still came to our ears from the steps of the hall, even after we were across the square. Mother listened to it modestly. "It's wonderful how art can ennoble people," she said later on to the aunts.

"You can't ennobre peopre rike these," lisped Aunt S.R. "If you ennobred them why didn't they give the piano back."

A month after, when the piano was already back in its place—through the efforts of Chubarkov—*Izvestia* printed in the "Answers to Correspondents" the following:

"Doctor from Pokrovsk: The confiscation of your piano was illegal, since it was taken from a person to whom it served as a means of production." Father was triumphant. He showed the paper to all his friends. He cut the paragraph out and kept it in his pocketbook. Stepka "Atlantide" exressed himself on the subject as follows:

"So it was about your piano that bit in *Isvestia*... Well, I must say — —! You made a fuss about it all over the R.S.F.S.R. You private property people!"

A Chapter on the Globe (In Place of an Epilogue)

The story is told! The book is almost finished.

One moment more! I want to look at the globe. A globe is a round exact thing. It is indispensable for collating.

The gaily colored map, whereon the glossy blue represents the sea and the mottled parts dry land, turns on its stand like a bubble blown out from this black stem. But it has none of the rainbow airiness of a soap bubble. The globe is hard, steady, heavy. It can be taken by the leg and lifted like a lamp or a goblet.

Oscar and I were what are called bookish children. We had a tremendous respect for the globe. We never picked it up by the leg, but took it carefully in both hands. It lay in our palms in an aureole of grownup phrases heard somewhere or other, about "vanity of vanities" and "great in the little." It looked insolent, knowing and rather horrible like Yorick's skull in the inquisitive fingers of the Danish Prince.

"I can guess how people knew the earth was round," said Oscar, fully convinced that the hypothesis of the earth's roundness was an unscientific one. "I know why," he went on. "It's because the globe is round. Isn't it, Lola?"

We would have grown up like that, filling out the ranks of a well known type, the ranks of those who had learned that the earth was round because the globe was round, who went a-fishing in aquariums, meditated upon life as seen through windows and only experienced hunger when it was prescribed them by doctors.

I feel grateful to the epoch! It took hold of that existence that had got corns from sitting and clubbed it over the head. It licked us hard. Certain parts of us acquired the conviction that the earth was sloping.

As regards the globe we had come to an understanding of its real use long before: it was not a revelation, but simply a piece of school equipment.

The globe revolves. Oceans sail by, countries drift past. There is no Shvambrania. There is no Pokrovsk now. It has been renamed Engels. The town of Engels is a capital—the capital of the Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic of the Volga Germans.

I visited Engels not long ago, to congratulate Oscar on the birth of his daughter. When I got the news in Moscow I was overcome, I must admit, by a fit of the former Shvambranian vanity. I thought out a highflown "cradle speech," I prepared an address (Oh, Runaway from the Non-existent Land! Oh, daughter of a Shvambranian!) I even thought of a number of fine sounding names to choose from: Shvambraeno, Brenabora, Deliara.... And then I got a letter from Oscar: "That's over!" he wrote. "We've been breeding enough unreal mongrels, you and I. My daughter is a real one, nothing Spanish or Shvambranian about her. Forgive me, but I've named her Natushka, short for Natalia. Your affectionate brother, Oscar.

"P.S. By the way, if there's any chance of buying stuff for baby clothes in Moscow, buy some of that pollymadam for us, will you?"

And a note by his wife —

"Goodness me! He holds a responsible position, is a student of dialectic materialism, reads Berkeley and Hume. Never made a mistake in a thesis in his life and now, instead of madapollam (a cloth), writes pollymadam!"

We met some more in the old home in Pokrovsk. We sat in that same room out of which, twelve years before, I had tramped with the idgnity of the head of the house. The duplicate of our famous chess queen lay in the drawer of the chesstable. I searched on top of the piano for the scratches received during its sojourn in the Army Transport Office.

The six-months old baby, Natka, stared at us. She was round and rosy knowing looking. I made her a present of a rattle in the form of a tiny globe on a long leg.

Father, now very grey, came home from the staff officers of the Sanitary campaign. Mother was busy with her class of illiterates who came to her to be taught. The warm, cozy family evening drew in. At night Oscar came home from Saratov. He was unshaven, hoarse, and manly.

"Hello, Lola," he cried. "I could hardly get away. In the morning I had to go the dockyards, in the afternoon I was lecturing in the Technical School. Then there was the District Committee meeting! Now I've just come from the Water Transport Active Workers' Group. I was giving a report on the revolution in Spain there. Well, and what do you think of Natka?"

Made a heartfelt cradle speech, and expressed my good wishes for her welfare.

"Oh, thou," I said, "thou that—"

"That's enough," Oscar interrupted, puffing away at a cigarette. "Enough of these gamadrills"—

"Oscar!" I cried, "really it's time you know—madrigals, not gamadrills."

"Bah! the same idiotic old habit of mixing things up that I had as a child," rejoined Oscar. "While we're at it, Lola, just tell me once and for all will you,—dragoman and mandragora—which of them is the interpreter and which is the plant?"

Then I read our *Shvambrania* book. It was not quite an ordinary reading. The heroes of the story kept intruding on the accounts of themselves. They protested loudly, were offended, triumphed, made suggested improvements, expressed disapproval, quarrelled with the author and forgave him.

And Natka went on pushing the little globe into her mouth. A true descendant of the Shvambranians, she shook a small and very noisy weapon which the world had given her.

"Speaking officially," said Oscar, "the book is perfectly sound evidence that we were the silliest, idlest kids that ever existed. The author has exposed very successfully the utter futility of such dreams. But, unfortunately, he has not been able to avoid a certain petty bourgeois vagueness on some points. Then, too, in exposing the uselessness and futility of the Shvambrania dream, you have somehow overdone things. You want to deprive the present day of the right to dream. That's wrong! This must be qualified. Just a minute, I'll . . ."

And Oscar turned his briefcase out on to the table. The books and notebooks slid out palpitating like fish from a net. Among them I noticed a little diary—*The Communist's Handbook*—and remembered *Jack the Sailor's Handbook* now long dead.

"Here you are," said Oscar, opening one of the books. "Listen to what it says here: 'And if anyone should say, what has all this to do with us? we don't need any illusions or deceptions for the support of our enthusiasm—That is our great advantage. But that does not mean that we have no need of any dreams at all'—(Lenin's words.) The class that holds the power in its hands, the class that is really transforming the world in a workmanlike way, is always inclined to realism, but it is also inclined to romanticism, that is, if we take romanticism as meaning the same thing that Lenin meant by dreams. This is no longer an unattainable star, a consoling chimera. It is simply —our plan, our Five Year Plan and future plans. These embody all our strivings, our efforts to forge ahead in spite of obstacles. This is the 'practical idealism' of which

Engels spoke when reproached by narrow materialists, who had only "narrowness and extreme sobriety."

"That's what you should have spoken about," concluded the scholarly Oscar.

"Oscar," I began meekly, "there are many mistakes in my book. I feel that myself, but I can't correct them all yet. Don't hurry me. I must subject this to a fire test. It's a bitter pill for me to have to be Jack, the Communists' companion. I don't want to be a companion, Oscar! I want to be a sailor, myself. And I shall, I give you my word as sure as you're my brother and a Communist."

We argued things out for a long time. The house went to sleep. Our young wives lay silent in the armchairs that had been turned into temporary beds. We talked in whispers, and it made our throats tickle like old memories.

In the morning my father took me out of town to show me the new hospital. The town was unrecognizable. At the place where the land formed a circular open space, a beautiful Recreation Park had been laid out. On the desert that remained after the Shvambranian palace, Ugria, had been pulled down, the buildings of the Meat Combine were rising. An omnibus was running. Students from three universities were hurrying to their lectures. Big houses had grown upon Breshka Street. Aeroplanes hover purring over the town, but I did not notice anyone standing looking up at them. A new theatre, a clinic and a library were being built. A splendid station on the hill.

I remembered what the Shvambranians had heard in the Cheka. "We shall always have muscles and pavements and cinemas."

And while the tale was being told, the deeds were being done.

The hospital dazzled me with the glitter of its windows, floors, instruments.

"Well," said Father, enjoying my astonishment, "was there anything like this in your Shvambrania. Had you any syringes or bedpans to compare with these?"

"No," I admitted. "There was nothing like this."

Father was triumphant.

Before we left for Moscow Mother dragged out from the family archives in the box room a big shield with the arms of Shvambrania emblazoned on it: a queen, a ship, a motor car and a tooth.There was a time when that coat of arms was the swollen thyroid gland of childish dream secretions as Father would put it.

The shield with the arms of Shvambrania is hanging now in my room. (N. Radishcheva, 14, Moscow.) It is an enemy of the globe, the symbol of all earthly things. The Shvambrania shield is nailed up over the door. It reminds me with cheerful spite of our wanderings and of the Shvambranian captivity. Thus, legend has it, did Prince Oleg hang his shield over the gates of Constantinople as if to say—"Greeks, Remember! Let this be a warning!"

It is good for me to recall Shvambrania. There are many of them among us still, these people of two worlds who sleep with a real spoon under the pillow, to eat the pudding of their dreams with. These doubly equipped folk are as unproductive for their times as all hermaphrodites must be. They are secret Shvambranians.

But now the globe has made a complete revolution. Shvambrania is nowhere to be seen on it. And so the circle of the story closes, a story that is not a revelation but like the globe, a piece of school equipment

Translated from the Russian by Anthony Wixley

Agnes Smedley

The Fall of Shangpo

Excerpts from a Forthcoming Novel of Revolutionary China

To a million peasants of south Kiangsi, the very name of Shangpo was a thing of evil. There were other walled cities just like it in Kiangsi and other provinces, to be sure, but this knowledge gave no comfort. For within these city walls lived the great landlords, the eighteen powerful families who owned the hundreds of thousands of *mau* of land around the hundreds of decaying villages. In this town they lived, and the members of the families totalled fully three thousand. They were the landlords, the bankers and moneylenders, the magistrates and tax-collectors, the merchants, the members of the Kuomintang and of the Chamber of Commerce; and their members were the officers of the *Min Tuan,* or militia, and the police. Apart from these families, there were perhaps twenty thousand other souls in the city, but these twenty thousand, like the million peasants beyond, lived only by grace of the great families.

The richest of the big families lived in great sprawling houses with series of enclosed courtyards where scores of men and women of many generations lived under one roof. The roofs of the buildings were gorgeous with gargoyles of dragons or other mythical creatures, and the broad white fortresslike outer walls were decorated in many designs and colors. Then there were the magnificent ancestral temples where stood the ancestral tablets of fifty generations of landlords before them, and before these temples stood stone monuments to men who had passed the state examinations and risen to be great mandarins under past dynasties.

These, the big families, were the rulers of Shangpo, and all that belonged to Shangpo. The strong city walls pierced by five gates, sheltered and protected them. In periods of unrest, as during the Great Revolution of 1926-27, when the peasants tried to form Peasant Unions, machine guns guarded the city gates and the city walls were patrolled by *Min Tuan.* Later, when the Great Revolution was betrayed and the reactionary forces established their own government at Nanking, the landlords of Shangpo were furnished machine guns, modern rifles, bullets and other weapons from Nanking and Shanghai, or from the chief provincial cities of Kian or Nanchang to the north. In those cities some of the landlords of Shangpo and their sons were now high Government officials, military officers, leading lights in the Kuomintang. The small arsenal of the landlords within the city walls of Shangpo was kept furnished with material for the repair of rifles, and the workers there could even manufacture single-bore rifles.

Far and wide in the villages beyond the city walls, were grown three chief crops: opium, "yellow smoke" tobacco, and rice. Of these, opium was the chief. It was the chief article of commerce for the landlords, and to it they owed their wealth and power. With it their sons were educated in Nanking and Shanghai and in foreign countries; with it they traveled. It was opium that enabled them to rise to their positions of authority in the Government. It was with opium that they were able to purchase from ten to thirty concubines each, to fill their great houses with slave girls bought from debt-laden peasants, to build their homes and their magnificent ancestral temples. And the hundreds of thousands of peasants who cultivated their land for them, grew this opium, and many of them sunk themselves in its fumes of forgetfulness. There were entire villages where every man, woman, and child smoked opium.

As the homes of the great landlords were magnificent, so was it but natural that the villages were piles of mud and stone held together by rotten timbers, sides of

rusty Standard Oil tins, and old dirty rags. The village streets were open sewers in which pigs and naked children with scabby heads played. Debt weighted upon the peasant families like the corpse of dead centuries. Few owned their own land, although once they had owned bits of it. But in recent years there had been heavy taxation, the countless sur-taxes imposed for this and that, and military requisitions; and although it was said the landlords paid this, still they settled this problem by raising the rent of the tenants. The share of the crops which the peasants had to pay the landlords as rent had soared upward beyond the usual fifty percent, to two-thirds and three-fourths. From that which was left, no man could live the year around. So the peasants borrowed—and the money-lenders were none others than the landlords themselves. As the peasants grew more and more destitute and less and less able to furnish guarantee for loans, the rate of interest soared also, so that even if a man borrowed twenty dollars, before the year had passed the interest was five to ten times that, and he could not pay. His bit of land went to the landlords, and then his daughters, as household slaves, while he himself became land-laborer, serf, or even actual slave. Opium numbed the sorrows of many. But others not. These others were known as "bad characters," and in times of unrest they were always said to be creating "trouble". This "trouble" meant that they kept recalling the Peasant Unions of 1926-27 and saying the peasants must unite against the landlords.

To see the villages and the peasants around Shangpo, it would seem that nothing human could live here. This was like the delirious dream of a sick man. It would seem that only the human animal, man, could sink to such depths and still live. Animals die more quickly. There was but one thing that belied this external appearance—the black eyes of many peasant men and women that burned with some hidden fire. They were the "bad characters," and the heads of many such had decorated the city wall of Shangpo, as a warning to others.

II

It was in the spring of the year 1929—the 19th. year of the Republic—that the Red Army of China first marched toward this stronghold, Shangpo. The news had spread that a town named Ma-au-chih, some miles distant, had fallen to the Red Army, and every landlord in the place slaughtered. This news sent a thrill of horror through the landlords of Shangpo and they immediately took council. Before the day had finished, some of them were sent scurrying through the night to Kian and Nanchang to the north, and on through them to Nanking and Shanghai, to bring back more guns, ammunition, radio machines. Still others remained behind and prepared the city for defence. Others set to work and before the same day had ended, their agents had gone through the villages far and near and posted proclamations. These proclamations read, that, in this, the 19th year of the Republic, it was the policy of the Kuomintang to care for the livelihood of the people in accordance with the principles of the *San Min Chu I* of "our late revered leader" Dr. Sun Yat-sen. The landlords, read the proclamation, desired above all the welfare of the peasants, and, from the depths of their own generous hearts, had decided to lower the rents by twenty-five percent, and even in some instances by thirty or forty percent. The proclamation ended with many a flowery flourish, and at the bottom was a great red official seal.

That night, the peasants could hardly sleep for excitement, and to their excitement was added the stimulus of too much wine. For the landlords had sent jars of wine to many of the villages. And to others they had also sent pigs to be slaughtered for a celebration on the following day.

But on the next day, agents from the landlords of Shangpo went through the villages, posting new proclamations. It seemed an army of bandits was approaching, slaughtering the population and burning everything in its path. Able-bodied men willing to

fight were told to go within the city walls; others were told to bar their doors and not come out, or to flee to the hills if the bandits came that way.

Thousands of peasant men went inside the city walls, and masses of others fled to the mountains, to live for days in terror. Others crept into their hovels and waited, not caring much one way or the other. Still others thought things over and decided that they had nothing much to lose anyway, since all they had ever possessed had already been taken by the landlords. So they merely opened their doors and curiously watched all routes to see if the bandits were really coming. After all, the landlords had always been liars and robbers themselves!

Then came the "bandit" army. It had perhaps four thousand men, and it carried great red banners with black five-pointed stars in the center or in the upper corner next to the flag-pole, and across the star was emblazoned a yellow hammer and sickle. This army marched into villages, but instead of looting and killing, it looked about and began calling mass meetings. To the stupefaction of the peasants, it even announced that it was the Red Army of workers and peasants of China, and was marching on Shangpo for the specific purpose of wiping out the landlords and freeing the peasants! It even invited the peasants to join them!

Some of the "bad characters" in the villages just went right over to the Red Army without a word, without a question, without an argument. But as peasants came running from other villages, there were masses of them who began to ask questions of the Red Army. They asked: After the landlords were wiped out, then what? Suppose the White troops came from Kanchow to the west, as they had two years before when the walls of Shangpo had bristled with the heads of peasants who had joined the Peasant Unions? How long would the Red Army remain to protect Shangpo and the villages?

The Red Army replied that it would form Peasant and other Unions of all kinds of workers. These should form their own Red Guards, their own defence corps, take over the arms of the *Min Tuan* and take over the arsenal; the workers and peasants should hold Shangpo and the villages as their own. This was the way of the revolution.

Some peasants listened and had long thoughts. Many had little confidence, and many had little will to fight because their minds were deadened by opium. They said: "The fate of us poor ones has always been bad. Our eight characters are unfortunate. We must now be content. The landlords have lowered the rent by one-fourth, and in some cases by one-third or even more. This is good for us. We should not tempt fate."

Others did not talk about fate. They just said: "When you are gone, the White troops will come. We have never used rifles and, then, what shall we do with those machines that shoot a myriad of bullets within one minute? No—if you go away, it will be bad for us."

The Red Army argued: "Look, we are also peasants just like you. There were men in our villages who talked just as you talk. The landlords are deceiving you. They lowered the rents only out of fear—because we were coming."

Still the peasants argued: "Let us wait and see. When you go they will still fear you."

The arguments continued for a long time, until at last the Red Army said it was useless to attack Shangpo without the help of the masses. And as the hours dragged and the peasants still feared, the Red Army gave up hope. So at last it left and went away and left the peasants with their proclamations from the landlords as comfort

When the Red Army was gone, things simmered for a month or so in and around Shangpo. Then as the weeks past, messengers brought the news that the Army was fighting with the White troops in Fukien. The landlords considered: the Reds were few, the Whites many, the masses unarmed, and therefore unable to help the Reds.

Their own messengers had returned from Nanking with new arms and ammunition, and with radios. And before long new proclamations were posted in all the villages, announcing that because of the hard times, new high taxes and internal loans, bad harvest prospects, national disasters such as famine and flood, the old land rents must be re-introduced. This proclamation also ended with flowery phrases and a red official seal.

The peasants were dumbfounded. They complained and protested, and some of them wept like children. Had the landlords not promised? Had they not talked of the livelihood of the people and of Sun Yat-sen? So they, the haggard, ragged men, sent deputations of men to Shangpo, to plead and even to kneel in supplication. But when the harvest time came, the landlords and their agents went riding in sedan chairs over the land, armed *Min Tuan* marching by their sides. They supervised the harvests, taking their old shares, leaving the peasants not enough to live even half the year.

In some villages struggles began, the peasants refusing to pay their old shares. But they had nothing but their spears, hoes and knives, while the *Min Tuan* had the latest rapid firing rifles brought from Nanking, and on the hips of the landlords or their agents hung heavy mausers. Actual fighting broke out in some of the villages, the men called "bad characters" leading. But the struggle ended in their capture, and they were driven like cattle to Shangpo, where they lay in chains in the empty rooms in the homes of the big families which had always been kept empty for prisoners. And those who were especially defiant were beheaded, and their heads stuck on bamboo poles in the villages, as a warning to others.

But instead of acting as a warning, they only incited the peasants, and a number of landlords or their agents were mysteriously killed. There were savage whippings of peasants in some of the villages, and at last the radios within Shangpo called to Kanchow for help.

White troops came marching in. It did not take them long to teach the peasants a lesson—in some villages they left not a house standing and not a soul alive. The revolt came to an end. "Law and order" was restored. The peasants bowed their heads and their backs to the old vicious burdens, their black eyes shielding murderous hatred. Others wept bitterly, and still others took up the opium pipe.

III

Two years passed and the autumn of 1931, the 21st year of the Republic, approached. Again a full division of the Red Army stood before the walls of Shangpo. As Shangpo was better armed by weapons from Nanking, so was the Red Army better armed by weapons it had captured from the defeated armies of Nanking. The Red Army now had regular uniforms, and caps with a red star in front, their feet were clad in grass sandals made by the women and girls of Kiangsi, and the red flag with the hammer and sickle floated proudly over them. From a ragged, bare-foot partisan army, it was now uniformed, disciplined, well-armed. And instead of fleeing within the walls of Shangpo, the peasants now flocked to the red standard in such numbers that it seemed the earth had erupted and thrown up myriads of desperate ragged men and women.

The landlords closed and fortified all the gates of Shangpo and permitted no man to leave or enter. The walls were high and thick and could not be battered down. So the Red Army and the peasants settled down to a blockade and siege until, before the month had finished, there was hardly a peasant far and near but that had taken his turn in the fighting.

The knives and hoes and the long spears of the peasants availed not at all against the strong city walls. When, during the dark nights, the peasants and

the Red Army tried to scale the walls, the enemy kept great torches burning, and in the light of these they shot down the besiegers. Sometimes the cannons of the Red Army tried in vain to batter down the city gates. The peasants had never fought in a real battle before, and the roar of these guns terrified them at first. But soon they watched and studied them curiously and intently, and their hard hands fearlessly caressed them, as one caresses a thing one loves. Then bands of these peasants went away to the hills and hewed down great trees. These they burned or hewed out from one end, leaving the other solid. Near the end of the burned-out cavity, next to the solid end, they bored a small hole right down through the bark and wood—the hole for ignition. Then into the mouth of these wooden cannons they hammered gunpowder, and on top of that they hammered old nails, bits of tin cans, steel shavings, broken glass, sharp stones. They ripped the Standard Oil tins from their hovels, and some of them smelted down their hoes. Then into the ignition hole over the gun powder they dropped fire. The roar shook the very heavens and struck terror to the hearts of the *Min Tuan*. Some of the cannons split wide open and did as much damage to the peasants as to the enemy; but they merely made new ones and enthusiastically continued their bombardment.

The peasants swarmed over the hills, cutting down trees. Then dozens of them, lifting great tree trunks in their arms, with rhythmic yells dashed with these against the city gates, hammering. They chose the dark nights for their attacks, but the torches of the enemy lit up the night and the deadly machine guns on the city wall went into action. Dozens of peasants fell, dead and wounded, but new dozens came forward to take their place. And so the siege continued.

The peasants experienced a wonder in the siege of Shangpo. Formerly the Red Army had captured seven aeroplanes from the White Armies. The division attacking Shangpo had one. Never had the peasants seen such a thing. When, one day, loaded with bombs, it soared upward like a bird and circled over Shangpo, dropping its deadly missiles, the peasants stood petrified in amazement. Messengers ran like mad over the hills carrying the news: The Red Army could conquer the heavens! The Red Army could fly in the air!

There arose dissention in the Red Army about the bombing of Shangpo, and it was said that the bombs killed the innocent and not just bad landlords. Thereafter, the plane soared once only, but this time only to drop propaganda leaflets over the city, calling upon the population to revolt against the landlords and open the gates of the city to their brothers and comrades beyond.

Inside the city, the radios cried to the White Armies for help. But all south Kiangsi was in the hands of the masses, there were Soviet Governments in villages and towns far and near, and there were Red Guards of workers and peasants guarding all routes into Soviet territory. No White troops could pass without meeting the Red Army. And the Red Army had no fear of death, not to mention White soldiers. But one day, from the West, in the direction of Kanchow, a city that still remained in the hands of the Whites because it was on the river, there appeared a White aeroplane. The peasants were terrified. But the Red Army sharpshooters chose the highest hills and mountains, and from all directions peppered into the air at the enemy. The plane swirled and dashed to the earth, burying its nose in the fields.

It was not loaded with bombs—but with bags of salt and boxes of bullets for the landlords of Shangpo! Then the Red Army knew that Shangpo was short of bullets and without salt. So new thousands of peasants began a furious attack on the city gates.

On the following day, three aeroplanes came out of the west, flying high. They reached Shangpo and circled in the air, dropping their cargo. But of every hundred sacks of salt and every hundred boxes of bullets dropped, eight fell in the fields in the

midst of the besiegers. Hilarious laughter arose: "Our transportation corps are again coming to our assistance," cried the Red Army members.

Then came the day when the population of the city, and the *Min Tuan* opened the gates of Shangpo. And it was the peasants, spears and knives in hand, who dashed through first and rushed upon the homes of the great landlords. Some of the landlords killed themselves with their own hands, but most of them, with their entire families, fell into the hands of the peasants. When the Red Army tried to take the prisoners into their own hands, the peasants refused, claiming them as their own. "As they have slaughtered our brothers, so will we slaughter them!" they cried. The Red Army protested, saying: "Wait—execute them only after they have been tried by the people." Only in this way did the Red Army prevent a wholesale massacre of the big families, and with them the officers of the *Min Tuan*.

All the members of the great families were fat and healthy. They had not suffered from the siege. But near to half of the population of the city had died of starvation. Dead bodies lay in the streets, unburied and it was the Red Army that buried them. The poor had died after but a few days of the siege. But still the store houses of the great families remained bulging with rice and other food. When the peasants, taking charge of the fine homes, the ancestral temples,and the store houses of the great families, saw this stored food, their hatred grew harder. These food stores were taken charge of by the Confiscation Committee of the Red Army, and thereto was added near to two million dollars in gold and silver dug from the walls and tiled floors of the buildings.

The hatred of the peasant masses was like an all-consuming flame, and it turned against everything that belonged to the landlords. They began the eradication of all the earthly possessions of the big families. They gutted the buildings, ripping from the walls every scroll, every picture, giving them to the flames they lit on the meadows beyond the walls. They carried out all furniture, every strip of cloth, every dish, every pan from the kitchens. The old vases, the huge carved candle sticks, the ancient oil lamps, the old pottery and the carved ivory chop-sticks—all were piled on the leaping fires or smashed into dust. Not even a gown of the enemy would the women keep to cover their own miserable nakedness. Blind with hatred, they even carried out rifles from the buildings, and were busily engaged in breaking or burning them, when Red Army men yelled and fought: "Keep them—arm yourselves! Don't be fools like this!" And when peasants came rushing along, carrying the hated radio machines with which the landlords had talked to Nanking and Kanchow, the Red Army had to take them by force from their arms.

Then there were the great ancestral temples where ancestral tablets told a tale of generations of wealth and power. With a hatred so deep that it was at times perfectly silent, the peasants seized these tablets, and the scrolls, paintings, the carved tables and altars, and took them to the flames. Before the templse stood the stone monuments to the great Mandarins. Over these the peasants swarmed like ants and for hours they labored, hammering them until nothing remained but piles of granite bits on which an occasional lone character shone.

In the big houses, in some of the rooms of the ancestral temples, in the store houses, were found the chief stores of wealth of the great families—opium. Fully ten thousand piculs were here stored. The Confiscation Committee of the Red Army stood back and raised no voice of protest when men and women loaded themselves with it and ran with it to the leaping fires on the meadows. It burned for days, a flame lighting a path to emancipation.

The Red Army took up positions guarding all sections of the city, all public buildings, the city gates, the city walls. When the buildings of the great landlords were almost

gutted, they stepped in and took possession, to save what remained and to preserve the buildings for future use.

The news of the fall of Shangpo flashed through the hills and mountains. And before the first night had finished, all the paths leading to the former stronghold were black with people. They came by the endless thousands, men and boys naked to the waist, without hats, without shoes; women in rags, patched until there was nothing but patches; old men and even young children with the unmistakable ravages of opium upon them. The news had gone far and wide that on this day mass meetings would be held, and unions of peasants, workers, women, apprentices, and goodness knows what, would be formed, and that a Soviet Government of workers and peasants would be organized in Shangpo. Such tales had never been heard of by the ear of man, and the peasants came to experience them.

Over the city walls floated the red flag with the hammer and sickle—symbol of the toiling masses. Through the gates the masses poured, their eyes big with excitement. And the Red Army—the fighting members with the red stars in their caps? Yes, there they stood, grinning and poking fun—and the peasants who had not seen them before knew that they were really just like themselves.

The streets of Shangpo really could not hold the swarming masses. The meadows and fields beyond became black with them. Everywhere from their midst sprang platforms, and the crowd cried: "Look, how clever the Red Army is! They are building platforms right among us!" Just as if they had never seen such a wonder! Even if a Red soldier just walked past, the crowd gazed upon him admiringly, as if they had never seen a man walk on his hind legs before. Of their own men, their own village comrades who had fought in the siege, they were so proud they could hardly contain themselves. And the women made them tell over and over again just how they besieged the city, just how they finally broke through the city gates. Such events!

Through the crowds wandered slave girls from the great houses. With dull eyes and often with scarred faces and bodies, they went, asking: "Have you seen anyone from the family of Chen Chung-hua, from the village of Liangshui?" Thus they sought their families.

Before the sun had hardly risen the mass meetings began, and when the night descended, they had hardly ended. It seemed the people could not have enough of talking, once their tongues were loosed. Of course, the men from the Red Army, especially from the Political Department, started it all. For talking was one of their weapons, second only to their rifles. And how they could talk! Just as easily as they could walk! What they said sounded as if they were reaching right down into the hearts of the peasants and demanding that which they had always wanted—land, the abolition of debts and taxes, rice; why, even schools where the children and even the older people could learn to read and write! Then there would be the Unions of workers and peasants, and armed Red Guards to defend them!

When they had talked, these Red Army men urged peasants to come up and say that which was in their hearts. One or two tried it bravely, but they became scared and got down without saying a word. Finally one started: "Now, they even took our pigs and chickens on the New Year. It was not enough, the two-thirds of the crop and the high interest, but they had to strip us of everything but our teeth! Of what use were our teeth after that?"

That speech made a great impression. It emboldened other men. There was a hard old peasant who had been the first to rush through the east gate after the siege. He now stood on the platform, spear in hand, and said:

"The landlords told us that they were landlords and rich because their eight characters were fortunate, and we were poor because our eight characters[1] were bad. That

[1] "Eight characters" here used always means the eight characters of destiny.

was a lie. Now we know that *ming* and *keh ming* are the same thing. We must make our own *ming* by *keh-ming!*"[1]

What a speech! What ideas!

Another man took a chance: "The landlords pretended to lower the rents by one-fourth or even more. That was because the Red Army was before the walls. They cheated us and we were fools. We were stupid, we peasants. But now we are not! We will kill the landlords and divide up the land!"

The thunder of applause followed.

In Shangpo in the days that followed there arose unions of peasants, apprentices, hand-workers, arsenal workers, women, fishermen, transportation workers, and many others, and there sprang to life the Young Guards, the Communist Youth League, the Pioneers, and the Communist Party. Red Peasant Guards took the place of the *Min Tuan,* and were armed with their weapons. And from their delegates was elected the first Soviet Government of Shangpo. The city hummed with a new life, and not a day passed but that Red Army commanders were seen training the new Red Guards on the meadows beyond the walls. The arsenal workers bent their backs over their anvils and machines with new energy and enthusiasm, and wherever men gathered, their influence was felt. In the buildings that had once been the homes of the great families there now moved crowds of men and women, for these were the headquarters of the people's organization. The great clan house of Tsai was the headquarters of the Soviet Government, with a red flag floating over it. The buildings of three of the great families were turned into schools, and teachers came down from Hsinkou to the north, bringing new textbooks and new ideas. Then doctors appeared and the ancestral temples became hospitals, where the wounded from the long siege lay, and where anyone could get free treatment, and buy medicine for a few coppers at most.

In such a way did all these men of the Red Army reach into the hearts of the masses and start the long work of creating that which the peasants seemed to have always longed for. People would say to each other: "Now look! Didn't I tell you we must have a hospital there?" But he had never told that at all—it only seemed he had, for this was just what should be.

But above and beyond all, the land had been divided. There were serious problems about this division, but these problems were taken to the Unions and the Soviet Government, and there they were solved. For they had to be solved. And as new problems arose, they were also discussed and solved, until the masses became accustomed to considering and discussing and solving all their problems.

As the first decree of the Soviet Government was about the division and re-distribution of the land, so was its second decree against the cultivation or traffic in opium. Opium smokers were told to cure themselves of the habit within a time limit, for opium had been one of the chief weapons in the hands of the landlords. Opium dealers were ordered to get new occupations, the small ones were to be argued with, the big ones arrested and either imprisoned or killed. They were the enemies of the people, the agents of the landlords and of the White Government in Nanking. For opium was publicly sold in White territory, and militarists and officials made great fortunes from it.

Six weeks after the fall of Shangpo, delegates were elected to go to the first all-China Soviet Congress in Shuikin. This was on the historic day of November 7th, and it marked the first day of the first year of the Soviet Republic of China. There would be hundreds of delegates from towns and villages like Shangpo, where the masses had arisen and established their own power. From Shangpo there was sent one arsenal worker, one peasant, one woman teacher, and with them went many to keep them company and to form the unofficial delegation to witness the formation of the first

---

[1] This is a play on words: *ming* means fortune, or fate; *keh-ming* means, literally, break order, *i. e.,* revolution.

government of the people. On the day of departure Shangpo was decorated as for a great festival, and thousands upon thousands of peasants and workers had come from the villages beyond. The Red Guards stood at attention, proud and stern with their new responsibility, the pride of Shangpo. Squads of these guards guarded all the routes far and wide.

When the delegation stood ready to leave, they stuck little three-cornered red flags in big jagged bundles before them. In these bundles were masses of grass sandals, woven by the women and girls in the villages. The campaign for grass sandals for the Red Army had been answered by the women and girls of this new Soviet district and they were proud of their presents. But they merely said to the delegates:

"Greet our brothers, the Red Army, and tell them the sandals are so few and so bad because of the recent fighting and the work of the harvests."

The broad-shouldered men stuck the little red-banners deeper into the bundles, laughing, then lifted them at the ends of bamboo carrying poles over their shoulders, and with enthusiastic cries of farewell, began their long, slow rhythmic run that would take them over the ranges of the hills and mountains and through the valleys to far-away Shuikin.

In such a manner, by such means, in such strange times, did the peasants and workers of Shangpo become masters of their own lives.

Louis Aragon

A Hand Organ Begins to Play in the Courtyard

Do you know
the land
where the eglantine grew
whence the eagle flew
when October
conquered the landlords
Do you know
the land
where the eyes of childhood
open on the future and not on the past
the land
where woman
is no longer your servant
no longer your mistress
no longer your
woman but
a woman
at last
the land without prostitutes patrons and priest
the land
where hearts
and flowers
are ours
the land
of miners
of sailors
and garbage men
of metal and print and railway workers
of the builder and the publisher and the paper firm
Do you know the land like asbestos
where the end of the flame is not to burn
the land of Lenin and the red banners flying
Do you know
the land of cooks
Do you know
the land by the morning sun caressed
the dew at the lips of Africa oppressed

the horizon of the black and the sky of the white
Do you know
the land
where day shakes hands with the night
the land
of hope and of new songs born
of materialism's yet green corn
the land
that's the pupil and eye of the universe
the salamander of the sun
the land
of grain
and cruicibles
and a week's work done
the land
the land the land where the tears of the world
shall form some fine day the diamond of the day
DO YOU KNOW THE LAND OF THE WORKERS
Say

Translated from the French by Langston Hughes

Leon Moussinac

Vive la Republique!

Excerpt from the New Novel "La Tête la Première"

March 30, 1914

Questioned this evening at the cafe by Robert G.:

"Would you care to do an election campaign in Brittany?"

"What as?"

"As secretary to Paul de Plemarec[1] at L."

"Plemarec? Independent Socialist?"

"That's right."

These words "election campaign" and "Brittany" release a flood of curious images—passionate and picturesque—not too picture postcardy, not too "Botrel"[2]—on the whole, very tempting. But the fear of phrases to speak or to write, and yet not so much of the phrases themselves as of the sense to be attached to them, of the attitude to be taken, gives me pause.

Robert G. has risen.

Everything must be decided tomorrow. Ring up Plemarec—192-06.

Net result of some rapid enquiries about Plemarec:

Age: between 40 and 45. Running for the third time. Used to be a lawyer. Possesses claims to noble blood—traces origin of his family to fourteenth century. Two daughters. A German sheep dog which bites everyone. Large fortune. A chateau near Pouldu. Estates in Normandy. Character—arbitrary. Governs his district like a despot. Very ambitious. Wants to be Minister of Education. Failing that, would be satisfied with being Under-Secretary of State for Fine Arts. Many friends among past and future presidents of the Council. Freemason, of course. Has been married for six years to an Englishwoman, connected with the best blood in the Empire. Flat (11,000 francs) in the Avenue Henri Martin... Socialist in his attitude... (collectivism won't be here just yet, one still has time to enjoy the privileges of wealth). Indulgent towards the "unifieds"[3] but as an aristocrat and former royalist, does not condescend to mix, except confidentially, with this *canaille.*

An easy portrait to complete. On this one-dimensional background, I sketch in the light and shade, the relief.

Came home on foot. Easier to think. Soft April evening—twinges of spring, misty haze, efflorescence, desires.

Men's passions are cowardly. The adventure lures me on.

Went into the post office, rue des Halles.

"192-06."

Meeting arranged for tomorrow at 8:00 o'clock.

March 31

Saw Plemarec. Everything fixed up easily enough. Five hundred francs for being secretary, 250 francs extra in case of a second ballot. Profession of faith: "Death to the clergy! Down with war!"

Leave for L. 10:00 o'clock this evening with Plemarec.

---

[1] I only gave him this name for the sake of convenience, of course. L. M.

[2] Botrel, writer of Breton songs, patriotic in tendency. *Translator.*

[3] Member of the *Parti Socialiste Unifie.* Translator.

April 1

Plemarec has reserved two berths in a sleeper, first class. Journey uneventful as far as Saint-Brienc. Plemarec told me: "You can prepare yourself for a pretty tough job. My opponent, the candidate of the Pope, has made up his mind to go the limit." I did not quite understand what he meant by this, but Plemarec added: "I know my opponent has a budget of more than a 100,000 francs at his disposal. As for me, I cannot spend that much. . . . ."

Ten minutes after Saint-Brienc, the train when it is going at full speed, suddenly pulls up. An alarm. Plemarec runs out to see what's up. I find him again, with great difficulty, in the corridor of the last car (third class), where he is already giving orders to the head guard who has hastened to the scene. Someone asks if there is a doctor among the passengers. A woman is about to give birth. Plemarec offers his aid with alacrity, makes the woman get out at the next station.

"I'll stay here. Telegraph to Saint-Brienc for them to send a doctor, quick. This woman is from Ploumanach, where I only got 15 votes out of 60, four years ago. If all goes well with that girl there, today, I'm sure of a majority on the 26th. A stroke of luck, I tell you.A good start for the campaign."

The woman is bawling. Plemarec pinches his nose with satisfaction (a habit he has).

The station master is hovering round us.

Monsieur le depute . . .

The train starts off again.

My first lesson in politics.

L. at 8:30 in the morning.

Having arrived at L. I went straight to our headquarters. A small brick house which Plemarec has hired for election purposes. Three stories. On the ground floor—an office for the despatch of newspapers, circulars, the editing of placards, tracts, etc. On the first floor—Plemarec's room and the office, a huge room with an engraving representing "The Execution of Louis XVI;" photographs of the demonstrations at Treguier, at the time of the inauguration—of the bust of Renan: priests fighting with their fists, general scrimmage, and Plemarec bawling out a speech. On the second floor—the room which I will have and another, clutttered up with furniture and things, a family portrait, a tricycle, a blunderbuss, a saddle and bridle, some trophies mounted in red velvet with a note glued on saying: Zulus. On the third floor are the servants.

A glance at the town through the window. Everything picturesquely Breton. A rain washed sky. The sea is far off. The heath is all in bloom. The houses are gray and warm. There is a little local train which coughs and wheezes. This, however, is not the moment to paint pictures.

I settle in. It will be very comfortable here. But still everything in this house has an air of something provisional, fortuitous. One seems to sense a feeling of disaffection in the furniture, brought here from the various estates which its master owns. The rest has been purchased at auction, regardless of what had to be bid. All imaginable styles rub shoulders here, and some articles which are of no definable style.

The following are at my service: an iron and copper bedstead, a walnut chest of drawers, Restoration period, deep and thickset, its drawers smelling of mouldy wood and camphor, a cupboard in the Breton style, pleasantly proportioned, cane-bottom chairs of the most banal kind, imported from Austria, a "Voltaire" arm chair with a cover, flowers and fruit.

A cat, Elsa, the only being that seems really to "belong" here.

Plemarec arrived by car at 11:00 o'clock.

The woman from Ploumanach was delivered of a fine baby boy—the seventh. Nothing out of the ordinary.

"They are going to christen him Paul, after me. And before the christening, don't forget to send the parents a savings bank account book, in the little brat's name, with a 'louis' to his account. I rely upon you. . ."

I make my entry upon the scene. I have already grasped the part I have to play. By tomorrow, I feel sure, I shall know it by heart.

Plemarec is still getting himself ready. Pierre, the valet, a handsome young Breton—he was a sailor only yesterday— comes to look for me.

"They're just bringing the chest. . ."

"The chest?"

"Yes, the chest. . . Monsieur gave me orders to put it down here, where it will be safer. . . the upper floor. . . ."

I answer "All right," without quite understanding. The chest in question is a heavy one, to judge by the exertions the chauffeur is making on the stairs. Plemarec has heard the noise. He appears on the landing of the first floor, one side of his face shaved, the other soaped and hairy, like a music hall comedian. He calls out: "I'll be with you in a minute. . ."

The mysterious chest is of solid oak, with the name of the Poulain Chocolate Co. burned on it with a red hot poker,and the words: "Avoid excessive heat or damp." The servant, hat in hand, announces: "I am waiting, Monsieur."

I remain standing there, rather ridiculous, uncomprehending. In order to have "an attitude," maintain some sort of "prestige," I make a pretence of searching for something in my pockets—something I can't find—then in my empty suitcase, then in the chest of drawers, then all around the room.

The arrival of Plemarec rescues me.

The chest is opened: full of gold. Then says Plemarec: "Here are the 2,000 louis necessary for everyday needs. You will do as I do: you will plunge your hands in there and replenish your pockets before going out. When you come back, if there is anything left. . . ."

He smiles and adds:

"The louis is the only practical coefficient for spongers, innkeepers, drunkards, beggars and the rest of the small fry. Personally, I'm out for bigger game. And this system will save us a lot of complicated bookkeeping."

Then, Plemarec takes a revolver out of his pocket and lays it on the chest of drawers:

"Always have it handy, above all during the last week."

Gold, lead. Buy, kill.

My second lesson in politics.

At midday we leave. Dinner with the mayor of R., a vet by profession. Fifteen kilometres by car over a landscape of tender green. Long silences, meditation. Then suddenly:

"Have you one or two pencils in your pockets, and some 'formulas?'" (The "formulas" are sheets of writing paper from the Chamber of Deputies, all ready prepared for requests to ministers, directors, etc.)

And just as the car draws up before the mayor's house:

"My God! I've forgotten the Official!"

That is to say, a little volume composed of newspaper cuttings: accounts of sessions in the Chamber, and of parliamentary commissions, where Plemarec has taken the floor—declarations, interpellations, motions, votes, etc; a sort of mute witness, bound in red vellum, never opened but always brandished at public meetings (there are so few people who can read as yet): "There, that's what I've done for you during the last government!" The crowd applauds, admires, cheers Plemarec, and boos anyone who contradicts.

Another indispensable accessory: an enamel inhaler fixed to a "painter's lamp." Plemarec has a very delicate throat. He gets hoarse. That is enough to jeopardize the safest

election. A speechless man is an invalid. Plemarec coughs and vomits, while the chauffeur prepares his "medicine." Between two churches, or between two pubs, Plemarec recovers his lost voice.

At the mayor's. We sit down sixty to a table. A regular general staff of non-commissioned officers; the fine points of politics are quite disregarded here. You are either red or white, with the schoolmaster or with the priest.

There is quite a lot of enthusiasm. Cries are heard of: Down with the clergy! Down with the army! Deals, combinations, professions of faith.

Notes: a change of schoolmasters, relief for the invalids, appointment of a road man, a railway pass to Paris, a good piece in every inn... Cider everywhere, you have to drink it.

Thirty seven communes are still to be visited. I am glutted, surfeited. My pockets are empty.

A fine day's work for the Republic.

Undated

Eighty letters by courrier. Various requests for employment, aid on behalf of expectant wife, the kids, the widower, the widow, the orphan, the cow, the pig, etc... Drum for the fire-brigade. Then, acknowledgments of letters, applications, moves: a total of more than 200 letters to be got off the same evening. A day's work on the typewriter.

Plemarec made a fuss because I can't imitate his signature well enough yet. Yesterday evening I spent two hours covering the blank pages of some old volumes with Plemarec's name. Tomorrow Plemarec will no longer be able to distinguish his real signature from my imitation. I tell him so. He cries: "Bravo!"

Have learned ten words of Breton and can already look as if I understood the conversation of the people who come to the office. Conversation generally closed with a gold piece—"to drink the deputy's health."

Lunched in the railway restaurant with Plemarec: "Oh you do love politics, don't you?" The boss grows red with indignation: "There is nothing I hate so much, except my brother!" Reported verbatim.

Went to A., a market town, with Plemarec. Reception unforgetable.

One kilometre before the first houses of the place—cavaliers dressed up as if for a Shrove Tuesday in Paris, music, children carrying branches. We make a solemn entry on to the square. A dense crowd, gathered from the surrounding hamlets, shouts—"Vive Plemarec! Vive la Republique!" without ever stopping. The facades of the houses are decorated with garlands and white flags. Before the crucifix stands a singer improvizing a few couplets of verse, in the style of the *Chat-Noir*[1] about our opponent. Guffaws of laughter. The mayor is there, and the town council and the fire brigade. A little girl comes forward with a bouquet of flowers. Plemarec embraces her, says thank you. Old men kiss his hands fervently. There is quite a fight to get at the deputy (this evening Plemarec's fingers will be so bruised he'll have to take off his rings). A meeting is held in the courtyard of the school adjoining the church. The bells ring a full peal. The priest hopes that the sacrilegious words may not be heard. It doesn't come off, however. Plemarec speaks in Breton, dominates the din. The frenzy grows into exasperation.

Return to L. at midnight. There we hear that our opponent has stuck up a notice in which Plemarec is "accused" of having been married in church. This must be answered. The printshop, the billstickers and the cyclists are put on the alert. Three proof sheets are read and corrected. A telegram is sent to Briand, the reply to which will serve as a knockout document at the eleventh hour. But we require the complicity of the postal authorities. The telegraph operator, in fact, has something to say in this: L. possesses a

[1] A cabaret in Montmartre. *Translator.*

clerical town council and this makes the situation with regard to public functionaries a very delicate one. While Plemarec is working to get a majority in the town, to force the mayor to resign, the latter keeps his agents in the Post Office, the Town Hall, the Printing Office, the Sub Prefecture. It is thus necessary to keep an eye on the sending of letters, the stamping of wrappers, the postal orders, the mail deliveries.

We are dropping with fatigue. At 3:00 o'clock in the morning, Plemarec has some absinthe sent up so he can "hold out" another quarter of an hour.

We leave at 7:00 o'clock.

Plemarec has asked at the Sub Prefecture for certain so-called "confidential" lists of addresses, as it is customary for the republican candidate to do. Wedged between the "official" candidature of Plemarec and the municipality of L. which possesses high connections (the government may change), the uneasy Sub-Prefect remains inactive, negligent.

He is called up by Plemarec and given a proper dressing down: "You are at my orders, do you hear? Things have got to go better than that. Otherwise you'll be got rid of pretty quick, you and your services!"

The Sub-Prefect went off to tell his friend the Public Prosecutor about it.

Met the two of them under the trees on the square an hour later, as I came out of the printing office, they bowed low to me and prolongued the greeting with a smile. Everything will be fixed up all right.

April 6

The Clarion, Plemarec's paper, is coming out every Saturday during the campaign. The editor in chief is Boloch, a former school teacher. It is a case of filling four six-column pages with different kinds of articles—tragic, comic, always vehement and impassioned. Utilization of all the gossip. Imagination. Polemics.

Went to a meeting in one of the suburbs of L. where I don't yet know my bearings, to arrange for a caricature of the clerical candidate. *The Clarion* does not have enough humorus drawings.

You have to have a hell of a good memory to avoid making boners, to maneuver among so many pitfalls, to appreciate personal situations, to know the gesture you have to make and the word you must not say, to hand out money and know what you are doing.

And all the time—letters, letters, letters.

And visits.

And cider.

April 10

I long for the 26th. I am dropping with sleep. I am stupefied, absolutely stupefied. Plemarec keeps himself going now with inoculations of camphorated oil.

This evening when he came back his car was full of flowers.

His brother, a royalist and mayor of Goasvilinic, has launched a violent campaign against him in the paper, *Western Lightning.* He speaks of Plemarec's fortune, of his vices, of his megalomania. Plemarec is bawling:

"I shall have his blood!"

Tempers are rising on all sides. The violence of the campaign reaches its highest point.

I often go to lunch in the railway restaurant. The girl there becomes more and more charming. She inflames me. I confide this to Plemarec. Disastrous results! I thought he would have a fit. Pale with indignation, his pupils distended, his veins swelling:

"But, you wretch, she is the mistress of Doctor Salaun, my worst enemy on the municipal council of L. What have you done? I'm ruined!"

I reasure him:

"I haven't slept with. . . ."

He heaves a sigh of relief. It is as if he had had a blood letting operation. Then: "Don't go there again. Here, I'll give you the address of the brothel—*our* brothel!"

April 15

I, too, ought to have put myself on a diet of camphorated oil inoculations. At 2:00 o'clock in the morning a double "Pernod" loses its virtue. Cider leaves me empty. The placards appear one after the other, red for Plemarec, blue for our opponent. Prevarications are invented, false testimonies fabricated. The atmosphere is one of drama. The tone of the newspaper articles takes on an unheard of violence. Fights are reported from some of the drink shops. The clerical candidate spends money like water. Where Plemarec gives two louis, he gives four, etc. The villages are canvassed, methodically; each house has its "watchword."

Two barrels of cider have been placed outside our headquarters. Free for all.

Pierre, the valet, has struck up some of Plemarec's election placards in one of the urinals of the railway station: enough to make the whole thing a farce. Plemarec, in a fury, called him into his room. Attracted by the shouts and bawls, I entered myself. Plemarec, in his underclothes, down on his knees on the floor, was beseeching the servant with clasped hands not to make any more such blunders "for the love of God," and next instant, bounding to his feet, was threatening to throttle him. Then, on the threshold:

"I order you to keep to headquarters. And after that, you are to stay in the store room! Do you hear, the store room. Very well. . ."

April 18

Today a delegation of "unifieds" came. They have about 900 votes at L. They can decide the majority in the town if, instead of abstaining, they vote "to check reaction."

A short interview. They refuse an offer of money from Plemarec for the trade union strike fund. The workers will go to vote on Sunday morning, all together, as soon as the voting booths are opened, so that no one can accuse them of having voted when drunk. Plemarec will gain by their votes, since he formally engages to fight the new law for three years' military service and to vote in the Chamber with the *Parti Socialist Unifie.*

April 22

The tempo increases.

A freemason was killed yesterday by one of his colleagues as a sequel to a political discussion. Very annoying. The public prosecutor has come to see Plemarec. He has the situation in hand. He will fix things all right. A battalion of infantry has arrived in L. It will be billeted in the schools. The gendarmes are all out.

The level of gold in the chest has undergone a peculiar sinking.

The revolver is always by me now.

We keep getting the most varied reports, and we have to verify them before we can act. We sound the alarm for nothing—that is what generally happens. That exhausts and depresses one. Plemarec is intolerable. He inoculates himself with camphorated oil three times a day, drinks coffee and alcohol, gargles, rubs himself, massages himself.

He calculates the probable number of votes he will get. It is an obsession with him. He has drawn up a sort of chart. With the aid of information which is supplied to him daily, he adds up, subtracts, devotes himself to intricate computations which give him a different total every time. He gets mixed up. He cries: "I shall be elected!" Ten minutes later he collapses with a sigh—"I shall be beaten!" and plunges the point of the syringe into his thigh.

Nothing exists now for Plemarec on the eve of his election: neither his wife, nor his children, nor his fortune.

I am signing things the whole time without a break. Everything that comes or leaves, returns or leaves again. Letters, circulars, notes, receipts, declarations on stamped paper. I sign checks to the bank. I even counterfeit Plemarec's hand-writing and write "My dear friend" to the President of the Council.

April 24

I have an overwhelming desire to throw it all up. A long walk in the country would do me good. It is raining.

Three drunks are singing under the window.

Plemarec calls me:

"If you don't make them get to hell out of here, I'll kill them!"

April 26

Awakened at 6:00 o'clock by people distributing ballot papers. Everything is ready on the ground floor. Everyone has been given his orders. We have all had a drink together at the bar round the corner.

A car is purring outside. I rush upstairs, meet Plemarec coming down. His presence urgently needed. In the canton of Plougouven, a very uncertain district. So I shall stay at L. all alone.

Instructions:

Stay the whole day at the special headquarters established in the Cafe de l'Europe, opposite the Town Hall. Receive the messengers sent to me there from the various communes in the canton. A checking figure has been agreed on for the orders that come for money. Give the bearer the required sum each time. Twenty thousand francs are at my disposal for the requirement of this memorable day. If any "incidents" arise, call in the Sub-Prefect at once. The gendarmes are in battle order. The batallion of infantry is under orders. Plemarec has gone.

I set off for the Town Hall.

In the street, a man stops me. He holds in his hand a ballot paper with the name of the reactionary candidate on it:

"You look like a serious sort of fellow. Look here, I can't read. My friends gave me a ballot paper, but I'm afraid they may have played a trick on me. I want to vote clerical, because I'm sick of Plemarec—he's a freemason and a skunk."

He shows me the voting paper.

I fly into a rage:

"Your friends have been making fun of you, sure enough! If you hadn't met me. . .!"

"Ah, the swine!"

I fish out a ballot paper in Plemarec's name and give it to him.

The man crumples up the "good" ballot paper he was holding, throws it in the gutter and spits on it. Then he wrings my hand in gratitude.

When I tell him that I am going to the Town Hall myself, he decides to go with me:

"This way I won't make any more blunders. No one is going to get me this time."

And he repeats:

"Ah, the swine! They are going to be sorry for it though!"

We arrived at the voting booth just after the official opening of the poll, and the man-who-could-not-read was the first to slip his ballot paper into the urn. When the chairman had pronounced the solemn words "Duly voted" and my friend—the free, conscious and sovereign citizen—wanted to treat me to a drink in recognition of my services, I could not restrain myself from exclaiming: "Long live universal suffrage!"

Installed on the first floor of the Café de l'Europe, with a telephone beside me. Friends come to offer their services. I take a look out on the Square. The members of

the *Parti Socialiste Unifie* arrive all together at 8:00 o'clock, just as they promised. No shouting, no disturbance.

I have put people to keep watch in the voting booths. News is already coming in from the suburbs, the communes. I have to stand each messenger a drink—and have one myself. By 11:00 o'clock I have had my seventh vermouth. Here come some people on bicycles. They handed in a paper, folded in four, with the sum required written on it. I check up the number and enter the names on my list. By midday I have already distributed 9,600 francs. There are many wavering souls who might have voted this morning but haven't yet "made up their minds."

I phone the Public prosecutor: a little scrimmage at Goas-Aven. A house sacked at Plemeur. The gendarmes interfered. Nothing very serious. There's a lot of drinking. Look out for the drunks!

A man from Plougouven comes for news. I give him a sort of official communique! Nothing to report in the canton. At L. nearly half the registered voters have voted already.

I learn that Plemarec is at his sixth meeting and has lost his voice. The election fever has reached its climax. A sailor has been struck over the head with a bottle in a drink shop at Kernec. Doubts are entertained of a favourable outcome at Plougouven. While a meeting was in progress at Saint-Gast the tires of Plemarec's motor were ripped up with a knife. A special guard ought to have been organized.

At midday a placard is posted up in answer to the last aspersion cast upon us by our opponents. It reproduces the copy of a birth certificate which proves that the clerical candidate is a natural child, not acknowledged by his father.

This is the finishing stroke.

My stomach is manifesting impatience. I decide to lunch at the Hotel de la Paix. There I find the Sub-Prefect at the same table with the commander of the batallion. I am invited to join them. A good choice of food, first rate wine. A cigar and liqueurs. Optimism. The batallion commander is rather ill at ease to be seen between a "socialist" and a representative of the government. He speaks little, does not drink, does not smoke.

The Sub-Prefect is rung up three times: another scrimmage at Goas-Aven; the priest at Plemeur ought to have had police protection; the school at Prival almost burnt down by an incendiary.

A cyclist comes to tell me that five confidential agents are waiting to see me at headquarters.

Doled out another 3,500 francs for the waverers in four "doubtful" communes. Goas-Aven wants 1,200 francs on the plea that by 2:30 only a quarter of the registered voters have voted.

No more news of Plemarec. I ring up the school teacher at Plougouven: the clericals are "doing" all the drinking places and leaving three louis in each: it is estimated that they have spent more than 20,000 in the canton since this morning. Plemarec and his opponent have met at Kerlen: a meeting of two candidates, both completely voiceless. Gendarmes intervene. Three wounded.

Agents on two election committees have betrayed us. I am rung up from Plemeur and learn that these include the one from Goas-Aven to whom I gave 1,200 francs a few minutes ago. I send off a motorcyclist at once to let them know in Goas-Aven. Half an hour later I learn that the gendarmes have seized these 1,200 francs, being informed that they originated from the "black fund" of the archbishop. Our party has raised the cry of corruption on all sides. This has given us thirty or forty more votes in the commune!

I have to drink one vermouth after the other. Impossible to evade the invitations There is a crowd on the Square now. Groups of people are getting excited.

A phone talk with the Public Prosecutor: a company of infantry has gone to occupy the neighborhood of the tanyards, which is swarming with drunks. Several scrimmages. Five slightly wounded.

Boloch keeps me company for an hour, and confides to me his bitterness at not being understood by Plemarec.

All of a sudden a clamor arises from the crowd on the square. From the windows, we see the municipal ambulance arrive. Remarks and conjectures.

I apply for information to the Sub-Prefect: he knows nothing. The hospital does not answer. After a quarter of an hour I am told that it was simply a case of a butcher with a sudden attack of peritonitis.

I drink some peppermint water. I await the counting of the votes with anxiety. Six mounted gendarmes are posted in front of the Town Hall. At 6:00 o'clock I am visited by the Public Prosecutor. He is nervous.The reports he is receiving bode ill for the coming evening. "I'm afraid things are getting hot."

Will Plemarec be reelected? No one will venture a forecast. Our opponents' activity has queered the pitch for us. I go through all my pockets and find 1,100 francs. All that is left of 20,000. My bill at the Café de l'Europe has risen to 97 francs 50.

The clock of the Town Hall strikes, then that of the church. The poll is closed.

I have no thought of dining. I am not hungry. I have drunk too much. The crowd on the square is growing denser and denser. Reinforcements of gendarmes come on the scene. A drunken man starts making a speech, letting loose a flood of foul language mingled with bad puns.

Plemarec phones me to say he will be back at eight and that he has given up hope. What else I forget.

I heard that the soldiers have had to make use of their arms in the suburb where the tan yards are situated. I jump into the headquarters car, followed by Boloch and three others. In five minutes' time we are there. We are recognized, the crowd cheers us. Our car is hemmed in with people. I ask questions, but nobody knows anything. In response to the shouts, a section of infantry comes up at a run. The lieutenant assures me that no serious incident has taken place. We want to get back to headquarters, but first of all I have to deliver a short speech against militarism. The lieutenant bites his moustache.

The counting of the votes has begun. I go off by car to visit the voting booths in one or two of the communes. A drive lasting an hour and a half. I retain the impression that at the reading out of the ballot papers, the name of Plemarec recurred more frequently than that of his opponent.

At 8:45 the results are out in two places—one favorable, the other not. I get back to headquarters. Plemarec is not there yet. I go to wait for the end of the business at the Town Hall. The Hall is full of people engaged in discussion. Every other minute the chairman of the poll has to call for silence. Some quarrelling going on. At last, at 9:30 the count is over: Plemarec gets a majority of 225 votes in the town itself. Cries of "Resign!" addressed to the mayor, who turns pale and makes his escape from the hall. Then again, shouts of "Long live Plemarec! Down with the clergy!"

People press around me. The gendarmes have to protect the Cafe de l'Europe, which is half invaded. I have to stand drink after drink. Shouts, hurrahs, someone makes a speech, from force of habit—that goes without saying. What can Plemarec be doing? I am dragged off to the Sub Prefecture, where the general results of the cantons are registered. Plemarec has already got a majority in three out of five. Victory is certain unless—as is feared—there is an unpleasant surprise in the case of Plougouven, where Plemarec and his opponent have been "working" all day long.

At 11:10 we get the final results. Plemarec is reelected. It means the downfall of the clericals. The Sub-Prefect heaves a sigh. We have to send for some champagne. Toasts are drunk. Delirium reigns among the dense crowd on the street.

No more news of Plemarec.

We phone in all directions.

His car must have broken down. . . the villages are so far apart. . . But no one can say exactly what has happened.

A demonstration is being organized throughout the whole town. The Public Prosecutor is informed. The troops are ordered back to their quarters. Only one or two gendarmes are left on duty. We leave the Sub-Prefecture. Outside, an important looking group is waiting for us. A red flag is unfurled. The *International* rings out. The flag is passed along from hand to hand till it reaches me. I find myself at the head of the demonstration. Bolôch is on my right, and on my left I recognize an alderman, Doctor Le Floch and his wife. Shouts of "Resign!" are uttered beneath the mayor's windows, beneath the windows of several of the reactionary councillors. All the verses of the *International* are sung. Shouts rend the air in different parts of the town.

Our column is soon 1,500 persons strong. We are under Plemarec's windows. The car is standing outside, I rush in, find Plemarec exhausted, at the end of his tether. He embraces me. As the crowd is calling for him, I help him to get up. He drags himself as far as the balcony. The shouts redouble. He opens his mouth. He makes a gesture. Silence. An inarticulate sound ,probably signifying "Vive la Republique!" Bouquets are thrown. With Pierre and some other goodnatured individuals, I deposit three more hogsheads of cider on the pavement. It is my last gesture. But I am swept off once again. I land up a bit later in the basement room of a cafe, confronted with warm beer. Round about half-past two in the morning I manage to escape from all this enthusiasm.

The streets are empty.

I get back to my room at last.

The revolutionary song haunts me:

Arise! Ye prisoners of starvation.

Then in the silence of this house which has gone to sleep—gone to sleep for four years, with its circulars, its placards, its letters, its newspapers, its confidential telegrams, its box of Poulain chocolate—empty now, of gold—its mysterious conversations, its numbered notes, its forecasts, its prognostications, all its election apparatus—O find enough strength left in me, before sleep gives me its *coup de grace,* to utter—with a tongue cloyed with absinthe, beer, vermouth, creme de menthe, cider, wine, alcohol—this cry which alone finally releases my being:

"To hell with their Republic!"

Translated from the French by H. Scott

A. Fadeyev

Diplomatic Negotiations

From the New Soviet novel "The Last of the Udegei"

I

The black horse pushed his way through the bushes, planted his forefeet on the stony platform and stood still. Then he propped his nose against a rock and turning his head towards his rider, neighed softly.

"We'll have to leave the horses"—said Peter, turning to the American lieutenant, whose horse, snorting loudly, laid her head on the black horse's crupper and rubbed herself against him.

"Wait there, Rasmakhnin, we can't get through here," Peter shouted to the orderly, who was struggling after them through the bushes.

The last shreds of the fog were melting away, and a shimmering heat rose from the stones when Peter and the lieutenant, who kept abreast of him, came out on the rocky crest of the mountain range dividing the Suchan Valley from the coal mine. Right of the ridge they came upon an American soldier armed with a rifle. He had evidently noticed them long since and showed no signs of being startled when Surkov's great sheep-skin Cossack cap rose up before him.

The lieutenant asked him a question and the soldier replied, saluting.

"Major Graham is waiting for us," said the lieutenant, giving a hasty tug to his tunic and setting his cap straight.

They descended a short distance by a track and just beyond the turn they saw the stocky figure of the major sitting on a mossy stone against the sunlit rocks. Before him lay a khaki cap with a pair of white gloves in it. On the rich carpet that was spread over the rubble—a bottle of wine stood tipped to one side a little. A kneeling orderly was opening cans of food.

The lieutenant saluted smartly and was about to report to the major, but the latter waved him aside and went towards Peter, making some kind of harsh sounds in his throat that were evidently meant for words of welcome.

"How do you do," said Peter, coldly taking in the Major's bald head and smooth, clean-shaven double chin.

They stood facing each other in silence for some time. The lieutenant and the soldier watched them respectfully. The kneeling orderly went on with his can-opening.

The Major then uttered some more throaty sounds and with a gesture, invited Peter to sit down on the carpet with him.

"I don't understand English," Peter said coldly.

"Major Graham is asking if you will have lunch with him," the lieutenant interpreted hastily.

"Tell Major Graham I'm not hungry and would like to know why—" Peter hesitated a moment—"I have the honor of seeing him here."

"Major Graham thinks it would be more sensible to sit down while we talk—" the lieutenant interpreted the words of the smiling officer.

Peter sat down on a stone, shifting his holster to a more comfortable position and stretching out his aching leg.

"Where can our boys be?" he was thinking as he listened to the Major's rumblings.

"Major Graham asks me to inform you of the following"—the lieutenant began in a reserved tone—: "The troops under his command that up to now have been guarding the Suchan Hills and the narrow-guage railway are being transferred to the

Kangans-Shkotovo-Ugolnaya section of the front . . ." He spoke very slowly, choosing his words. "Major Graham asks me to say that during the whole time the American troops have been in the mine district, he has never had the slighest occasion to doubt the loyalty of the guerrilla troops and can vouch for the loyalty of the American troops as well. On the other hand it is well-known that the Kangans-Shkotovo-Ugolnaya section for the guarding of which the Japanese have been responsible up to now, is much more frequently attacked by the guerrilla troops. Major Graham wishes to know: can the Guerrilla Command ensure—in view of the coming changes—the maintenance of friendly relations between the guerrilla troops and the American troops on the new section?"

Peter kept silence for a while, thinking.

"Allow me to ask Major Graham three questions"—he said calmly at last. "The first is: does Major Graham take into consideration the fact that the cessation of military activities by the guerrilla troops along the railway would mean the same thing as the cessation of the partisan movement in general, and if so, is he consciously working for this end? Secondly: does the transference of the American troops from the Suchan Mine District mean that Japanese troops will take their place there? And the third question: can Major Graham's words be taken as a proposal to transfer military operations from the Kangans-Ugolnaya section to the Suchan Mine?"

These questions were put so directly that the lieutenant seemed confused for a moment. The Major, who had been watching Peter with good-humored curiosity, raised his sandy eyebrows when the questions were interpreted for him. After that he rumbled for some time.

"Major Graham's reply to your first question," said the lieutenant when the Major finished at last—"is that, according to the declaration of the United States Government, which has been made fairly widely-known, American troops must not interfere in Russia's affairs and must not support any one of the political parties in Russia. The sole purpose of the American troops is to guard the railways and the stocks of valuable materials. Therefore the question of the possibilities and aims of the Partisan Movement lies outside Major Graham's sphere. With respect to the introduction of Japanese troops in the mine region—Major Graham says he knows nothing of this: the transference of Japanese troops comes within the sphere of the Japanese command . . . . Lastly . . ."—the lieutenant paused for a moment, searching for a suitable expression: "Major Graham feels he has no right to make any proposals regarding the military operations of the guerrilla troops. He is only interested in the guarding of that section of the railway entrusted to him, with as few sacrifices as possible on both sides . . . Major Graham, as may be supposed," went on the lieutenant in a significant tone, "can take no further responsibility for the situation on the section that does not come under his supervision."

"It is widely known that the United States Government is giving regular assistance to Admiral Kolchak, in the form of arms and provisions," said Peter sharply. "And it is equally well-known that the railways guarded by the American troops are being freely used by the Japanese and Kolchak's troops, while the Partisans are not allowed to use them. It is also fairly well-known that the Kolchak Government is not supported by the majority of the population of Siberia. Don't these facts afford Major Graham sufficient foundation to conclude that the activities of American troops in Siberia actually aid Admiral Kolchak and are in conflict with the interests of the greater part of the population? Doesn't he see that the proposal he makes to us to guarantee loyal relations on the Kangans-Shkotovo-Ugolnaya section is really a proposal to ensure the unhindered transference of the Japanese troops into the Mine district, against the interests of the greater part of the population?"

The Major's voice when he replied to these words of Peter's, held much deeper notes than before.

"Major Graham is not in a position that would enable him to judge which of the Russian parties has the sympathy of the masses"—the lieutenant interpreted slowly. "But he finds it necessary to contradict your statement concerning the help given to Kolchak by the American Government in the form of arms and provisions. Major Graham cannot recall a single instance when this has happened. He had heard, it is true, of the work of the American Red Cross and the Y.M.C.A. in Siberia and among the sick and wounded soldiers. This work cannot be carried on in the district occupied by the guerrilla forces at present, but the organizations are not to blame for this. If it is possible to maintain loyal relations between the guerrilla forces and the American troops—particularly now that the latter are being transferred to the new section"—said the lieutenant with some emphasis on the last words.—"Major Graham will take it upon himself to speak to the organizations in question about help for the population of these districts and for the sick and wounded Partisans."

"What form would that help take exactly?" Peter asked cautiously.

"It is difficult to decide the exact form and scale of the assistance to be given before first negotiating with these organizations"—said the lieutenant. "But if we can come to an agreement with you on the main questions, Major Graham could supply you, for a start, with twenty five sets of hospital linen and fifty pairs of boots."

"So they think they can buy us for fifty pair of boots!" Peter thought in astonishment. "They like a bargain, don't they?"

"Tell Major Graham"—he said aloud—"that his proposal is an unprofitable one for us. Major Graham must know as well as I do that on the evacuation of American troops from the Kangans-Shkotovo-Ugolnaya district, the guarding of the mine will pass into the hands of other military forces. Since the Kolchak command has no military forces of its own, it follows that the mine district will be given over to the Japanese. The fact that the guerrilla troops in the Kangans-Shkotovo-Ugolnaya section are now idle will facilitate the unhindered transference of these troops and the American troops, which will have actually secured this transference, will keep up the appearance of complete neutrality... You must agree that this would be extremely unprofitable for us, and that there is absolutely no sense in our accepting Major Graham's offer."

"Major Graham could, perhaps, let you have thirty sets of linen and sixty pairs of boots," the lieutenant returned calmly. "How they bargain—curse them!" Peter was more and more astonished.

"We could only consider Major Graham's proposal," he said, looking straight at the lieutenant, "if the American command found it possible to let us have a certain quantity of arms to help us in our fight with the Japanese."

While these negotiations were being carried on the orderly had laid out snowy napkins, ham and caviarre sandwiches, and opened a bottle of wine. The stocky major gave the food and the bottle a couple of longing glances, and was obviously wavering between politeness and appetite. At last he could hold out no longer. He seized a sandwich in his pudgy fingers and began to munch it sadly. When the lieutenant interpreted Peter's last words to him, his eyes grew very round, he lowered the hand that held the sandwich and stared at Peter in astonishment for some moments. Then he put aside his sandwich altogether and rumbled in such a deep bass that Peter expected an outburst of rudeness.

"Major Graham wishes me to tell you that to supply either side with arms would be against the policy of non-interference followed by the American forces"—replied the lieutenant politely. "But Major Graham would be glad to make you a present of a revolver, a colt and a hundred cartridges."

"Ugh, what a bargainer!" thought Peter inwardly raging, but somehow cheerful. The color mounted to his brick-red cheeks as he said:

"We cannot accept the Major's proposal on those terms."

"Major Graham reminds you that this would mean the beginning of military operations between the guerrilla and the American troops!"

"I'm of the same opinion," replied Peter. They sat silent for a while. The major finished his sandwich.

"Is that final, then?" asked the lieutenant.

Peter thought a while. At last he said:

"I shall put major Graham's proposal before the Revolutionary Committee of the guerrilla forces. This committee has full powers over the territory where the insurrection took place. Then I shall let you know the decision arrived at."

The major and the lieutenant talked together for a while.

"One more question—the last," said the lieutenant: "could you order your detachment in the Kangans-Shkotovo-Ugolnaya district not to begin operations against the American troops at least until the final decision of the Revolutionary Committee is known?"

"I can promise this, but it is not of any practical importance," laughed Peter. "The decision of the Revolutionary Committee will be arrived at before my orders can reach the detachment. The neutrality of the American troops is such that we are not even permitted the use of the railway telegraph."

"Major Graham asks you to tell the Revolutionary Committee that if his proposal is agreed to, he could let you have forty sets of linen and eighty pairs of boots."

"All right, I'll tell the Committee that," said Peter coldly and rose to go.

The major gurgled something with a polite smile:

"Major Graham asks me to tell you how glad he is to see that you trust him and compliments you on your manliness."

Peter stood a few moments, screwing up one contemptuous eye at the lieutenant. Then, giving way to a sudden childish desire, he put two short fingers in his mouth and gave a loud whistle.

He had hardly time to enjoy the expression of dismay on the faces of the Americans, when a shower of rubble came rattling down; officers looked up, startled, the soldiers seized their rifles and then a tousled head in a uniform cap decorated with an enormous red bow appeared over the rocks.

"Here we are, Comrade Surkov!" said the tousled head in the voice of the habitual toper.

"Escort Major Graham to the mine.... So long!" said Peter to the astounded Americans.

He touched his cap politely and started to climb the track to the mountain ridge.

"The blackguards,—to think of the way they bargained!" he thought indignantly. He never doubted for a moment but that the exit of the Americans meant the transference of Japanese troops to the coal-mine. The major was trying, on one hand, to provide for this transference and, on the other, show the Allied Command that, wherever the American troops appeared they brought with them immediate peace and order, while the Japanese brought war and devastation.

What enraged Peter was the thought that the Major wanted to make a fool of him and that his own theory of the antagonism existing between the American and Japanese troops was an exaggerated one.

II

Before they got to the ferry, Peter and the orderly, who had dawdled timidly behind, leading the horse that the American had ridden that morning, heard a stream of desperate curses from the river.

"What can be the matter down there?" Peter spurred his horse.

A dusty rider seated on a dun horse that pranced impatiently on the gangway of the ferry, was cursing the Chinese ferryman for all he was worth. The ferryman was slowly returning from the other side of the river.

"What are you bawling about?" Peter inquired as he came up to the man.

"Well, he's messing about there like an old woman!" shouted the rider, as he turned his purple face towards Peter. "I've got to deliver an urgent letter!"

"Who's it for?"

"Comrade Surkov. From Commander Bredyuk.'

"Let's have it!"

The Partisan looked at him mistrustfully.

"Hand it over, it's all right," prompted the orderly. "This is Surkov himself."

Peter broke the seal and almost cried out when he gathered the import of Bredyuk's scrawl.

Bredyuk informed him that the suburb of Shkotovo had been occupied by them after a six-hour battle. As he had no hope of retaining it, Bredyuk had blown up the bridge across the Maikha, and the water tower and was now removing all arms and provisions from Shkotovo. "And the lads are going to break up the railway, by my orders, at least as much as they can of it," he wrote.

The report had been sent off at half-past four on the previous day and had traveled by courier from village to village.

"Bravo!" said Peter with a broad grin to the partisan, transferring to the latter all the admiration he felt for Bredyuk's detachment, although this Partisan had only come from the detachment at the base, the village of Khmelnitskaya.

Peter suddenly recalled the Major's last request—that the guerrila forces should desist from operations on the Kangans-Shkotovo-Ugolnaya section until, at least, the Revolutionary Committee had given its final decision. He understood now that the Major had known of the occupation of Shkotovo and had wanted to take advantage of Peter's ignorance so as to get him to agree to such conditions as would oblige the Partisans to leave Shkotovo. That means then—that meant that Bredyuk was still holding Shkotovo!

Without dismounting, Peter got out a writing-pad from his bag and wrote a note to Bredyuk in which he expressed his approval of all the commander's actions, advised him to stay at Shkotovo as long as he could, to take all measures possible to hinder the transference of the Japanese troops to the mine, and, if there was the slightest chance of doing so, to derail the train in which the American troops were to advance on the Kangans-Shkotovo-Ugolnaya section next day.

Bredyuk's unauthorized action had suddenly turned up an unexpected military and political success.

"If I'd only known of this when I was talking to that fat rascal, Graham!" Peter thought with vexation, and cantered off in an excellent humor to the Revolutionary Committee.

III

Practically all the members of the Revolutionary Committee were present. The first thing he caught sight of was Alosha's bristling head; he was explaining something in excited tones.

"At last!" cried Alosha when he caught sight of Peter. "We were beginning to think something had happened to you. Bad news has come through, too," he added.

"There's a letter for you from the mine. It's from Jacob Butov, a special messenger from Periatino brought it," said Karpenko, the telegrapher.

Jacob Butov was the chairman of the local Miners' Committee.

Peter seized the letter. He stood there reading it on the threshold, his big cap pushed to the back of his head, his riding-whip flung over his shoulder.

"Dear Comrade Surkov," wrote Jacob Butov. "The new garrison-commander, Colonel Langovoy, arrived three days ago, in the morning with about say, a company of Kolchaks and they say there are more to come. That same night up comes a company of

Japs with artillery, another company at daybreak and more are expected and rumors are going round of a hold-up at Shkotovo and the trains ain't running. The Americans have been loading their traveling-kitchens and provisions into the cars all morning. At the mine they say a big attack on us is being prepared. Folks are getting scared. Yesterday one of our lads was caught with dynamite on him. They did all sorts of things to him and questioned him, but he never gave us away. In the evening Colonel Langovoy called me round too and asked me about this dynamite, and then about order—there should be better order he said but I just let on I was a bit cracked and he let me go. Best wishes, Comrade Surkov, and the same to the boys."

The letter had been sent that morning. "Well, what about it? Nobody but an enemy would be glad of news like that," Peter remarked quietly. "But the transference of the Japanese troops to the mine is a fact, just as much a fact as that Bredyuk has occupied Shkotovo."

He told them of his negotiations with Major Graham and of Bredyuk's letter.

"Now it's a question of how Bredyuk will be able to manage," said Peter. "I am quite certain the Americans won't be able to clear him off the railway line and that means that the main Japanese forces can't reach the mine until they've finished off Bredyuk. Of course, we've got to be prepared for anything unexpected. Karpenko! Ring up Periatino and tell Ilyin everything. Tell him to send a detachment of troops to the Paramonov farm close to the mine, and scouts to the mine itself. Yes, and tell him I'm coming to him tomorrow. We're going to begin an attack!"

Marvin Klein

1933!

A Story of Germany Today

Professor Jacob Ludig rubbed his hand wildly over his forehead. His tight little world had come to a violent end. Who could have foreseen the events of the past week? Who could have believed that such things could come to pass? In Germany! He stepped to his window to see how the world had changed, and to his amazement he saw that little boys were running and jumping on the spring-softened turf as if nothing had happened. He wanted to shout out and warn them: hide! HIDE! The *bugerman* had leapt out of the pages of mythology into the very veins of Germany! While spring clouds drifted down the skies; —

BOYCOTT JEW STORES TOMORROW!

Stores of Jew merchants and offices of Jew professional men are warned to be closed to the German people to-morrow or the drastic penalties for disobedience will be invoked! All German citizens are warned against patronizing these enemies of the German nation!

Nazi Control Commission—Hamburg.

— read a broadside left at every door during the night. "It can't be true . . . It cannot be true," the professor's mind kept singing to itself, "not in Germany, not in the twentieth century! It is a nightmare!" He walked to his window again. A few blocks away the tower of the Hegel school, where he had taught sociology for ten years, raised itself sheer into the blue genial sky, a battlement of youth and learning and promise. It was the first school built in Hamburg by the Republic. Further away he could make out the blurred line of the docks and the sea. A familiar quiet seemed to run up the streets of the city into the very arms of the pensive teacher. "Hamburg . . . my home . . . my people." He turned from the window with a shudder. "Hamburg . . . seized by Black Hundreds . . . city of terror . . . a maniac's dream!" He poured himself a drink of brandy wondering what he might do. He knew that he was forbidden to return to school to teach. Yet he had gone the day before. And nothing had happened—as yet! He felt that it was not wise for him to go into the streets. He tried to assure himself that it was not fear but discretion that held him back. "Who would flaunt a precipice?" The room grew smaller and smaller. It was a gaol and he was sentenced to life at solitary confinement. It was a Neanderthal cave wherein a small hairless man hid from giant primitive beasts. Life within four walls, pressing pressing pressing—binding him closer and closer to froth-mouthed hysteria. And his neatly stacked books on democracy, social progress, reform? "Lies, lies, lies!" screamed his mind. "Tripe, tripe, tripe," continued the word-dervish in his bald-pated skull. The brandy jug glowed warmly to the light that came flowing in through the gay-printed curtains. He turned around to the door and his fear. His reclining chair began to look grimly like an electric chair. "Condemned to death for the crime of having become a foetus in the womb of a woman who accidentally professed one among the dozens of religions!" He recalled how often in the past the stock had dozens of religions!" He recalled how often in the past the stock had been watered—and wined: — in Egypt, in Babylon, in Greece, in Western and Northern Europe—everywhere—the Jew had intermarried and intermarried. No Jew knows what, racially, is in him; no more does

any man. "I have no idea of what is in me. I am simply, and above all, a man. PROOF: I reason. Bah! Thats a poor reason. I am a Jew and thus an 'enemy of the Fatherland,' an enemy of Germany! *ME!* 'Like a rat the Jews destroy', says my physiological brother, Hitler. He became silly and jingled,

Hitler, spring, and the guillotine,
Of all but the second enough I've seen.

He recalled, as he belched his brandy, the odor of U-boat 146a . . . "For Kaiser, God, and Fatherland" went the legend on the medal, "distinguished service at sea." For what? And this is the century of Progress. My grandmother told me of the horrors of the Polish Ghetto, and I thought them a figment of some impossibly past Past,

Delusions and fiddlesticks and Aryan slop
Will make lots of Yiddisheh heads go POP!

The jingle somehow recalled to him the sober faculty-room of the Hegel School where tea was served to the teachers amidst chess tables, German classics, and polite discussion of literature, education, philosophy, and history. There was Herman Schlimmer, his best friend among his colleagues some years ago. And now reputed to be a Nazi! Schlimmer had a little *dachshund* that loved to eat *strudel* . . .

A sharp pounding came from the floor below. A scream followed and then the noise of the huge pseudo-Chinese flower vase on the step-landing falling onto the basement tile. A silence that hung heavily like a fog pervaded the air. The professor was transfixed for a moment. Then, he ran quickly to his door. Brown Shirts! He felt relieved. At last he would be face to face with the THING. It would be much easier now. He went back for his sporting cap and cane. They might admire his insouciance. He recalled St. George and the Dragon.

A burly officer with dirty red mustaches bounded into the room.

"Professor Jacob Ludig, Jew-" he demanded.

"Professor Jakob Ludig, at your service."

"You dared to return to your class yesterday after being warned?"

"I did my duty. I have not been formally relieved of my post. I am accustomed to executing my orders as you will note from my naval citation," responded Ludig as he drew a time-yellowed document from a carefully-folded pongee handkerchief.

"Swine . . . Jew pig! *You* want a formal release. Ha, ha, ha! Search the dog."

"Sir, you are violating the Weimar Constitution; you cannot search me without a police warrant, and I refuse to submit," shouted Ludig.

"Weimar Constitution. Pfui! What d'we care about constitutions? And so *you* refuse to submit?" sputtered the Nazi officer. "Initiate the kike, boys" he ordered to his punitive squadron.

The men grabbed the professor and knocked him to the floor. One man pounded his face as another tore his striped academic trousers off his thin academic legs. With his eyes half-closed by the swiftly falling blows Ludig imagined that he was being cut by a swastika-shaped hoe as if he were a spring worm in a garden.

"I am a Jew worm being cut in half," he thought in his pain and he saw a Christ stinking and bleeding on a sunbleached cross, the flies tormenting the drying blood on his mouth. What was that unspeakable song:

Dirty Jew you must do
Exactly what we ask you to,
You must sing you must dance
Or we'll put matzes in your pants
And if you ever dare to speak what you think
Two buckets of 'caster-oil you'll have to drink!

"The blow-torch boys . . . let the kike smell it!" commanded the officer. A Brown Shirt came forward with a small blow-torch in his hand. The flame was almost invisible because of the sunlight that filtered in through a window on the staircase. Two men ripped Ludig's shoes off and ran the flame over the soles of his white-stockinged writhing feet.

He remembered a story he'd once read of a maniac in Leipzig who had knocked his wife down in a drunken fit and cut her breasts off and then her arms and legs and put her into a trunk and mailed her to her own mother. He wondered whether he were the maniac, the wife, or the mother who had lost her mind when she opened the bloody receptacle and saw her daughter's head leering up at her from amidst her dismembered arms and legs like a rag doll chewed to pieces by a playful puppydog.

The flame was taken from his feet. An awful smell arose from the burned flesh and socks. "On your feet, dog," came a command from somewhere out of the world.

"I am not a dog or I would still have two feet to stand on," screamed the professor to himself in the inside of his skull where his brain had frozen in pain and horror.

"JEW ARISE AND GREET SIR CASTOR-OIL," laughed a pseudo-man from beyond the rim of the world. And as they forced the foul fluid down his throat Ludig saw only knights on white horses riding over the quivering bodies of lovely maidens who looked at their transgressors with pity in their eyes. Events of the twentieth century ran through his brain . . . He remembered the night it had begun and how his father had sent him to bed after a merry party which had ended at ten o'clock so far as he was concerned. He remembered his grandfather who, bent and withered, had maintained that he'd never expected to live to see the great twentieth century. A flower grew out of his grandfather's memory—it was the tender flower of a hothouse, fragile and anaemic. Grandfather had written the best book on the German theatre of his time . . . and the flower was the book or the book was grandfather or grandfather was the flower? Ludig was jerked to his feet and, half-conscious, he was held up by the laughing boys of Hitler, *schöne Hitler,* God's right-hand man.

Jakob Ludig was a wretched sight. The transformation he had run from a distinguished pedagogue with a regular income and lovely quarters and substantial dinners, and clean underclothes to an almost-man with swollen eyes, tattered clothing, jobless, scourged, hopeless, lost was a tribute to the remarkable program of national salvation of the man of destiny with a little mustache. Ludig's vest was stained with casteroil and the dust of the floor.

"Let's make him ride the ass through town as a lesson to the others," suggested one evil-visaged Silenus of a laughing Brown Shirt to his fellows, "let's ride the yid down because he can't walk anyway."

One of the Nazi youths ran up the stairs to the professor's room and re-appeared in about five minutes with a crudely printed sign made on a piece of cardboard:

THIS YID POIZ
ENED GERMAN
MINDS LONG ENUF

The sign was tied around Jakob's neck and he was carried to the street and thrown over the back of the ass.

The crucifixion was complete. The sensitive schoolmaster was too greatly in pain, too nauseated from the vile oil to resent the jeers of the Nazi hangers-on and the street hooligans. He imagined for a fleeting moment that he was a stark, gaunt Holbein Christ on a little ass in the little land of Palestine. He stuck his hand out and it became enmired in the brine of the Red Sea. A Roman ruffian drove a long spike into his wrist and transfixed him to the shore of the sea. He turned his other cheek, he offerd his other wrist, he suffered—for what? For whom? The solemn shuttered

house fronts seemed to await his reply but he could only answer with questions. The Republic? Principles? Race? Religion? How meaningless they all had become? They were arabesqued abstract lies and they had lost their meaning.

Ludig found himself holding on to a burning bush while Moses stroked his long tangled beard. Moses handed him a tablet of stone and said, "A man gave me this to give to you. He said you'd understand now." The stone tablet read:

Telegram-Urgent!

THE REPUBLIC IS AS DEAD AS A DOOR NAIL
AND PRINCIPLES ARE THE FALSE TEETH
THAT DODDARDS CHEW THEIR CUD WITH,
WHILE YOUR 'RACE' IS AN ETHNIC GHOST
CONTRIVED BY THE ARCH-FAKE, HITLER,
SCHÖNE HITLER WHO WILL BE REMEMBERED
AS THE MAN WHO TRIED TO STRANGLE HISTORY
WITH THE GROCER'S TWINE OF REACTION.

and blow-torches. Professor Jacob Ludig, just before he collapsed face forward, mouth into the filthy, stinking mane of the jackass, decided that he had been a fool and that there was much to learn that could not be learned in the clean, airy classrooms of the defunct German Republic. A great hate filled the unconscious mind that had deprived the Nazi sadists of much rollicking good fun. A corpse, or a near-corpse, cannot be tortured with pleasure. Not even by a Nazi.

II

Impenetrable darkness and the close, hot, oppressive stink of dozens, perhaps hundreds, of bodies confined in a small space. Groans, tears, cries, sobs, hysterical laughter, curses. And occasionally a pitchblack silence more oppressive than the wildest shriek, more fearsome. Ludig was coming to, 1 . . . 9 . . . 3 . . . 3 . . .
he screamed. And the darkness responded with sobs and,

1 9 3 3 !

"Don't scream comrade, you're in prison now," came from a remarkably soothing female voice at his rear.

"Oh God! Oh God! Oh God!" went the professor's tongue in long-grained response to his throbbing pain.

"God," smiled the female voice in his ear, "God is working for the Nazis."

A thick Yiddish-accented manvoice took up the conversation heard dimly from the rim of the world by the professor with cooked feet, "God will be with Israel. *Schama yisroel, adenoi alehenu.*"

"You rabbi optimist of a fool," answered the soothing womanvoice, "The Nazi's have a monopoly on God. God is the scourge that has helped them put us here—the God of the Krupps and 155 mm howitzers."

"God is truth."

"God is . . . well, one can't argue with a reverend," hopelessly from the womanvoice again.

"Ah, if the workers were armed like our comrades in Petrograd in 1917," came a manvoice thickly Jewish too.

"1 . . . 9 . . . 1 . . . 7 . . . ?" screamed the professor again. "No,

1933!

"Be quiet friend, screaming won't help," soothed the womanvoice through the thick, smelly darkness.

"Yes, if we had guns. But now . . . we must get them at once!"

"Violence will not cure violence," came the rabbivoice.

"The armed proletariat uses guns to obtain justice for the masses, they take the flaming words out of the mouth of the prophet, Isiah, and forge deeds out of them."

"But the Nazis say they use castoroil to obtain justice."

A fearsome vomit struggled to come out of the depths of the professor's stomach. A child's shrieks punctuated his awful gasps as he retched and retched.

"No *reb,* that is simply sophistry. The armed proletariat, by the reconstructions of the methods of production and distribution, obtains justice and security for the great working masses and the sympathetic middle class and intellectuals. The Nazi terror is the beast cry of the Junkers and the Big Industrialists and their contemptible house-soldiers before the growing might of the German Proletariat—and Soviet Russia. This is their *last* terror, their last extensive pogrom. It is the death cry of the nabobs and their middle-class hangers-on. It is their gruesome valedictory. Remember that in Russia there are no more pogroms; remember that in Russia the Jew is at last free."

"Ach, what words! We Jews have learned to suffer. It is our lot."

"Will you teach that to our children, will you break their spirits with that defeatism," came from another voice pent up with anger.

The professor had stopped retching. As parts of the conversation floated into his distraught brain he seemed to become aware of a truth. He had not quite reached complete understanding but he was beginning to see. He felt, in his weakness and pain, that a truth like a speckled trout was playing before his eyes. But his eyes were immersed in darkness and prodded with pain.

"The workers have been smashed. You'll have to learn to go into the ghettoes and chew the cud of your defeat like my forefathers did," came from the holyman.

"Wrong again! We modern Jews will *not* go back to the ghetto. Our eyes are turned toward Russia where the ghetto has been abolished along with the knout and economic insecurity and all racial discrimination. But you socalled *divines,* perhaps, don't know any better. Even the bourgeoisie won't let you *heal* anymore like you did in primitive times. Even the bourgeoisie use science to protect their health. But only the workers possess the science of social progress. You think Hitler will last? You think the proletariat can be put down? Not by Hitler!" came the womanvoice angrily, no longer soothing.

"But Hitler, by suppressing us, will be able to give hundreds of thousands of German workers and intellectuals jobs that will take the thoughts of Marxism from their heads," reasoned the rabbivoice through the darkness.

"Hitler suppressed the Jews because he couldn't do anything else in his socalled program rightaway. He couldn't revise the Versailles Theaty. He couldn't raise wages or the standard of relief. He couldn't solve the complex economic problems of the day. All he could do was to turn his fury on the Jews along with the vanguard of the working class. Yet he has not touched a single Jewish banker! Only we poor workers and intellectuals and farmers."

The sun came brightly out of the sky and fell into Professor Ludig's lap. He held on to it feeling the pain of all the earth in his hands and on his lean, naked shanks. He felt for a moment like reciting some schoolbook maxim such as "Honesty is the best policy" but decided, that a man with the sun in his lap must rise to the occasion better than that. He looked at the sun with love in his eyes. The sun was more beautiful than the Kaiser's Diamond in the Berlin Museum. "To think that I have the sun in my lap," screamed the dying professor to himself deep in the forest of his skull.

"C o m r a d e," came a voice from one million men, from one million darkness-concealed women with soothing voices, "C o m r a d e, now that you are beginning to see clearly you must not die. We need living men. We leave the corpses to the earth!"

"Your heart is greatly strained," spoke reason pretentiously.

"I do not care," responded a part of Jakob Ludig, "there are other hearts in the world stronger than mine. There are bodies in the world fit for triumph, and justice, and hard work. I have the sun in my lap. It is the green fruit of the universe and it has been bequeathed for one passing moment to me. I shall take it with me out to the edge of the world fleeing Brown Shirted ruffians, snaring them into the outmost peryphery of space where I shall finally turn the clean heat of the sun upon them and sterilize their carrion hearts." Jacob Ludig's heart gave away and the sun vision died with the breath of him.

"Reverend rabbi. To your last. Here's another corpse to moan over," came a woman's voice now filled with bitter, mocking words.

"One more death to avenge," muttered another.

"But he may not have been one of us. How can we tell in the darkness?"

"If the Nazi's killed him, he was one of us. They whom the Nazi's have touched will inevitably come to see that only the militant working class can properly dispose of the Fascist ordure that is infesting life on earth. When we re-arise tomorrow we shall clean the stables . . ."

John Dos Passos

Fortune Heights

Excerpts from a New American Play

ACT I

The action takes place in a filling station on a national highway. On one side there is a new glassed-in office where tires, spare parts, etc. are kept, and two gasoline pumps, and on the other a freshly painted soda fountain and lunkeon stand. In the back three overnight cottages with their names on them — Arizona, Nevada, Montana. The whole place is plastered with signs and ads SAY YES BUY NOW Guaranteed Hot Dogs BEST COFFEE IN THE STATE How About a Bowl of Soup? OVERNIGHT CAMP. Over the camps there is a big realtor's sign:

Why not look over our lots now ?
FORTUNE HEIGHTS Realty Company
We help
U
along the road
to ownership and independence

In the first act there's a piece of scaffolding up against the side of the luncheon stand and a ladder leaning against it.

When the lights come on OWEN HUNTER, in sweater and overalls, with an old Stetson on the back of his head, is on the ladder, right, finishing up one of the signs. MORRY NORTON, the filling station attendant, is tinkering with a wrecking truck in the back of the stage left.

There's a red motorcycle standing center front.

HITCHHIKER: Say bo, how far are you goin' ?

MORRY: (looks up sore and redfaced, he has a smudge on his nose): Nowheres.

HITCHHIKER : My mistake.

MORRY starts the car again, listens to the motor, seems satisfied, turns off switch and closes hood. Meanwhile the HITCHHIKER is standing around, first on one foot, then on the other, until MORRY catches sight of him again.

MORRY : (drawling) Lookin' for a hitch like the rest of 'em ?

HITCHHIKER : Umhum.

MORRY : Well you're outa luck around this neck o' the woods. These here farmers are close they wouldn't give you a hitch not if you was walkin' with a crutch, as the feller said.

HITCHHIKER : Well I ain't even got crutches.

MORRY : Well this burg is no place for a man without money . . . or for a man with money for that matter.

HITCHHIKER : But cars from the city go past all the time, don't they ?

MORRY : Sure they go past, way past, as the feller said. Takes a collision to stop 'em.

HITCHHIKER : How about trucks ?

MORRY : Well most of 'em stop up there at the four corners, fill up on that cutrate gas . . . How fur are you goin'-?

HITCHHIKER: Jeez, I dunno. Out west somewheres. I got up back home an decided I'd blow.

MORRY : Ever work ?

HITCHHIKER : Sure I work, whenever I get a chance.
MORRY : Well I've worked all my life, never got anything by it yet.
HITCHHIKER : Sure I'll do any kinda work that's clean an' fit for a white man.
MORRY : Don't get a job in a fillin' station, boy.
HITCHHIKER : Tell me you get better pay an' hours out west.
MORRY : Yare ?
HITCHHIKER: Looks like a new development out here.
MORRY : Sure, it's a boom. Buildin' cottages a mile a minute down Five Mile Road. Better stick around and do some tradin' in options.
HITCHHIKER: You don't think I'm walkin' for my health, do you? Jeez if I had a red cent I'd be drivin' my own car. Say, up there at the four corners do you think I could get a hitch ?
MORRY : Sure ; keep right on about three miles up the road.
HITCHHIKER : What you think I am, a tramp ? I ain't walked a mile since I left home . . . Say what's the boss like, is he an openhanded kind of a feller ?
MORRY (in a low voice) He's a prince, the only regular guy in the county. That's because he don't belong here, I guess.
HITCHHIKER: Say there wouldn't be some old bread or hamburger or somethin' round that dawgstand, would there ?
MORRY (calling up to OWEN): Hay, Owen, the Rover Boy's come out with it at last. Is it all right to give him some of that old hamburger ?
OWEN (from the ladder) : Well, I guess it's all right this time. Don't you tell any of your pals on me, boy. How'm I goin' to break even if I give it all away in handouts to rolling stones ?
MORRY (goes into the booth and hands the HITCHHIKER some stale rolls and a couple of cold hamburger steaks.)
MORRY : Now you walk up to the four corners, see ; it won't kill yer. That's where 44 crosses this road. Trucks go through there goin' to St. Louis, Chi, Kansas City ; every goddam place.
HITCHHIKER : Jeez, thanks a lot. So long.
OWEN : Where's he goin' ?
MORRY : Wants to go out west where men are men, as the feller said.
OWEN (comes down from the ladder) : Say Morry, got the time ? I don't want to miss that train.

My wife's a swell woman, do you know it? *(coming down ladder.)*

MORRY : I've heard you say so. Say, pick my watch out of my pocket, my hands are all grease.
OWEN : Thanks.

Oh, I got time aplenty.

I feel as excited as a two-year-old goin' to his first date. Second childhood, I guess.

Well, it's been nobody's fault but my own. But now it almost begins to look like I was going to get a break.

MORRY: Sure.
OWEN (going up the ladder again) : I don't suppose I'd do anything so different any other time though.
MORRY : If things keep up like this in five years you'll be sittin' pretty.
OWEN : I got to be.
MORRY : Me, hell I ain't ever done a thing.
OWEN (painting as he talks): You got time.

I'm forty years old.

MORRY: But you must have made your stake a couple of times, Owen.
OWEN: Sure, but nothing ever come of it. Can't be done on the fly like that.

MORRY : That time up in Alaska ?

OWEN (painting away) : All I got outa that was frosted ears and a hollow belly.

(A snappy roadster draws up, driven by ELLERY JONES the local real estate operator. With him is FAY ENTREKIN, a dark tough little girl from Chicago, who once had a job in a musical show.)

ELLERY (has a nervous habit of laughing after every sentence) : Why, the man himself as I live . . . greetings . . . putting on the last finishing touches, eh ? Look at that, Fay, the sturdy home owner putting the last finishing touches on a prosperous future . . . an inspiring sight . . . that's independence . . .

OWEN (coming down the ladder and wiping his hands with a rag) : Hullo, Ellery, you're just the man I wanted to see.

ELLERY : Don't let us interrupt. We just wanted to try one of your hamburgers . . . she's a lovely delicate girl, but has she got an appetite ?

OWEN : I was knocking off anyway . . . Gettin' late. Sure nothin' pleases the mortgage-holders so much as to see the victim puttin' in improvements, ain't that so Ellery ?

ELLERY: Mortgage is a word I never allow in my presence. We stand for co-operation . . . a new deal . . . service to the prospective owner . . . You know.

OWEN (goes into the booth and puts a couple of hamburgers on the electric plate to fry) : Oh well, we all stand to win, with luck . . . I'm sorry, lady, things ain't fixed up quite like I'd like 'em. My wife's coming today. She always has a lot of ideas. I'm runnin' into Center to pick her up at the depot. I certainly hope she likes it here.

FAY : I'd like to see her face.

ELLERY : Of course she'll like it, my dear fellow. Men live in the present but women look ahead. They think of their little ones and all that sort of thing . . . I'll talk it up to her for you . . . Bring her in the office to show her our plan for the civic center, lecture hall, movie theatre, stores, post office, an exact replica of the Alhambra palace in Seville, Spain, the architectural gem of Europe and Asia, modified to meet the exacting standards of modern enterprise.

FAY : That hamburger don't look any too fresh to me.

OWEN : It was delivered this morning, and it's been in the frigidaire ever since.

FAY : Oh, I'll take a chance. I got some bad hamburger once and it made me sick as a dog for week . . . No, I can't eat it with mustard on it.

ELLERY : I'll take that one . . . Strong sensations . . . mustn't be afraid of them, so long as they don't distract us from the dream, eh? Well I can tell you confidentially that we sold a hundred thousand dollars worth of lots this week . . . That's what you want to tell the little woman . . . You know my snake talk. Why I wouldn't be surprised if you were refusing big offers for this place before the week is out . . . And if you take my advice you'll go on refusing them.

OWEN : Florence has got a pretty level head in business matters. Say you won't mind, will you, if I bring her along Monday when we go in to talk to Mr. Stead about that loan.

ELLERY : Of course, of course . . . charmed of course . . . Ah how we all wish we had a fair helpmeet to share the chores and burdens . . . American womanhood . . . needs no snake talk . . .

FAY (munching) : Chores and burdens . . . that's what it sure would be for the dame was fool enough to marry you.

ELLERY : A woman every time to prick the bright balloons of fantasma. Ah, it's the women that rule these days as when knighthood was in flower. Ever thought of that ?

FAY : I don't think that hamburger was quite right . . . I was a fool to eat it. Say, bozo, if I get sick you've got to pay the doctor's bill.

MORRY : Shall I fill her up ?

ELLERY : To the brim. Make it high test.

FAY : I'll go to the ladies' room. Say is the paint dry in there ?

OWEN : Yes indeed and you'll find hot and cold running water, a looking glass and a dressing table. Tell me if you think it's fixed up all right. Florence'll know what to do about that, she's been running a beauty parlor in Chicago.

FAY : It can't be that Fortune Heights is getting Ritzy.

(BUCK and BABE, two young boys enter.)

OLD BINDLESTIFF (who's shuffled in without their noticing): How far is it to Center, buddy ?

BUCK : Coupla mi. How's walkin'?

BINDLESTIFF : Lousy.

BABE : Why didn't you wait for a hitch ?

BINDLESTIFF : That stuff's all right for a coupla goodlooking young punks like you. Nobody'll give an old man a chance to take his weight off his feet. You'll see how it is when you're old. This is a country for kids. When you're old they throw you on the ash-heap.

BABE : There's always the poorfarm.

BINDLESTIFF: The hell you say . . . I'm only fifty-six years old, though I may look a hundred. I can take it better'n any of these young kids any day that ain't got the taste of their mother's tits outa their mouths.

(RENA, gotten up in a light summer dress and apron, comes in from the back.)

Say lady, you ain't got a nickle for a cup of coffee.

RENA : Sure. Say you boys must have something in your jeans. *(They make sour faces and each produces a nickle.)* Sure, that's the stuff. Now I can give you a cup o' coffee right here, mister. Mr. Hunter's hired me to run the coffee stand. I can give you a nice hot hamburger and onion sandwich for ten cents. Say, suppose you boys loosen up and buy grandpa a hamburger. That's the stuff, Buck. How far are you goin', Grandpa ?

BINDLESTIFF : No place I ain't been before.

RENA : How long have you been on the road ?

BINDLESTIFF : About fifty-six years I reckon.

RENA : Don't you never settle down ? Gee, I'd like that.

BINDLESTIFF : You wouldn't like it, lady.

RENA: I don't like this, because I have to be with the folks every minute and my aunt's awful strict. But gee I'd like it if I was on my own.

BINDLESTIFF (chewing as he talks) : Not with the cops an deputies achasin' you every minute. I been in jails an workhouses in thirty-six states. Time an again I been beat up an left for dead. I worked on a chain gang in Florida and lived through it . . . These Hoosier towns they hustle you along for fear you'll die in some hick's back yard an they'll have the cost o' buryin' you. I wish I was on East Madison Street right now. That's where I'm bound for. I'm bound for the city of easy handouts, if the crows don't get me before I get there. Thank you lady . . . and you young punks can go to hell.

BUCK : Now that's what I call a good mixer ; just a civil word for everybody.

(MORRY and RENA are alone on the stage.)

MORRY : I felt rotten tonight. Jeez, I feel worse now.

RENA : What's the trouble ? Are you in trouble too ?

MORRY : You wouldn't give a damn if I told you.
RENA : How do you know I wouldn't ?
MORRY : I'm about through, that's all, with this lousy dump and everything.
RENA : You mean you got the wanderin' jeebies?
MORRY : I'm no rollin' stone, but damn it things make me sore. Take Hunter now, the feller runs this fillin' station, he's a prince of a feller, but what does he do but get his wife here? Now she'll be naggin' and pickin' on us all day long. First thing she did was make me clean out the kitchen sink. I'm not a housemaid, I'm through I tell you.
RENA : Well, you can get another job easy I guess.
MORRY : Sure I can. It's time I got a move on anyway. No future in this game. Gee I wish I was goin to college like those fellers said they were.
RENA: Well you could.
MORRY: I ain't never finished highschool. Old man died and I had to go to work. I'm fed up with bein' mother's boy around the house too. I got to get a move on.
RENA : Look at us, we got a move on outa Youngstown. We ain't in such hot shape, to tell the truth.
MORRY : A boy alone's different. He can keep moving till he strikes it good. There must be more to it than this. A feller's got to get in a situation where he don't have to slave all day for a boss. I don't mean I wouldn't rather work for Hunter than any man I ever worked for ; I'd a worked for him if he hadn't dragged a woman into it. But hell. Here's some drinks left in the bottle.
RENA : Say bo, lay off that, you're goin' to get tight if you drink all that.
MORRY : Let's get tight, the two of us ; come ahead, be a sport.
RENA : I wouldn't want to get sick.
MORRY : Hell you wouldn't get sick, I been tight lotsa times and I never got sick.
RENA : You don't look like that kind.
MORRY : How do you know what kind I am ? . . . Come ahead and find out. I dare you . . . I double-dare you.

Listen, I chauffeured that real estate guy over to the Red Hen, that's a speak about ten miles this side of Bangsville. Then I went to the movies and came back after and got him and his jane. He didn't want folks to see his car parked outside the dump, too many wellwishers around here ready to spread the good news. I don't blame him. Then afterwards I come by to get 'em. He was tight as a tick, and he sets me up to a coupla drinks in there. It was the damndest dump I ever saw, girls and fellers drinkin' and huggin' and dancin' . . . Guys spendin' their roll, Saturday night, see.

They're in there now, rented a cottage together, name of Mr and Mrs Smith. Its his car these guys borrowed.

We got just as much right to raise hell as they have, though I wouldn't go with a woman like that, no not for a million dollars. Fraid I might ketch something, as the feller said.

Here, have another drink.

Me an' you, kid.

(He tries to kiss her ; she pushes his face up with a straight arm.)

RENA : You lay off me.
MORRY : Aw, be a sport.
RENA : What a terrible line you've got.
MORRY : I ain't got no line at all. I want us to have a time, raise cain. Jeez, don't you ever feel like that ? I'm tired of going straight. All the others seem to get the big rolls and the fancy cars and the lovin'. I suppose if I had a big wad of lettuce in my pocket and a sport car you'd give me tumble as soon as you'd put powder on your face.

What you want me to do, go an' rob a bank ?

RENA : But Jesus, Morry, we just met.

I don't want to fall for a feller yet again.

It hurts too much, Morry. I had a feller in Youngstown. I thought he was all right. I thought him and me was goin' to settle down and be happy and have kids. Maybe we would if he hadn't lost his job.

You can't do much without money in this man's country.

He got so he didn't give a damn. I found he was just usin' me as a convenience.

Do you blame me if I don't want to start that up right away again?

I liked you, though, when you licked Buck. I liked the both of you then.

MORRY : All right, I'll go home.

Gee, everythin's quiet now . . . smell that sweetgrass. I oughtn't a talked like I did.

Honest maybe it isn't just wantin' a girl . . . a summer night and a swig of liquor. You make me feel like I wanted to cry. God damn it, I got to pull out of here and get a job that really pays money. I could a had you if I could a taken you out given you a big time and everything. That's all right, I know what girls are like, as the feller said.

RENA : You're the craziest fool boy I ever did see. *(She lets him kiss her.)*

MORRY : Smell that sweetgrass. Honest Rena, don't you like the smell of sweetgrass ? .

I'll stick around a few days more now you're here, Rena. Is that all right by you?

Well, I'll go along home now. See you in the mornin'. *(He kisses her again.)*

Me an' you, Rena.

RENA : Don't go, Morry.

MORRY : I got to, it's late. Ma'll be raisin' cain . . . Don't forget me an' you, Rena.

(He throws the whiskey bottle as far as he can into the bushes, and strides off. When he's gone RENA bursts out crying.)

ACT II

(An autumn afternoon, two years later. There are pumpkins and hubbard squashes and baskets of apples and jars of cider and preserves and pickles neatly stacked on shelves in front of the soft drink stand, and new signs around : Delicious Apples, Old-fashioned Winesaps. Cider, Fish Fries .15. The whole place has a neat and businesslike look. The radio is going in the soft drink stand.

RADIO : (Orchestra and then voices singing.) "This is the Missis, etc."

(MORRY is taking a rim off a wheel in back of the office. He looks worried. RENA is reading a magazine sitting in front of the soda fountain. An old bum shambles across the stage.)

(MORRY has walked up and is wiping his hands on a piece of waste, listening.)

BUM : The papers talk about the stockmarket crash, but it's the moral breakdown, that's what does it.

Once a country's on the skids, ain't nothin' goin' to save it.

MORRY : You can let the crash come, daddy, any day. It's all right by me, as the feller said.

BUM : Sure, nothin' could make fellers like you any worse off, you work all the time and you're broke all the time ; me, I'm broke too, but I don't work, no sir.

I must be gettin' along, though. I'm catchin' No. 112 southbound down here at the tank. They tell me it's a good train.

RENA : Give my love to them Palm Beach millionaires.

BUM : I will that. *(Goes off.)*

OWEN (comes in with a battery box in his hand.)

FLORENCE : Owen, you promised me you wouldn't sell anything.

OWEN : What do you mean ?

FLORENCE : Liquor, that's what I mean.

OWEN : Well, I didn't expect things would be so bad. I thought we could pull through without. The amortization's coming due. There are things I haven't told you about . . . I didn't see why you should be worried too. Hell, I've been worried enough about 'em.

FLORENCE : But Owen, you promised you wouldn't.

OWEN : Who told you, did Morry tell you ?

FLORENCE : He never opens his mouth to me, you know that.

OWEN : That's one guy I can trust.

FLORENCE : The sheriff tipped off Ellery. He spoke to me. He didn't like to say anything to you about it, scared you'd be sore, I guess. They're all kinda scared of you around here ; except me, Owen.

OWEN : How the hell did Bill White get to know about it.

FLORENCE : Sheriff White told Ellery a Federal man had been through and gotten a drink sold him at our soft drink stand. He said he wouldn't do anything about it if you promised it wouldn't happen again. Ellery was scared they'd stage a raid and give the whole development a bad name. They're raidin' soft drink stands all over the country.

OWEN : Bill White owns some lots here himself. I guess he's as much interested as anybody . . . and it's his brother's concern. Well, we'll have to lay off. Damned inconvenient time, though. I got a letter from the bank this morning said they couldn't renew the loan.

FLORENCE : Ellery said they would. He said Mr. Stead promised him they would.

OWEN : Well, we'd be up the creek if it wasn't for my bootlegging money. I got pretty near a grand in cash. I kept it in the safe, I was scared you'd ask questions if I banked it.

FLORENCE : Wouldn't be enough for your bail if they pinched you.

OWEN : Well, we'll lay off for a while.

FLORENCE : We'll lay off for keeps, Owen I've got enough to worry about with the baby, not to have jail to worry about.

OWEN : Don't worry kid. Maybe we'll get a break from now on. Anyway we're mighty near owning this dump. Once we get rid of that loan and the last amortization, everything we make 'll be gravy, pure profit.

FLORENCE : If we make anything . . . Anyway, Ellery said Mr. Stead promised he'd carry us on the loan.

(RADIO : Found a million dollar baby in a five and ten cent store, etc.)

OWEN : What about you and this guy Ellery anyway ?

FLORENCE : Oh, don't be silly Owen.

OWEN : I don't like it, I tell you.

I figured once we had the kid we'd have a real happy quiet home together. You know I've worked hard enough for it.

FLORENCE : And haven't I worked ?

What do you think I'd a put up the money for you to get on your feet again for, if I didn't care for you ? When I was 'workin' in Chicago I had plenty of men making big money wantin' me to get a divorce so they could marry me. I never pretended I wasn't married, you know that.

Isn't this proof enough, this slave's life, always washing out baby clothes and making jams and jelly and baking cakes to sell to those miserable tourists and cleaning up their filth after them, shutting my eyes to their damn dirty ways. You know as well as I do most of the fellers and girls come here for the night ain't married.

What do you think I'm doing it for, my health ?

OWEN : Florence, we're together in this up to the hilt. We're not goin' to row about it.

When a man's worried he gets crazy ideas. You're a swell girl and we've got a swell kid and once we can push this business over the top we'll be out to win.

FLORENCE : We've got to do it now for the baby's sake.

OWEN : Anyway, even if they do call the loan in on us, I can meet it. Then we'll only have the taxes and mortgage amortization to worry about. Look, I'll run over to Matheson's right now to see if I can get his bill out of him. Morry says he's just sold his potato crop. He owes me pretty near a century.

(ELLERY comes in in his roadster, jumps out ond comes over.)

FLORENCE : Well-?

ELLERY : I've got to talk to you alone, Florence.

FLORENCE : You look worried. Fay makin' trouble again?

FLORENCE : What's the trouble ?

ELLERY: Things are closing in my dear. They've got us on the spot. We may be about to be spectators of the collapse of a wellknown firm of realtors.

FLORENCE : You don't mean Jones and White ?

ELLERY : You couldn't have guessed it better. That's exactly what I was attempting to convey. Mr. Stead announces that he can't carry us any longer . . . can't handle any more mortgages.

FLORENCE : Can't Mrs. Stead do anything? She's soft on you I know. Just now she was asking about where you were ? They say she can twist the old man around her finger anytime.

ELLERY : She can't twist the state bank examiner around her finger. They closed up the Farmers Loan over in Harveyville yesterday. They're sweating blood around the First National to liquify their assets. They say the old man has been digging in his own pockets to find cash. Well, we'll be thrown to the wolves. White's gone to Chi to try to borrow some securities from his brother-in-law. But what's the use. Have you read the stockmarket reports?

FLORENCE : But the land's there, and the houses.

ELLERY : Sure it's there, but . . . Stead and I are going over to the Merchants Provident Loan to try to do something with mortgage certificates. The terrible part of it is that we are being frozen out by what is merely a temporary setback. We've got a goldmine out here once confidence picks up, if we can only hold onto it.

I'll probably come around looking for a job tending your filling station.

FLORENCE : But where'll we be. If the bank's coming down on you, they'll be down on us twice as hard.

ELLERY : Well they'll liquidate the whole concern, I suppose. You don't need to worry. Your mortgage is almost paid up.

FLORENCE : That's what does worry me though. It ud be worth their while, don't you see ?

ELLERY : How about tonight ? Florence, I've got to have some relaxation.

FLORENCE : Owen's pretending to be jealous. I don't want to do anything more to worry him.

ELLERY : Won't you consider me a little ? All this is worrying me crazy.

FLORENCE : I'm through considering. What I'm thinking of is years of work lost. Owen and me right where we started. You've always had breaks. You don't understand what that means.

ELLERY : Let's not worry. Let's let ourselves live.

FLORENCE : I think we'd better quit.

ELLERY : You're not the kind of woman that can live without the softer refinements. I can't do without you now. I'm so nervous I can't sleep or eat. Florence, you've got to take pity on me.

FLORENCE : Shut up, here's Owen coming down the road now.

ELLERY : But dear girl we must.

OWEN (comes in feeling fine) : Well, I got some of it out of him, like pullin' teeth to do it . . . Hullo, Ellery. Say, you're the man I wanted to see. What about it ? What's the trouble ?

FLORENCE : Ellery's just been telling me. Things are about as bad as they could be.

OWEN : What the hell, no use looking like an undertakin' parlor.

ELLERY : Well my dear fellow, just to pull the lid off the coffin . . . What you are about to see is the demise of Jones and White.

OWEN : You mean you're going bankrupt ?

ELLERY : That's how it appears, but please don't breathe a word.

OWEN : How'll that affect us ?

FLORENCE : Ellery don't know yet.

OWEN : Jesus, that's tough . . . I'm damn sorry, Ellery. You've got a great thing out here once times pick up a little. Well any time you need a job, old boy . . . It's damn lucky I can meet that loan. Who'll take over the receivership?

FLORENCE : We oughtn't to talk about it yet, maybe none of it'll happen.

OWEN : I suppose you'll be too busy to go down to the bank tomorrow morning. I wish it wasn't too late now. I want to take in some cash to fix up that loan and to talk to Mr. Stead about the mortgage.

Never mind, I'll go talk to him alone. He seemed a pretty good feller, not stuck up like you'd expect a banker to be.

Jesus Ellery I'm sorry . . . I wish I had a big healthy piece of change so's I could help you out a little. You've done a wonderful job out here, and you've certainly treated us square.

FLORENCE : It would be terrible now if the bank got the advantage of all your hard work.

OWEN : God damn it, that's the way it is . . . One guy does the work and the guy higher up comes by and skims off the cream.

ELLERY : It's foolish to ever put discouraging thoughts into words. Bad for the morale. White's gone up to Chi to see some big speculators. We'll pull through yet.

OWEN : Sure you will, kid, and don't forget that we're rooting for you.

ELLERY : Well, back to the grindstone. Wish me luck. *(Goes out.) (MORRY comes in looking very much agitated.)*

OWEN : He'll make the grade somehow. He's a bright young feller and he's Mrs. Stead's fairhaired boy. Gosh I wish I had his gift of gab.

FLORENCE : I think I hear the baby crying. About time to get supper anyway. *(FLORENCE goes out, toward the house.)*

(RADIO : Through the following scene : an astrologer is answering questions.) . . . This young lady Must Learn to control her feelings particularly in the early days of the month these are influences that tend to be dangerous. In the spring she will have a very fortunate meeting with an old friend from which great happiness will come and possibly wealth, etc.

BUCK and BABE come in on a motorcycle. They're wearing goggles and leather jackets. BUCK hops off and runs up to RENA.)

BUCK : Hello cuteness, say haven't I seen you someplace before ?

RENA : You can search me.

BUCK : Well I sure would like to.

BABE : Sure you remember. We were here two years ago, that night we played and sang for you.

RENA : The college boys, well I declare. I didn't recognize you with the goggles on . . .

(BABE leans over to kiss her. She backs off.)

RADIO : Orchestra : Some want loving but I want love.

RENA : Quit that. Didn't I tell you you gave me gooseflesh all over the way you talk.

BUCK : Hell let's blow. You made her cry now.

BABE : I don't give a damn about her. I'll go to see about some gas. Hell you take her. *(Walks over to where OWEN stands by the pump.)*

BUCK : Say Rena. You don't sell any liquor do you ?

RENA : No sir. Gosh, I know what's the matter with you boys now. You're prohibition agents.

BUCK : Sure didn't you know that ? But I wouldn't do anything to you if you sold me a little drink.

RENA: Only put me in jail . . .

(BUCK shambles over to the motorcycle and strarts tinkering with it. He's watching BABE intently.)

(RENA has turned the radio on loud.)

RADIO : Rudy Vallee crooning "Some Want Loving But I Want Love."

(BABE has brought the can back to Owen from filling the gasoline tank of the motorcycle.)

BABE : Thanks. Say Mr. Hunter I'm sorry to do this, but we have information that you've been selling liquor. We have a search warrant. Now if you just show us where it is we'll make things easy for you as we can. Would you like to see the warrant ?

(BABE hands OWEN a paper. As OWEN eyes drop to the paper BABE pulls his gun. BUCK starts the motocycle and covers OWEN with another gun.)

BUCK : Don't anybody get excited I got a bead on him.

BABE : If you don't mind I'll get you to open that little safe.

OWEN : There's nothing in there but papers. You can look if you want to. *(Opens it.)* Hey, don't get rough with that safe. There's no liquor in there.

RENA (yells from the soft drink stand) : Look out for yourself Mr. Hunter ! They ain't prohibition officers. It's a holdup.

BUCK : You mind your own business. *(BABE has cleaned out the safe and the cash register, and is stuffing an envelope full of bills into his pocket.)*

BABE : Plug the girl, goddam her, plug her if she moves.

RENA (runs out of the booth) : Help ! Help ! *(OWEN makes a dive at BABE, who shoots, misses him, neatly trips him up and runs to the motorcycle.)*

BABE : Come on Buck. It's like takin' candy from a baby. *(BUCK's already on the motorcycle.)*

RENA (center) : So that's where you went to college. The state reformatory . . . I know all about you boys now.

(OWEN's started to get up, but drops flat again when BABE starts shooting from the back seat of the motorcycle. A couple of panes of glass smash.)

BABE : Stick it into her, Buck.

(He throws down the gun. OWEN's on his feet, grabs it and runs after them shooting.)

(RENA's been hit. She's leaning against the little glass office.)

RENA : Don't, oh please don't . . . Oh it hurts . . . *(She drops.)* *(FLORENCE comes running in from the house. Meets OWEN who's coming black limping. He's broken the gun and is emptying the shells into his hand.)*

FLORENCE : Oh Owen, are you all right ? I phoned the highway police. The minute I heard shooting I knew it was a holdup. You're not hurt, are you? Did they get that money?

OWEN (nods gloomily) : They pulled the prohibition officer gag and I was sucker enough to fall for it.

FLORENCE : What's the matter with the girl ?

OWEN : She must have fainted.

FLORENCE : No, she's hurt. She's been hit.

OWEN : God, I hope it's not bad. *(He goes into the office to phone.)*

FLORENCE : She's not breathing. The dirty cowards. Phone Dr. Reynolds quick. She doesn't seem to be bleeding much. The bullet went in right beside the heart. *(She starts to sob.)* Poor little thing, I think she's dead.

(ELLERY drives in; jumps out of the car when he sees her. Soft dance music coming from the radio.)

ELLERY : Florence, are you alone ?

FLORENCE : I'll say I am.

ELLERY : You certainly look down in the mouth. Is it true you had a hold-up? Now if they came and held us up it would have been something. It would have saved our lives ; we're insured against robbery. I bet poor Mr. Stead wishes they'd held the First National up. Bank examiner's in there now, and it looks like a funeral parlor. Florence, this is the deluge, as they say in the French: *après nous le deluge* . . . After all, I was pretty sick of the real estate business. I think my place is in public life, perhaps. Somebody's got to stand up for people's rights in this country. What's the matter ?

FLORENCE (has burst into tears) : They killed that little girl who worked for me, you know, Rena Meakin? She's lying there dead now. The reporter for the paper's talking to those poor old people right now.

ELLERY : Good heavens.

FLORENCE : They got almost a thousand dollars Owen had ready to take down to the bank.

ELLERY : This is tragic.

FLORENCE : Call me dear just once more, it makes me feel good . . . snaketalk.

ELLERY : Well, it's my business. Dear lady, here's my proposition. Fortune Heights is flat. The bank can have it. We may salvage an equity in it and we may not. Anyway, it's dead as long as this depression lasts. If we'd had one more year there would have been millions in it . . . I'll retire from business for a while. I want a chance to think things out.

FLORENCE : You're young, you don't know what it is yet. Maybe next time you'll make a killing and then you'll never know.

Don't you understand, we'll be flat broke, without anything to eat, no roof over our heads, and a baby girl to raise and god knows I'd rather strangle her with my own hands than have her been through what I've been through, any of it.

ELLERY : Suppose we walk out together, leave 'em all holding the sack. I've got enough cash in the bank to get us to California. We'll rent a cheap bungalow and wait till things pick up. Dear lady, I need you so badly.

OWEN (comes in suddenly from behind the booth he's pretty drunk) : Hullo Ellery. Well, Florence, I think you're right, Sheriff and I phoned all over hell giving his description. Left the sheriff home ; he's tight as a tick. Old son of bitch is about as much good as a sheriff as my foot. Can't even his liquor.

Got some good corn, though. The old sonofabitch 's got a regular distillery down in his cellar. Imagine him holdin' out on me all these years, and a deacon in the church too.

Adversity makes strange bedfellows, and speakin' of bedfellows, how about it Florence ? Going to California with the boyfriend, eh ? That's pretty.

FLORENCE : Owen, you've been drinking. You don't know what you're saying. You better go up to the house and turn in. Ellery you better go along.

OWEN : I've got a toothful, but I'm not so drunk as you think.

FLORENCE : Ellery, you better be going.

ELLERY : Yare. Too bad about the holdup, old top.

OWEN : Too goddamnbad. No you don't. We're goin' to sit right down and talk the matter over right now. *(He pulls out a gun.)* Sheriff lent me his Colt in case I met any more holdup men.

You think I'm drunk, do you ,well I'm not so drunk I don't need another drink. You look a little pale, Ellery, you better take a drink too. So you'll have your wits about you. Take a little snifter yourself, Florence, and then we'll sit down and talk about your pretty little California honeymoon.

Well, I been trying to beat the system all my life, and now I'm licked.

God damn it I don't understand how Morry could have done such a thing. It's different about you. A woman'll doublecross her husband like she'd eat a ginger snap. But goddamn it I thought I'd treated that boy square. I guess if you work for a man you think he's a sonofabitch no matter what he does.

It's the money changing hands that makes it all stink Dawg eat dawg.

Well, what about it ?

ELLERY (spluttering) : This is good corn all right.

OWEN : Sure it is. Tastes like piss. Better drink up strong. This is the last of it. Well what about it ?

FLORENCE : Owen, you're all wrong. You always knew I had a bum streak in me, Owen. I was just stringing him along for the light wines and beers, a few little parties on the side. Life hasn't been all roses out in this dump, you know that.

It's all over now. He gave me perfume and called me dear lady. But can't you see there's no life for a woman in a place like this, nothin' but old inner tubes and the smell of gas and your greasy overalls. There's no life for a woman in stuff like that.

Honest I'll stick if you let me.

OWEN : Struggle, struggle, struggle to make money, to keep your head above water, to keep your woman. Jesus when a guy's broke he can't have anything.

There ought to be some things you could have, even if you didn't have any money.

FLORENCE: Sure there are things.

OWEN: What are they?

FLORENCE: I started to say things, but then I knew I was lying. You tell him, Ellery.

ELLERY (with a hysterical titter): Why there's the birds and the flowers.

OWEN: You shut up you damn little shrimp.

FLORENCE: Sunday school talk . . . I guess that's all it is. *(she bursts out crying)*

ELLERY (shrilly hysterical) : Go ahead, shoot me. I'm through anyway.

(Owen shrugs his shoulders, puts the gun down on the table and walks away. He's walking up and down while Ellery's talking.)

ACT III

(Winter; a year or more later; a grey raw morning. The soft drink booth is partly boarded up. Empty packing cases, cartons, gasoline drums clutter up the stage around

the pumps. There are broken windows in the office. The big sign FORTUNE HEIGHTS has fallen down and hangs at an angle.)

(The sheriff and a deputy drive up in a Ford, sit talking in the car.)

SHERIFF: Damned if I know what's gettin into people these days.

DEPUTY: It's what's comin out bothers me.

SHERIFF: Meanness that's what it is, low-down cusedness. I never would have thought it of Owen Hunter.

DEPUTY: Well a man who'll violate one law'll violate on all. That's my opinion.

SHERIFF: Never would have thought it of Owen Hunter or Florence either.

DEPUTY: You can't be sure of anybody these days.

SHERIFF: And these marchers, what about them? The roads is full of 'em.

DEPUTY: Criminal element them reds. I tell you Bill I don't like the way things look around here. And all these tramps on the roads.

SHERIFF: God damn those state police; they're never anywhere you want 'em.

(He shouts:) Say, Florence — *(walks towards the house).*

Say Mrs. Hunter come on out it's Bill White.

(Florence comes out with a rifle in her hand)

FLORENCE: What's the trouble? You're looking worried, Sheriff.

SHERIFF: Mrs. Hunter you know I don't like this job I've got to do.

FLORENCE: I don't like it either.

SHERIFF: Make it easy for me, won't you Mrs. Hunter?

FLORENCE: The easiest thing you can do is go home and forget it.

SHERIFF: Look here Mrs. Hunter. Let me make you a proposition. As soon as Owen comes home, you and him come down and stay at my house until you've decided what to do. You understand I've got to do my duty. That's what I was elected for.

FLORENCE: You were elected to keep the peace not to throw hardworking men out of their homes.

SHERIFF: Let's go up to the house and talk it over. Come along. We'll talk it over and you'll be reasonable. *(A Hitchhiker, a tall raw-boned man wearing store clothes and carrying a suitcase walks in.)*

FLORENCE: I'm through being reasonable. Owen can do what he likes.

SHERIFF: Just let me talk to you a minute. *(They walk up towards the house)*

HITCHHIKER: (Goes up to the Deputy) Say buddy, any place around here I can get an old piece of bread a glass of water.

DEPUTY: You can go up to the house and ask. More likely to get a slug of lead in your belly if you ask me.

HITCHHIKER: What's the trouble?

DEPUTY: Eviction.

HITCHHIKER: Eviction don't hurt my feelin's any, I ain't got no home to be evicted from.

DEPUTY: Well this feller's got a wife and kids. His wife sure is a tough customer. He's in court now, himself.

HITCHHIKER: A wife and kids is luxuries a poor man can't afford these days, nor a home either.

DEPUTY: Well this kind of thing won't go on foreever.

HITCHHIKER: It's gone on five years and six months for me.

DEPUTY: Some guys won't work no matter how things are.

HITCHHIKER: I couldn't be worse off if I'd never done a lick of work in my life.

DEPUTY: Anybody could be worse off.

HITCHHIKER: I mighta stayed in Detroit.

DEPUTY: Heard anythin' about these here marchers?

HITCHHIKER: Sure I was with 'em last night.

DEPUTY: What's eatin' them? A bunch o reds ain't they?

HITCHNIKER: Hell no they's most of em white men like you an me. They're travellin' this way. A feller gave me a hitch on a truck. We passed a bunch of em with a flag sitting by the road about ten miles back.

DEPUTY: What kind of a flag?

HITCHHIKER: An American flag.

DEPUTY: We got instructions to keep em movin'. They help people resist eviction.

HITCHHIKER: You'll think the circus's come to town. They got big signs on the trucks and guys making speeches and they're singing *Where do we go from here* like in war time.

FLORENCE: It's no use arguing, Mr. White. We've decided to stay in the house. We haven't any place else to go. The baby's not well.

SHERIFF: It isn't as if you hadn't had warning. You've been in here four months since they foreclosed the mortgage, plenty of time to make other arrangements.

FLORENCE: With what? Will you tell me that? Takes money to make arrangements with, don't it? Well, what with the holdupmen and the bankers and this flimflam real estate development they've stripped us to the bone.

SHERIFF: I can't hold off any more. I'll have to get some deputies and put your furniture out, after all the property owner has got his rights too.

FLORENCE: Any man who breaks into my house, does so at his own risk. You wouldn't shoot at a woman and a baby I know you wouldn't.

SHERIFF: Oh hell I don't know what to do. *(Starts for his car)* It's no way to act I can tell you that.

FLORENCE: (Yelling after him) You go tell the bank to do its own dirty work.

SHERIFF: I give you till twelve noon, not a second longer. Come along Charley, we'll go round up the boys.

(Owen arrives, gives a hollow laugh and they sit looking at each other glumly for a while)

OWEN: I'm going to stick it out.

Oh what the hell does it matter? I've worried so much the last few months there's no worry left in me.

If some of the other fellers being evicted around here had the courage of a louse they wouldn't get away with it so easy. I sure was a damn fool to think I was a business man.

FLORENCE: Well we got the baby out of it anyway.

OWEN: The rich get richer and the poor get children.

FLORENCE: I wish this was all talk. Do you think maybe someday we'll be able to look back on all this an talk about it and kid about it maybe?

OWEN: Funny this feeling of having the whole country against you. I never done anything against it, I went and fought for it, and you was always a great one to give to charity. I feel like I felt that time overseas when we first went in at Soissons, a terrible lonely feelin to have thousands of men I'd never seen out to kill me. Poor devils I'd never done anythin against em.

But goddam it it's our work built this place up we got a right to defend it. A man's got some rights.

Well if they come they'll get lead that's all.

How many cartridges we got?

(Sheriff White comes in with two deputies. Each one has a teargas bomb in his hand. A little man, the bank's agent, follows them with a sheet of paper in his hand.)

1st DEPUTY: I never handled one of them things Bill. I'm afraid it'll go off in my hand.

2nd DEPUTY: Oh we won't have to use 'em.

AGENT: You boys are only doing your duty . . . our duty as officers of the court.

SHERIFF (Stammering a little. He's scared to death) Owen's a sensible feller. He's only bluffin'. I'll talk to him. Say Owen . . .

(Ping of a rifle bullet over their heads. They all run and hide behind various objects.)

AGENT: (Hurrying away) I guess there's nothing left to do but for you to arrest him, sheriff.

(The Sheriff mops his brow and pulls his pistol out in a gingerly way)

SHERIFF: Better keep yourselves covered boys. He's just doing that to scare us.

(They start advancing again. Ping. They all fall flat. Meanwhile a truckload of tall men in overalls has come to a halt on the roadway. They pile out and find the sheriff flat on his belly in the middle of the stage)

SHERIFF: (all off the handle, getting to his feet, dusting himself off) There's a dangerous lunatic at large in that house . . . he's shooting out of the windows . . . you men have got to help us get him . . . he's a menace to public safety . . . we gotto get him out.

1st FARMHAND: What is this, a war?

2nd FARMHAND: I bet you it's an eviction

3rd FARMHAND: Nothin' doin' on evictions Bill . . . I thought we had that out with you before.

SHERIFF: I was elected to uphold law'n order.

1st FARMHAND: We ain't stoppin' you. What we don't like's evictions. *(The stage gradually starts to fill up with quiet, determined-looking farmers and hired hands)*

1st FARMHAND: You better let it ride Bill.

SHERIFF: What good'll that do? They got lawyers raisin' hell already to try to get me removed.

2nd FARMHAND: Who is?

SHERIFF: This damn receivership concern.

3rd FARMHAND: Well they don't elect you, we do.

SHERIFF: I offered to put him an' his wife up at my own house till he'd fixed up what to do. I don't see how I can do more than that.

(A man in a tattered army uniform pushes his way in from the back)

MAN IN UNIFORM: Folks, lemme speak to you a minute from the bottom of my heart. *(He gets on the table)* Honest it makes me feel real good to see you fellers crowdin' together to help another feller out. That's what we call cooperation. That's what's goin' to save us. The men at the top of this man's country, bankers and financiers and their hired men have gone plumb loco. When a horse goes loco you shoot him, but when a man goes loco you send him to a sanitarium, give him a rest, relieve him of care and responsibility. What we've got to do is relieve them Wall Street wizards and their hired men of the care and responsibility of running this country.

1st FARMHAND: You said it brother..

MORRY: You tell 'em, boy.

MAN IN UNIFORM: I want to tell you about us, us marchers, we ain't reds, all we want to do is go and talk turkey to the hired men of Wall Street. We pay 'em but they work for Wall Street. All over the country there's thousands of us marchin'. We stand on the declaration of independence. Last night they met us in Higginsville with machineguns and tear gas, ascared we'd help some of you dirtfarmers resist eviction. In school they taught us a citizen of these United States had unalienable rights. A country where they won't let a man go and talk to his own representatives in Congress assembled ain't the United States. A country wheere a man who wants to works, can't earn his own livin' aint the United States.

We're out to find the United States.

(They go off. The stage is empty now. Owen comes forward as Florence comes in pushing the baby carriage.)

OWEN: Well I guess this is bed rock Florence, we been up against it before, but never like this.

FLORENCE: I haven't the heart to start it all over again.

OWEN: We got to.

FLORENCE: We're not so young any more.

OWEN: A man's got to have the nerve to live no matter what.

FLORENCE: In cities you've seen those old women that scrub the floors in office buildings. Sometimes you see 'em leaving if you get to work a little early.

OWEN: I know and I've seen Madison Street bums and Bowery bums. I seen 'em pucking in the gutter blind sick with smoke, I seen 'em eatin' out of garbage cans. I know but we got to live no matter what, you and me and the kid. We got to find the country where a man has rights. They used to tell us that's what this country was. We got to find the United States.

FLORENCE: We've got to do something right now. We can't stay here. They've locked the place up on us.

OWEN: First we'll get out of this place. God this dump looks sour to me now. Fortune Heights. I sure was a damn fool to fall for this get rich quick stuff. All we want to do's dope out some way to live decent, live, you and me and the kid. Gettin' rich is a hophead's dream. Live, that's what's up to us.

FLORENCE: What's the use of talking? *(She breaks down and sobs)*

OWEN: Let's get the hell . . . We'll walk along the road, we'll think of something. We'll make somethin' turn up. We'll meet others in the same fix. We'll find the United States.

(Florence is sobbing. OWEN has his arm around her. They go off slowly pushing the perambulator before them.)

(The stage is empty for a while.)

(A car drives up. The AGENT steps out and a man and a woman who look as much as possible like Owen and Florence without being mistaken for them.)

AGENT: Here we have a very interesting proposition we've been forced to undertake repossession due to a foreclosure. Owner wasn't the right type you understand. Here's an admirable opportunity for a man who's willing to work to attain independence a respectable position in society and even wealth in a short time.

MAN: How much would we have to put in?

AGENT: As our contribution to ameliorating the present period of reduced er activity . . .

MAN: What do you think of it mother . . . can we swing it?

AGENT: We are making terms never before offered in the history of the country's development. We are offering you an opportunity of making big money, riches, wealth . . . We are. . . .

(From the time the Man speaks the lights dim. They go out.)

N. Aseyev

Song of the 42nd parallel

Comrades! I have no fighting words,
Studded with reality like gems on a flashing sword
To slice the deathly darkness,
Bringing dawn,
No difficult words
With hardness the quality of stone
Chipped off from the living rock of this planet, our home,
Words to be cast at stupid, grinning faces
Of sophisticated asses
Known as our fellowmen.

Asure sea and golden sunset.
Fit and ready is the boat.
Farewell, friends, a lucky voyage!
Don't forget to drop a note!

Comrades! Out in America:
The bestials brought up for trial
Dos Passos and Dreiser
For daring to defy . . . for daring to defend
The accused miners of Harlan, Kentucky
Against the law by judges, attorneys and sheriffs,
The law that is crooked like the noose of a lasso
So easily looped on the branch of a tree
For lynching,
The law that is beaten in shape by the wealthy,
Beaten and brazened and rung like a gong.
Writers and workers, Comrades!
Are they not worthy of a song?

Lo! the birds are flying seaward.
Who will cage them, make them stay?
Why should we delay and tarry
If the winds are blown our way?

Behold the sardonic sheriff and his bellied badge,
Glittering brass and authority,
Bright as the baleful spotlight of a coin.
And the judge, intoxicated with the beverage of the law,
Smacking his lips on the bitter ale of the law.
And the lawyers, potbellied, poor
In everything but money.

Foaming waves attack the mainland,
Like pistons batter the rocky shore.

O carry along the husky sailors
To a better port than ever before.

And last of all emerges the State's attorney,
A replica of reptile, a snake with an old snake's skin.
And all together, the sheriff and the judge
And the sheriff's men, the lawyers and State's attorney
And the State's men
Conspire
Imprisonment for the miners of Harlan and death,
Prison for Dos Passos and Dreiser
For defying . . . for defending
The barricades of the workers' ranks.
But they have not broken . . .
The strength is mass.
The force is will.

In our bunks we lie and ponder
As we sail across the main.
Was America discovered?
Shall we do it once again?

America again!
America of The Forty-Second Parallel
With the Danger sign off the dynamite.
An America against the dollar kings,
A fighting,
Indicting, scathing America
Glimpsed, seen and understood by Comrade John Dos Passos,
Written—not upon the wall—but in the hearts and brains
O workers, punctuated by their fists,
Dictated to the arch stenographer, John Dos Passos,
Who in turn from many proletarian communications
Wrote the American letter
Imbued with the spirit of our powerful Pyatiletka:
A letter, a book that shreds the bourgeoisie with shrapnel.
And sends our enemies to hell . . .
Comrades!
We are happy to discover
This America
Of The Forty-Second Parallel.

Lively, sterling stokers,
Rake the curl of the coal:
We are heading left-north-left
For a red stupendous goal.
Sing your song and heat the furnace,
Feed the engine, oil it well:
We are cruising with the dynamite
Of *The Forty-Second Parallel!*

Adapted from the Russian by Michael L. Korr and Norman Macleod

SOVIET LIFE

B. Agapov

The Stalin Auto Works (AMO)

The factory gates were flung open. Hens were scampering over the scrap iron heap in the yard. The working day was started by one of Babulianz's long speeches. He was fond of ceremony and pompous talk. As we rolled our cigarettes, he sat down on the work-bench, and thrusting his wooden right leg forward like a machine gun, began his peroration.

"Today," he said, "we received a Ri-nawet (this was how he pronounced Renault) for repairs. The engine is on the bum, although the full extent of the damage has not yet been ascertained. Nevertheless we need not be downhearted, seeing that the whiteguard scum are furnished with autos by the Entente, whereas our advanced revolutionary forces have no motor transport at all. It is our duty to overhaul two autos a week to supply the front with necessary motor conveyance."

Babulianz went on in this strain, enlarging on the current situation and urging the importance of exerting our efforts for the good of the proletarian revolution. We knew it all ourselves, but we needed that speech by our older comrade — it served instead of lunch, for we ate but one meal a day. While Babulianz spoke, we looked over our "plant" — a shed littered with broken Fords and Benzes, disabled engines, leaky radiators, and twisted pinions. A primitive turner's lathe operated by pedalling, a grindstone, and a drill — such was our entire equipment.

After the speech we began work. The hens in the yard watched us dismantle the wrecks with a chisel. Babulianz would scrutinize these dissected corpses, figuring how they might be resurrected. He kept in his mind a full inventory of the miscellaneous stock of old parts in our yard, mentally matching one with another.

Sometimes we succeeded, and from three disabled autos we managed to turn out two that could be put on the road. It was no simple task. It would take us two days to turn out a small valve on our pitiful foot-power lathe, tipping the urchins in the yard to pedal it for us. It was still worse in the case of pinions as we had no milling tools. We would sit then despondently, waiting for the arrival of fresh wrecks from which the necessary parts might be grafted.

Nevertheless we did turn out motor vehicles. One in a couple of weeks. Makeshift autos, nondescript mongrels, yet something running on wheels. We would then chalk on the car the words "Trial Run" and drive out of the yard, through the "triumphal archs" of our crooked gates that were decorated with flags of linen hung out to dry. Babulianz would unburden himself of speech, pompous and unintelligible to outsiders. But we understood every word of it. It dealt with the Entente, with the question of motor-transport against the inteventionists, and with our future prospects, forshadowing the time when we should be making new autos from new materials, after throwing out all this rubbish left over by our former masters.

2

A little book, printed on bad paper and with an unattractive fly-leaf, entitled *Birth of a Factory*, by A. Salov, spring-maker. Read it. No one could tell a better story of the progress of the Soviet auto industry from little repair-shops to up-to-date plants.

"The Civil War ended, our Party threw over all its forces to the economic front. The AMO factory received an order to start production of "AMO F-15" motor trucks.

"At that time our factory was turning out kitchen pans and pocket-lighters instead of autos.

"The stamping mill was deserted and still. The hydraulic press, a giant weighing 600 tons, was idling in solitude. Nearby was the spring making department, a semi dark shed littered with plates and tools. Coming to work in the morning, the workers would grope their way to the cloak-room which served also as a lavatory. It was altogether a dingy and cheerless place."

Suddenly the order came to produce 10 motor cars for the 7th Anniversary of the October Revolution! "A great bustle ensued in the smithy, in the stamping mill, and in the spring-making shop."

A class struggle began in the plant.

Salov tells us about Mokhov, the first manager of the spring shop, a former capitalist who was taken on because there were no specialists available for that work. How Mokhov picked "his own men," how he managed things in the shop and organized a struggle against the communists. How he concealed his "trade secrets" from the workers and prevented young people from learning the trade. Seven feet high, with a body loosely hung from lost fat, he stood like a screen before the workers, obscuring their future prospects, and mocking their efforts. He had around him a body of tsarist officers. The latter he prized highly, as "educated people," as "people who understand the business," as "invaluable" assistants.

Those were, however the first years of the "birth of the factory," of the birth of socialist industry. The workers had to build everything with their own hands, in order to be able sooner or later to dispense with the Mokhovs, after learning from them what they knew. And then, to move forward.

Constant improvements in the manufacturing processes were essentiel to progress. Volodya Khlyustov had invented a stamping mill for springs. He showed his workmates his crude designs, tracing them on dusty iron sheets, urging the making of auto springs the way they are made in up-to-date American plants. Khlyustov was not an engineer, nor even a technician, but a semi-literate. His first stamping mill was a failure, and he had to undergo the torments of every revolutionary innovator. He was laughed at, derided, insulted. Nevertheless, he had the backing of the Party organization. His mill was made, and it netted a saving of 12,000 rubles in the first year. This, however, is not its only merit. Khlyustov's achievement will stand on record as the first step towards the new technique, made in the teeth of bitter opposition and ridicule. His example was emulated by the proletariat in the factory.

Soon the whole country was to learn about these strides.

3

There are wiseacres who figure the mastery of American technique somewhat as follows: an American machine is simply transplanted into a Soviet plant, some fine slogan is sprinkled on it, and at once it begins to thrive and bear fruit — two-hundred automobiles a day!

Such a view is shared by many especially by those who have been in America engrossed in technological questions, they disregard the vast difference between the political and economic situation in America and in this country.

This view is perhaps no less harmful than the opinion held in some quarters that we have nothing to learn from America, that "we can manage on our own." In the long run the two extremes agree on one point — they belittle technical progress in the USSR, a tendency that comes from the enemy class. And the AMO factory gives the best possible illustration of the viciousness of both these views.

Entering the mechanical assembling department of the AMO plant, the final stage of production, you enter a world of machinery, whose time is divided into operation periods. Thus, a cylinder block has a length, not of 80 centimeters, but of 15 minutes. You feel like an alien body if not drawn into the general current of motion, and one submits to the current — if not in time, then in space. One follows the tortuous line of the rollers over whose steel waves are moving, now black iron castings, now the rays of light streaming down from the ceiling.

The stream of cylinder blocks begins near the "Newton" mill. The iron support folds up a drum the size of a man. The drum slowly revolves on a vertical plane. An electric trolley picks up the blocks that flow along the roller waves, and the worker, with almost no strain, deposits the casting in the drum. Then it is caught by the revolving paws of the steel millers. This operation begins on a level with the worker's waist, and while the drum describes a circle the milling is finished, and the casting is brought up to the worker again. The worker takes out the casting, and the electric trolley transfers it to the rollers for its further motion. The revolving mill turns out a milled block in one-fourth of a revolution. And the worker? He merely keeps on depositing and removing the castings.

Here is piece of American technique on which it is well worth while to dwell.

We rejected a number of American projects for AMO, we declined many projects for the Autozavod — simply because we could not agree to the abominable overcrowding of the shops that is customary for capitalist production, to the absence of conveniences, to the disgraceful system of ventilation; in a word, to all that is incompatible with our principles of socialist labor. We dropped 20 per cent off the Ford rates of productivity because we know that these rates are based on sweating the worker. We have mechanized those processes in which Ford employs "those loafing Negroes" who have to lift and turn daily two-hundred five-pood blocks each, and we have set up foundries (like those of AMO and Autozavod) that cannot be matched anywhere else in the world. We put this very "Newton" to work under new conditions and have already outdistanced the Americans in the matter of labor protection. Nevertheless, even now we have differences with this "Newton."

We are not satisfied with the ten movements which the "Newton" compels the worker to make. Thus, the worker here is quite different from what he is in the Ford plant. There is no speedup. Our worker is surrounded by daylight and streams of fresh air. During lunchtime he listens to concerts by the best artists. In the evening he has his club, theatre, cinema, music. He feels himself the master of industry, and this feeling surrounds him with an atmosphere more valuable even than the one created by the wonderful ventilating fans near his bench. When he grows old and grey headed, he will not be placed in the "Dead File" like his class brothers in America, where old people are thrown out into the street for the single sin of having lost their stamina in serving the capitalists. No , he will be secure in his old age, and his children will be taught in the universities and colleges, as the children of the rich are in the capitalist countries.

Yet he is not content with this. He wants even more.

I recollect how one foreign newspaper correspondent went down with me into the huge moulds of one of the piers of Dnieper dam. Through a little sky-hole overhead a huge bucket of concrete mixture came down. A shock brigade of women, their hands on each other's shoulders, danced upon the mixture, trampling it down with their heavy rubber boots.

"One, two, three, four," they shouted and laughed.

"Raise your little feet higher, girls!" somebody shouted from above.

We too began to dance, and our shoes were filled with cement. We laughed then in chorus. The shift over, the foreign correspondent went up to the leader of

the brigade. She stood, breathing heavily and smiling with the whole battery of her dazzling teeth. I acted as interpreter.

"Are you a shock worker?"

"I got a prize for best work in the women's brigades of concrete mixers."

"You probably like this work?" was the next question.

At this she sniffled and turned to leave us.

"Don't tell him," she said to me, "but he must be a fool. Tell him that we are going to invent a trampling machine."

And when my companion doffed his hat in departing, she cried to us in a loud voice, so that all the women in the brigade could hear her:

"In their country the women work with their feet, but we can also work with our heads."

The man of the socialist world will be as far removed from the automaton as the machine of the socialist world will be close to it. Everything that calls for standardized movements and no thinking will be handed over to mechanism. The human brain will be freed from the dull, monotonous work that degrades it, and will direct all the energy of its nerve-cells in search of new combinations. If we can entrust such work as calculating to an adding machine, now can we allow man to remain a sort of adjunct to a "Newton," which requires only a few simple reflexes from his brain?

Capitalist technique has transferred to the machine thousands of operations which formerly were considered possible only by human labor. There are weaving mills that do not require a single loom worker; there are power stations (for instance, Louisville, Kentucky) where, with a capacity of 100,000 kw., only two men, a mechanic and his assistant, are employed. However, the very nature of the capitalist system hinders the wide substitution of machinery for human energy.

Swelling the army of unemployed, and thereby reducing the purchasing power of the masses, capitalist rationalization leads to a crisis in the sale of goods, and at a certain point continued technical improvement becomes not only unprofitable but downright ruinous. For instances, in the Ruhr, after the mechanization of the work in the mines, the capitalists urged a return to manual labor which promised them more profits. For the same reason, in Germany the whole women's clothing industry has reverted from machinery to handicraft. Therefore, leading capitalist firms in the West buy out patents of new inventions for the sole purpose of hiding them away in their safes so that competitors might not utilize the new process. And were it possible to apply slave labor in the capitalist factories and workshops without any danger of political disturbances, rationalization would suddenly cease, like the motion of a cinema reel. Indeed, why should capitalism waste money on naphtha if "power plants" can be fed by oxygen from blood corpuscles?!

But in this country the wooden stand near the "Newton" mill, on which the worker stands, is to become transformed into a platform from which we shall give battle to capitalist technique, even in its most improved form.

We want to take off the worker everywhere. We must so arrange things that the block should automatically go in and out of the drum. In this respect our ideas are ahead of foreign technique, so that the latter can serve us only for the time being.

And watching the Grinley mill with its 79 drills operating simultaneously on the block, we can imagine the steel fingers of automata as mechanical workmen, resembling H. G. Wells' Martians carrying out the technique of Socialism.

Indeed, what can prevent us from working along this line? The fear of increased unemployment? But we have none! The fear of over-production? But this is impossible under socialist planning.

Volodya Khlyustov invented a stamp for springs. Being an illiterate fellow he invented what had already been invented by Ford. Ford had forestalled Volodya, but Volodya's class has taken over from Ford his automatic stamps, and is going to outdistance the rival

in the next round of this contest. Volodya's class will win not only because it already possesses the necessary knowledge, but also because it is free from the obstacles that handicap the enemy—over-production, crisis, and unemployment.

Thus, American technique clashes with us, because it is imperfect. It also clashes with us because of our own imperfections.

4

The Keller copying mill. If you see if for the first time, it strikes you as magic. On top, among the wheels, levers and clamps, like a steel ornament, is fastened a relief model of the stamp that is to be copied. Below is placed the piece of steel to be treated. You press a button and a long, thin spindle approaches the original. It works like the chisel of the sculptor, or rather, like the needle of the entomologist. It touches the original caressing, or at any rate, studying it. Its touch is delicate and attentive, spoiling nothing in the steel sculpture. At the same time below, a furious milling tool, tracing all the movements of the needle, cuts into the steel, buzzes, removes the blue chips, and cleans the copy of superfluous metal, just as the sculptor polishes off his marble statue. This tool is almost human, except for one thing: it is blind. Its eyes are those of the operator. The worker directs its palpitating hand, up and down and sideways, to obviate all superfluous movements. He presses the buttons and from the sound of the cutting tool knows whether there is any overheating or friction.

To learn to operate the Keller mill is an easy thing. It is far more difficult to study it, to be able to repair and adjust it. This calls for high skill and wide knowledge. In America there is a special institute of tool adjusters, who are equipped with technical knowledge the average worker cannot possibly possess. We consider this method merely a temporary palliative. Right now nearly 100% of the workers in AMO are studying technique, not only to operate the machine, but also to have full control over it.

Our imperfection, however, is due not only to our lack of knowledge about American tools.

Just as AMO of 1927 was different from the old primitive workshops like the one managed by Babulianz, so the new AMO is different from the AMO of 1927.

The cost of the latter was 19 million rubles; now the figure has been transposed, the new plant costing over 91 million. It has renewed 80% of its equipment, acquiring such machines as the Keller, Bullard, and Gleason. It now runs parts over rollers, conveyors and monorails, having mechanized production and shifted the main burden of work to the steel shoulders of machines. Whereas previously the annual output per individual worker was 4,400 rubles, it now reaches 19,500 rubles. Whereas previously the cost of a four-cylinder one-and-one-half ton motortruck was 7,000 rubles, now the cost of a six-cylinder two-and-one-half ton truck is only 4,500 rubles. The new plant stands unquestionably on a very high technical level; nevertheless a good deal has to be done before we catch up with American technique. To catch up not only in the purely technological sense (here we can already set ourselves the task of surpassing), but rather in the sense of *organization.*

The Americans who drew up the first plans for the reconstruction of AMO, which were subsequently quite altered by our engineers, did not think about setting up tool shops in the plant. They wondered, why make tools if they can be bought outside? They had in mind the American practice of large automobile firms buying most essential parts outside—frames, wheels, and even motor engines. In its turn the engine firm does only the mechanical treatment and assembling, buying the castings and forgings outside. It does not even have its own foundry and smithy!

In this country there is as yet nobody to make the castings and forgings for us. Nay, even more, AMO has to make a good many castings for other plants, to the tune of no less than 22,000 tons annually. These are the sharpest of our problems. They demand the most rapid solution possible.

As matters stand at present, our big engineering plants feel like Robinson Crusoes who have to make everything for themselves. Here is our imperfection. We have achieved the heights of Western technique, we have surpassed America as regards organisation of some of the workshops, but the general backwardness inherited from the past is still hindering us from putting our automobile industry upon the principles of differentiation and cooperation of industrial plants.

Differentiating labour according to the laws of the conveyor, and having organized the highest mechanisation of the process, the AMO plant is at the same time a *universal* factory. This universalism consists not only in the rich nomenclature of its output, but also in the great variety of the products turned out by its workshops. For instance, the factory has to maintain its own wire-mill because the steel works does not furnish the required caliber. A universal factory has to take in large stocks of materials of various kinds. It has to maintain large warehouses involving a good deal of frozen capital. Its universality involves heavy transportation expenses, as it receives raw materials instead of semi-manufactured articles. Finally, it handicaps the improvement of each separate branch of manufacturing, because the factory has to do everything simultaneously.

Where is the way out of the difficulties?

The solution is not only theoretically feasible, but it alredy exists in reality. We are now building special factories for engines; in Nijni-Novgorod an auto wheel plant is being built to supply our entire auto industry, and there is general extension going on in our metal-working factories. And here we find what used to be our weakness, turning now dialectically into the very opposite. Under the conditions of socialist economy we possess unlimited possibilities for great specialisation and cooperation in production, possibilities undreamed of in the West. What capitalist country can stamp wheels for all its autos in one plant, distributing them everywhere, like coins from one universal mint?

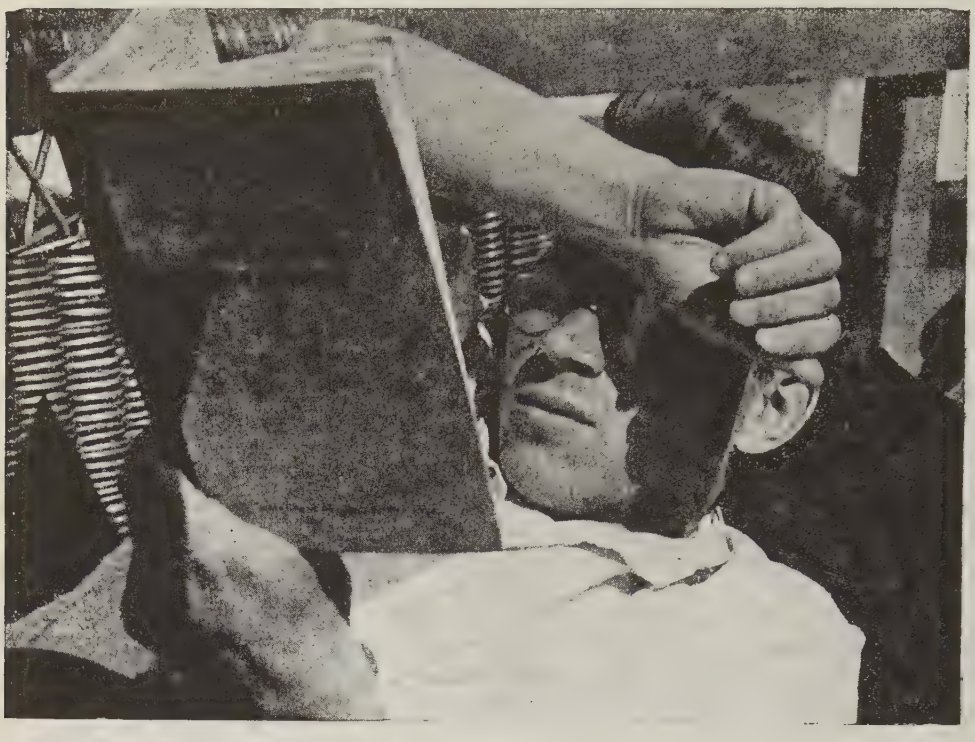
5

The AMO plant was opened. A few weeks afterwards the autos began to fly off the conveyor.

The organism of the factory is young but robust. Its pulse throbs evenly. This means that its brain—general planning; its nervous system—the planning of the shops; and its muscles—the machines and tools, are working properly, if slowly. And only he who saw our factories during the restoration period, who knows what Russian technique, Russian planning, and Russian rationalisation was before the October Revolution, will be able to appreciate the victory scored by the working class in the Stalin (former AMO) plant—the first automobile plant of the first proletarian country.

SUMMER IN MOSCOW

Photographs by B. Ignatovich



Studying Marx in the Open-Air library

Exercising in the sun

Workers summer at the Park of Culture and Rest

Langston Hughes

Negroes in Moscow

In a Land Where there is no Jim Crow

In the very heart of Moscow, for a great many years now, day and night, night and day, a tall curley- headed Negro stands looking down on the moving life of Russia's greatest city. Autos and tram cars cross the square, and crowds of people. Overhead airplanes fly. And soon, under his feet, there will be a subway. At night, the lights blaze, electric signs flash and theatre crowds merge. By day, mothers with kids come and sit on the park benches around the square and often say to their children, "Look, there is Pushkin." And sometimes the children walk up the steps to the foot of the statue and learn to spell out among their first words, the name of the greatest of the Russian poets.

Pushkin! Pride of the Negroes, too, standing in the central square of Moscow. I first read about him years ago as a child in the Negro magazine, *The Crisis*. The *Negro Year Book* contains a sketch of his life, as well. And recently, on my long tour of the South, I saw his picture in many schools and colleges in the American Black Belt. I heard colored teachers in Mississippi and Georgia point to him as an inspiration for their oppressed and exploited pupils. And in their graduating orations, black students laud him every year as one of the great persons of Negro blood in the cultural past of the world.

Pushkin! Dead nearly a hundred years. Standing now in bronze in the heart of the Red Capital, looking down on the workers who own the earth; standing with his long black cape thrown about his shoulders, an equal of Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe, in the literature of all time; Pushkin, his books sold and read and studied everywhere by more people than ever before because the Russian masses now are literate; his poems loved and recited by the sons and daughters of workers and peasants; his memory honored by the Soviets even more than it could have been honored by the Tsars.

Pushkin, a great grandson of the Negro of Peter the Great. Of course, by the time the black blood got down to the poet, two generation removed, it was pretty well mixed with the blood of the Slavs and Tartars, too. But Pushkin's mother was a beautiful mulatto. And Pushkin himself was dark enough to show, in hair and skin, traces of Africa. There is an anecdote current in Russia that Poe, the famous American poet from Baltimore, refused to shake hands with Pushkin when he looked into his face upon meeting and saw how much it resembled the faces of some of the light slaves in Maryland. Pushkin, however, being a member of the nobility, deemed it beneath his dignity to be insulted by a mere white American—otherwise there might have been a duel of historical and literary importance.

Pushkin died in 183. Before the end of the century, another Negro of purer blood, a black actor from America, was attracting the greatest of attention and receiving high praise for his art from the Russian public. This man, Aldridge, played Shakespeare with great force and power. He specialized in Othello, but also performed King Lear and other roles most successfully and for his performances he was made a member of the famous Imperial Academy of Arts and Sciences in St. Petersburg. In several old books on the Russian theatre, Ira Aldridge is written on at length and his photographs displayed.

From the more recent past, indeed since the October Revolution, two other famous Negroes have crossed the Russian scene. One is Claude Mckay, the poet and novelist, who lived for a time in Moscow, and whose books have been published in Russian.

The other is Roland Hayes, the singer, who was invited to sing in the largest Soviet cities. He sang to immense audiences in the Big Hall of the Conservatory at Moscow, leaving a most favorable impression on the crowds of music lovers who came to hear him.

Claude McKay is well remembered in the Moscow literary world. His picture and one of his poems may be seen in a text book of the Russian language for foreigners. It is said that McKay wrote a book in Moscow about the American Negroes, too, a very rare book that appeared only in Russian, (now out of print) and is the only factual book he ever wrote. Claude McKay was one of the first of the Negro intellectuals to come to Moscow after the Revolution. He came as a friend and a comrade, and his visit evidently made a great impression, as many people in Moscow still ask visiting Negroes for news of him.

There are, among the permanent foreign working residents of Moscow, perhaps two dozen Negroes, several of whom I have not met as there is no Negro colony; and colored people mix so thoroughly in the life of the big capital, that you cannot find them merely by seeking out their color. Like the Indians and Uzbeks and Chinese, the Negro workers are so well absorbed by Soviet life that most of them seldom remember that they are Negroes in the old oppressive sense that black people are always forced to be conscious of in America or the British colonies . In Moscow there are no color bars, and the very nature of the Soviet system can never admit any sort of discriminatory racial separation, or the setting apart from the general worker's life of Negroes or any other minority groups.

Indeed, in Moscow, the balance is all in favor of the Negro. The Russian people know that he comes from one of the most oppressed groups in the world, so the Soviet citizen receives the black worker with even greater interest and courtesy than is paid to most other foreigners coming to the capital.. In the Moscow papers and magazines, schools and theatres there is frequent and sympathetic attention paid by writers, teachers and playwrights to the widespread and difficult struggle of the black peoples in the capitalist lands where they are subjected to exploitation and oppression as serfs and colonials. Negroes in Moscow sense at once this great Soviet sympathy for them. Black workers soon feel at home. And most of them resident at present in Moscow have no thought of returning soon to the countries where Jim Crow rules.

Among the foreign specialists in the factories of the Moscow district, Robert N. Robinson is one of the best known. His picture is frequently seen among the udarnik groups (shock brigade workers) whose photos are often displayed in the windows of the Moscow shops. His dark face is thus known to thousands of Muskovites who pass in the city streets. Some two years ago his name flashed across the press of the world as the Negro who was attacked by white Americans in the dining room of the Stalingrad Tractor Plant, said Americans being expelled from the Soviet Union immediately on a charge of racial chauvinism. Thus the Union protects its darker workers from imported prejudice.

Robinson came to Russia in a group of more than a hundred American specialists brought over to work at Stalingrad in 1930. He was the only Negro in the group. Seven other Negro specialists had been contracted, but at the last moment backed out, with the characteristic reluctance of most North American Negroes to pioneer abroad. (Robinson himself is a Jamaican, B. W. I.) He formerly worked as a gauge grinder at the Ford Plant in Detroit. There, being the only Negro in his department, he has many tales to tell of how his fellow workers attempted to drive him off the job, even putting a short circuit into his machine so that upon touching his tools he would receive a severe shock.

In the Soviet Union no such things have happened. After two years at Stalingrad, Robinson is now working as general tool maker and instructor in the gauge grinding department of the Moscow Ball Bearing Plant. His work, of all in the tool room,

requires the most exact precision, demanding an accuracy of up to one-thousandth of a millimeter.

In his spare time, Robinson is a lover of the theatre, especially the opera. He has seen the best of the theatres abroad, London, Paris, New York, and Berlin, but he insists that none of them compare with the Soviet productions, and that the music at the Bolshoi is the finest he has ever heard. And in Moscow there are no Jim Crow galleries.

There are other Negro workers in Moscow factories who, unfortunately, I have not been able to interview. And in far away Tashkent, there is a group of American Negroes employed at the Machine-Tractor Station and Seed Selection Station of the State Cotton Trust. Members of this group may be seen occassionaly on vacations in Moscow, bringing their Russian wives to the shops and theatres.

Among the oldest Negro residents of the capital are two artists of the theatre and concert stage. Emma Harris and Coretti Arle-Titz. Emma Harris has been in Russia for more than thirty years and is well known by the resident American workers and journalists. Among other things, she is famous for her apple pies. But these pies are among the least of her achievements. Her life story would make a colorful and exciting book.

She came to Europe in 1901 as a member of the "Louisiana Amazon Gods," a singing group which included Fannie Wise and Ollie Burgoyne, now old and well known artists in the States. After a tour of Germany, a smaller group, the "Six Creole Belles," invaded Russia and Poland with great success. When this group disbanded, Emma Harris formed a singing trio of her own which performed in the large dities for a number of years. Finally, stranded in Siberia, Mrs. Harris taught English for a livelihood. Upon her return to Russia proper, she appeared as a concert soloist. And during the early days of the war she conducted a motion picture theatre in Kharkov. Later she owned an American Pension in Moscow. During the days of the Civil War she served as a nurse for the revolutionary forces in the Ukraine. Then under Colonel Haskell she worked with the American Relief Association. And after the establishment of the Bolshevik power, she continued active as a speaker and propagandist for the International Red Aid.

One of my first memories of Moscow is Emma Harris speaking at a huge Scottsboro meeting one July night in the Park of Rest and Culture, her dark face glowing in the blaze of the gigantic flood lights, her voice magnified by loud speakers so that thousands of people could hear. She is more than sixty years old now, but no one would think so. She is full of life and fire. And she has come a long ways from Augusta, Georgia, through the days of the revolution to the red freedom of Moscow.

Coretti Arle-Titz has been in Russia for more than twenty years. She thinks in Russian, and often English words come hard for her now. For a time, she sang with the Emma Harris trio, then she took up the serious study of voice at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, and later with Madame Vladimirova at the famous studio in Moscow founded by Ipolite-Ivanov.She has sung the role of Aida at the Kharkov Opera, and has toured the whole Soviet Union in concert with great success. Her scrap books are full of critiques and testimonials from workers and Red Army men. She has known many of the leading revolutionists and is a friend of Maxim Gorky's.

At the Moscow school for children of English speaking parents there is a Negro teacher, Lovett Forte Whiteman of Chicago. His field is chemistry, physics and biology. He has lived in Moscow for more than five years, is married and intends to be a permanent resident.

Of those Negroes who came with the Meschrapom film group in 1932, three have remained as workers. Wayland Rudd, the actor, is a member of the famous Meiyerhold Theatre. He acts a small Role in Russian in one of the new productions. At the same

time, he is taking full advantage of the opportunities which the theatre offers for the study of singing, dancing, fencing and allied theatrical arts.

Homer Smith, a former postal employee of Minneapolis, is now a special consultant in the rationalization of the Soviet postal system. He is credited with the planning and supervision of Moscow's first special delivery service recently introduced. He is the only American, Negro or white, in a position of high responsibility in the Soviet Post Offices, and as such, is being frequently written about in the press.

The youngest member of the film group, Lloyd Patterson, came directly from his graduation at Hampton Institute in Virginia to the Soviet Union. He is an expert painter, and whereas in America he could work only at simple jobs of house painting, he is employed in Moscow on the interior decorations of the de luxe tourist hotel, Metropole. Patterson is married to a talented Komsomolka who is a painter of pictures, and together they executed some of the best street decorations for the last May Day demonstration.

Although the actual number of Negroes in Moscow is not large, the Muscovites, from reading and from the theatre if not from direct contact, are well-informed on the various phases of Negro life. Each year, a number of books by or about Negroes are published. At present *Georgia Nigger* has appeared in both Russian and English. The Moscow papers follow the Scottsboro case closely. In the theatre, Muscovites have started with *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and have lately come down to a very modernistic production of Eugene O'Neil's worst play, *All God's Chillun Got Wings,* called in Moscow, *Negro.* At the Children's Theatre there is a playlet called, *The Good Little Negro Girl.* And recently the manuscript of a new play has been completed by a Russian playwright, Ronn, depicting the struggles of a black boxer in America whose career is hampered by prejudice, and who is exploited by his managers for all the money they can get out of him.

Negro music is popular in Moscow, too. Irma Yunzen, the great folk singer, uses southern melodies on her programs. Sergei Radamsky of New York sang a Negro group during the past season. And it is rumored this fall Paul Robeson is expected to appear in concert. In the Museum of Western Art there is a bust of the American Negro musician and composer, Hall Johnson, done by Minna Harkovy, of the New York John Reed Club.

So modern Negro art, both literature and music, is well represented in the Soviet capital. The music is kept alive not only by Coretti Arle-Titz and visiting Negro artists but by the Russian singers, also. And as to the workers, the great task of building socialism and the labor it entails has given work of importance to the competant black hands of Robinson, Patterson, Homer Smith, and other Negroes in Moscow, where specialists from all countries in the world are employed.

A Moscow poet, Julian Anissimov, (translator of a forthcoming anthology of Negro poetry) has written a little poem which begins like this article with Pushkin; but which ends, not like this article, with today, but with tomorrow.

It is called:

KINSHIP

The blood of Pushkin
Unites
The Russian and the Negro
In art.

Tomorrow
We will be united anew
In the International.

So merge past facts and present prophecy.

Moscow, 1933

Louis Aragon

Magnitogorsk

Fragment

. . . il s'agit maintenant de la transformer.
Karl Marx

They have given man back to the earth
They have said You shall devour all
and you shall devour all

They have thrown sky to earth
They have said The gods shall die
and the gods shall die

They have put in ferment the earth
They have said Times shall be good
and times shall be good

They have dug a hole in the earth
They have said Fire shall burst forth
and fire shall burst forth

Addressing the masters of the earth
They have said You shall be conquered
and you shall be conquered

They have taken in their hands the earth
They have said Black shall be white
and black shall be white

Glory to the land and the earth
in the sun of the bolshevik days
and glory to the bolsheviks

In the little houses of black earth lived
the human mole
In the little houses of black earth laughed
the child with the slanting eyes

In the little houses of black earth sleeps
the woman on the smoky hearth
In the little houses of black earth one day more
is dead

One day more in the little houses of black earth
One day more in the shadow of the church or the mosque
One day more to sew on the dead days like coins
on the breasts of the women here

so beautiful quiet and adorned
on the coins the image of
Franz-Joseph or Peter the Great

Citizen asked the agitator
do you know the ways of Lenin
She shook her head and showed her pieces of silver
that held a bit of light in the depths
of the little houses of black earth

The agitator comrade from the Komsomols
in the dusk of the village
re-tells in one breath the modern legend
Marx, October and Lenin
the taking of the Winter Palace
the commissars of Baku
Kolchak and his sister the famine
and all at once and all at once
he explains what is being smelted
he explains the world
he explains what will be
Magnitogorsk, Magnitogorsk
Do you hear Magnitogorsk

At his feet little naked children crawl in the black earth
One day more one day more in the little houses of black earth
one day more.

Translated from the French by Langston Hughes

ARTICLES and CRITICISM

Sergei Dinamov

SHERWOOD ANDERSON: American Writer

Sherwood Anderson is a bright spot in the development of the newer American literature. In many weys he has proved entirely unsual for America. Many would not see in him an American writer, because he, this sombre artist, infringed on "customary" bourgeois press inoculated notions of America. But Sherwood Anderson is in every way an American artist just as Edgar Allan Poe was, who expressed with beautiful strength the fall and decay of the plantation aristocracy of the South. Anderson stands firmly on American soil, but the ground beneath him trembles, crumbles, its sun grows dim. Hence the sombre, shaken quality of his creative work. Sherwood Anderson is the artist of that America, whose voice was heard in the attempts, at the end of the last century, of Frank Norris, Stephen Crane and partly and for a short period Hamlin Garland. Sherwood Anderson has a sound basis in the creative work of these representatives of the radical petty-bourgeois that came out, timidly, half heartedly, half scared against capitalism.

Anderson's most direct connection is with Frank Norris who died in the heyday of his talent.

In his *Epic of Wheat* (the novels *The Pit* and *The Octopus)* Frank Norris reflected the ideology of the farmer part of the petty-bourgeoisie who came out against finance capital.

The petty-bourgeois movement brought a new, more significant content into the work of Frank Norris. He began the *Epic of Wheat.* The "epic" was to consist of three novels: *The Octopus, The Pit* and *The Wolf,* but the early death of Norris (1902) cut short his work on *The Wolf,* and only the first two were completed.

In *The Octopus* Norris portrays the life of the farmers under the heel of finance capital. The farmers collect millions of tons of wheat, but all the profit goes to the railroad that finally overcomes the opposition of the farmers with the help of the government. The press, communications, government officials, judges, lawyers, congressmen—all are bought out by capital and obey instructions. Norris flays the financial Octopus that strangles the farmers.

Describing with love the life of farmers and agricultural laborers, "strong with the strength of the earth," who have returned to the point of the origin of civilization "crude, vital, healthy," Norris makes no secret of the hopelessness of the farmer's struggle, of their lack of union, of organization.

In *The Pit* (published posthumously in 1903) Norris describes the further history of wheat coming from the farmer to the consumer. In the center of the Middle West stands Chicago, like a "terrible titanic" symbol of capitalist America, risen out of the "ashes of the perished well being of a nation." Preying speculators here hold the stream of wheat, ruining both producer and consumer for the sake of profit. As in the previous novel, Norris in *The Pit* shows the negative side of big capital in a series of pictures of the life of big and petty bourgeois.

Absorbing the force of social protest from the movement of the petty-bourgeois, Norris also reflects the importance of this movement. In criticizing this or that evil of his contemporary society Norris demands only the abolition of individual "injustices" (high railroad tarriffs on agricultural products, excessive rents, speculation in wheat,

bribery of officials), expressing at the same time the hope that the social evils will disappear by themselves.

This side of Norris' ideology is expressed in the final parts of his novels: in *The Octopus* the foe of the farmers, Berman, perishes in an unlikely way, in *The Pit* the capitalist Judwin is ruined by speculation and joyfully returns to the farm, which of course could not have been typical of financiers of the time. Not seeing any effective way of freeing the farmers from the capitalist yoke (their alliance with the proletariat) Norris has recourse to chance in the denouement of *The Octopus* and *The Pit.*

The strength of Norris and writers like him, lies in their criticism of the evils of capitalist society. But they were representatives of the middle class that had not united with the proletariat, that did not break with half measures, that fought against particular evils and not against capitalism as a whole.

Norris' death in 1902 could not, of course, break the line of development of middle class "radical" literature: he himself was instrumental in the publication of Theodore Dreiser's first novel *Sister Carrie,* and was one of the few writers and critics who supported Dreiser when an unbridled campaign against him was begun by the reactionary press and critics. Theodore Dreiser's is also a direct line of continuation of the work of Frank Norris—like Sherwood Anderson—in a way the latter is a pupil of Dreiser's regardless of their totally different artistic manner, themes, literary forms. Norris, Dreiser and Anderson are connected by a common class tendency in their work, they come out against capitalism, in some of their things approach a negation of bourgeois society, stepping, it is true, oftener on unclear positions of protest against separate evils of the capitalist system. Upton Sinclair came out much more decisively against bourgeois America, though he is left lagging behind now.

II

Windy McPherson's Son was Sherwood Anderson's first novel. It can be called the story of disillusionment. All the veils gradually fall before the hero of this novel, both of his life and the lives of others, his way is one of gradual denunciation of everything that once, at the beginning, was worth while. Money—that is the only thing that keeps him, that moves him, that makes of him, from his point of view, a real man. McPherson at 15 had 700 dollars in the bank and later becomes one of the giants of capitalist society, the owner of many enterprises. He soon begins to understand however, that to be at the top of capital does not at all mean to be a real man. Quite the reverse. He is the owner of untold wealth, but he is a spiritual pauper. And, abandoning everything, as Sherwood Anderson himself did, goes forth "seeking truth." But he cannot find her in anything and the last pages of the novel sound like the beginning a new story: "I cannot escape life. I must face it. I must begin to understand the life of other people, begin to love them."

The novel is very immature, the author asks more than he answers, wanders more than he progresses. Nevertheless it was a challenge to American literature and the bourgeois society it represents, was a direct continuation of Frank Norris' novels *The Octopus* and *The Pit.* All American literature was built around the exaltation of the American bourgeois; money, power in an endless number of novels were put forward as the best and most sacred things, Sherwood Anderson suddenly breaks the "tradition": money is nothing—he says—it does not give happiness. This was bold and brave. There is genuine hatred of capitalism in the book. But it is the hatred of a blind man, finding his way with a stick and asking every passerby the way. Anderson appears in the novel as a fighter for humanity as a whole, he sees no classes and no class struggle, he is concerned about the fate of the individual man, he does not understand that society is not just a lot of people.

In *A Story Teller's Story* Anderson later wrote that he has a loathing for standard production of standard work on ready made subjects ("poisoned subjects," Anderson

calls them). In *Windy McPherson's Son* we have no "poisoned subject," the artist comes out as an original master, taking a difficult path, the path followed by Norris, Dreiser and other writers of the group of "diggers in the manure pile" (as the writers who protested against capitalism were called). Even bourgeois critics could not fail to notice such an original writer. The *Chicago Evening Post* wrote then, comparing Anderson whit Dreiser, that "There is a promise of a new, fresh, clear and brave soul in these pages."

The following year, 1917, Anderson published a new novel, *Marching Men,* which is related directly to *Beyond Desire.* This second book marks a decisive turning point in Anderson's development. He no longer sees only the individual, he attempts to comprehend the movement of classes. What bothers him considerably is—what is the strength and weakness of each of the two struggling classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. By his very nature Anderson is not the master of broad general canvases, he looks fixedly into the psychology of a man, he never depicts mass movements, the struggle of hundreds, thousands, millions. Thus in this novel, he fixes his attention on the personality of MacGregor. He sees darkness and bestiality among those who are doomed to involuntary labor. He throws a beam of light into this dark world of slavery and finds there moving human images. Such is old MacGregor—silent, morose, perhaps not altogether normal, but ready to sacrifice himself for the sake of his fellow workers, a tender, loving father. Sacrifice is the only way for him to reveal his humanity. Another way is his son Norman. Anderson begins his story from childhood. And he sharply breaks away from accepted standards of American literature. Anderson takes the childhood of Norman and sees it is surrounded by gloom, dirt and coarseness. Wrathful tones of accusation sound in his voice telling of the "golden age" of this child of a worker's family. Thus the most prominent note in the child's character originates hatred. Hatred of people is what he learned in his childhood. The surrounding world cripples him. His rage at first is blind like that of the wind, the storm, the ocean wave. "They are all beasts" in his formula. It is the rage of a lonesome soul. Individualism is the heart of his protest. But Norman's further development shows that his hatred was not for people generally, but for certain of their qualities—wildness, ignorance, rudeness, disharmony, disorganization, weakness. Thus a new quality is born in him: one must grow hard as an individual to be able to rise out of the surrounding filth to destroy it.

But how destroy it? This Norman does not know. His protest recalls the cry of a newly born child wriggling and squealing, stunned as if crushed by this vast world. With tremendous mastery, Anderson shows how Norman McGregor drags himself out of his dark existence. He eagerly grasps for books. He sees the key to understanding himself and others, society, in science. He can be said to jump towards thought. Thought is clothed in action and he needs it for his struggle, this makes it elastic, active. Norman does not just accumulate knowledge like a file clerk. But where is this action? Norman seeks to find the laws of struggle and development. Thus order begins to form out of the chaos of his thoughts. He finds the cause of disorder in the world—it is the lust for gain, money, business. Understanding this, Norman understands a good deal already. He begins to educate himself in hatred for the class which incorporates this lust for gain. He wants to know the strength of the class enemy. He admires the orderliness of the force when he watches the hirelings of the bourgeoisie, soldiers and police, march. This force of organization must be taken from them, Norman decides, then they can be defeated in the struggle. Thus the idea of marching men is born. On the streets, in squares, laborers and office workers gather and silently, without word or song, but with unconquerable determination—march. The movement grows and is broadened, there are continually more and more of these marching men. The bourgeoisie is alarmed. Why are they silent? What do they want? What are they

preparing for? And they march on joyfully feeling that united they are strong, they are a force.

Anderson describes these scenes of proletarian strength with great admiration, making it understood that only the working class has this revolutionary force. He makes two worlds clash, bravely and boldly severing all ties between the two classes. But he does not realize that his beautiful idea of marching men is utopian, that although beautiful, the idea is reactionary. Norman McGregor reduces everything to simply marching, only to training in going together, "forgetting" that revolutions move towards clear aims through organized deeds, directed towards the destruction of the existing bourgeois order. McGregor's marching men only march but do not struggle—and the entire movement perishes.

Marching Men ties together all subsequent works of Sherwood Anderson. It shows clearly all the vacillations and strength of the writer. The artist is decisively in protest against capitalism, he shows excellently into what a worthless and pitiful creature a worker who will not struggle is turned into under capitalism. He shows the tremendous significance of organization for the working class. But he does not know himself how they should be organized, for the sake of what and to what purpose. March!—But this is no answer! It is worse than no answer—it is a wrong application of the energy of the working class. It is dangerous, it is establishing an illusion that victory can be achieved without destruction, without bloodshed, without armed struggle.

III

In another two years all the world learned about Anderson. The collection of short stories, *Winesburg, Ohio* made Anderson famous. American provincial life seems unutterably terrible when you read these stories. A heavy pall of dense gloom that is not pierced by a single ray of light. As if the world had died around these people who, like wandering children, knowing nothing and understanding nothing wander without rhyme or reason. The collection opens with a story with a warm, tender beginning: the writer, a room, high windows, a calm conversation with the carpenter who is making the bed over. Suddenly a turn aside, a nervous shudder, and the warm picture fades instantly. The entire world is a procession of grotesques, it is distorted, lengthened or shortened beyond recognition, there is no truth in it, its truths are deceptions because they are always and everywhere incomplete and they are not full valued. The world is a grimace. This is the gist of this first story of Anderson's book. Further pages reveal pictures no less horrible.

Anderson takes life at its greatest tension—deadly for his heroes—small people with small worlds. They are at odds with their *milieu* but cannot protest, they have no strength, no energy. They are insignificant and pitiful, they have no bright thoughts. Their life is uneventful, their events lifeless. What tortures and kills them is loneliness. They are extremely, desperately lonely, they are like Martians on the Earth, or "Earthlings" on Mars.

But these crushed people cannot tear themselves away. Anderson's book is an excellent document, a remarkable example of the inability of the petty bourgeoisie to act independently. The lot of his heroes is suffering and inactivity, they have nowhere and no one to go to. They have no ambitions in life, no strength for life, no thought and no will. They are crushed by the terrible emptiness of their existence, they are crumpled up and shattered by the stream of life, they are like fish thrown out of the water and suffocating under a burning sun.

Sherwood Anderson draws a picture of a terrible world. It would seem as if this should have moved the artist further to positions of struggle, he should grow even more decisive in his negation. But the reverse happened. "I am a perplexed child in a confused world," he writes in his book *A Story Teller's Story.*

Winesburg, Ohio is really the book of a perplexed child lost in the debris of a shattered world. The artist stops blinded before the terrible sight of human tragedy, he is filled with sorrow and compassion, grief and horror, sympathy and pain, he does not concentrate these feelings in order to destroy their origin but lets them corrode him, rob him of power and will.

The post war years created John Reed, singer of the October revolution. But these same years brought confusion to such artists who passed by the great experience of the Russian revolution. To these also belonged Sherwood Anderson, who took a step backward, stepped aside, in order to find himself again later—after more than ten years—a rebel and hater of capitalism.

IV

After *Winesburg, Ohio,* Sherwood Anderson wrote a number of books. In 1920 he published his third novel *Poor White.* He brings his hero to the very apex of wealth and this height proves to be the very point from where it is most clearly to be seen that money is the ruin of man. A typical trader and business man Joe Wainsworth can say: "Learn your business. Don't listen to talk. A man that knows his business is a real man. He can tell any one to go to hell." But Sherwood Anderson warmly objects to this "philosophy." The entire novel is built as a negation of the Wainsworths, their exposure. But characteristically enough, Anderson really repeats his first book, as if he felt more comfortable within the limits of the old theme, he does not go further, does not revert to the line of *Marching Men,* to the fight between labor and capital.

Triumph of the Egg (1921) like the later *Horses and Men* (1923) repeats the motives of *Winesburg, Ohio.* Leroy has looked under the "shell of life" and was frightened, the past chokes him, he has no life ("Seeds"). A nightmarish old man wanders over the highways of life in search of a woman friend—but who needs this emigrant from nowhere going no place ("Age")? "Are there no words that lead to life?" exclaims in despair the historian in "The Man in the Brown Overcoat." His words could be repeated by Professor Walker ("The Trapdoor") "resembling a man lost in a dark hall and striking the wall."

The heroes of the stories in *Horses and Men* are no less lonely nor less pitiful. The daughter of a laborer and drunkard, May Edgeley feels "walled in, cut off from life" ("In Vain"). The office worker Tom says of himself :"I am terribly tired. I am dog-tired trying to understand myself" ("Hamlet of Chicago"). To the farm hand Will, life seems like "infinity and emptiness" ("Sad Musicians").

Such is the world of these crushed people. Such is the life of these workers, intellectuals, bourgeois, businessmen and doctors, saloonkeepers and pastors. "From nowhere, no place!" And this is all Sherwood Anderson saw in America. It is both much and little. Much because no one before him showed with such admirable strength the horrible life of middle class America. "I hear a terrible and heartrending cry from America," wrote G. K. Chesterton. This is the cry heard in Anderson's works. He has rendered excellently the decay and death of the middle class hemmed in by capitalist development, pitifully helpless in the grip of the bourgeois vise, unable to live and unwilling to die, refusing to struggle and being crushed by the march of capitalist development.

This is much indeed. The artist has informed the world of things American writers did not write. But this is also little, because Sherwood Anderson appears as a contemplative onlooker. I recall a drawing in an American magazine. A gloomy dark cabin is shown. A group of tired, exhausted people sit in the faint light of the half open-door. Two men are looking in through this door. The drawing was captioned: "Sherwood Anderson and Theodore Dreiser observing human suffering." Yes, observing, but not calling to battle, not saying what is to be done, how life can be made worthy of man, how to blast the system that condemns people to a miserable slave existence.

Sherwood Anderson was himself crushed by capitalism, did not know himself what was to be done, where to call, where to lead, under what flag to step out.

This is shown clearly in his other books of this period: *Many Marriages* (1922) *Dark Laughter* (1925) and others. There is no way out, says the artist, so let us tell of the sorrows of man. But a way there was. And Sherwood Anderson came to it.

The world crisis of capitalism has radically changed the entire course of American culture and art. Before the war only single individuals like Upton Sinclair came out against bourgeois society, against the killing pressure of capitalist civilization.

At the begnning of this century Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair took up the cudgels against accomodational literature. They were lone warriors. After the war they were joined by a whole group of petty-bourgeois rebels: Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis, Edgar Lee Masters, etc. In 1928 Theodore Dreiser published his book *Dreiser Looks at Russia* and gave a generally favorable report on socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. Three years later Dreiser published his unchallenged indictment of American capitalism—*Tragic America.* Dreiser collected a vast amount of statistical material and facts on the suffering of the proletariat, the venality of the press, the preying of the trusts and banks.

The bourgeois press could not ignore this book. "Capitalism in modern America is bankrupt,"—this conclusion of Dreiser's was supported by the best representatives of intelligent America—John Dos Passos, Sherwood Anderson, and other noted American writers who united around Dreiser and took a direct part in the miners' strike at Harlan. The result of this was a book *Harlan Miners Speak* published in New York in 1932. This book is the first revolutionary document of American literature and marks a turning point in the development of the American intelligentsia. No more do solitary figures give their impressions of the class-struggle like Upton Sinclair in the *Jungle.* No longer do solitary figures attempt to tell the truth. The American intelligentsia now has a whole group of writers who were not afraid to go to the very center of the class struggle, run the gauntlet together with the workers, be subjected to beatings and provocation.

The deepening of the crisis of capitalism and the success of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. were the basis for the mass character of the movement of the revolutionary intelligentsia, for the foremost ranks of petty bourgeois intelligentsia going over from criticism of capitalism for the sake of preserving it, to a struggle against it, for their occupying a revolutionary position. The presidential campaign in the last part of 1932 called to life a new revolutionary organization of the American intelligentsia, The League of Professional Groups for the Support of Foster and Ford. Originating as a temporary organization the League has become a permanent one which speaks for the stability of the revolutionary enthusiasm of the American intelligentsia. Some of the most important writers are members of the League. Dos Passos, Sherwood Anderson, Waldo Frank, etc. But among the members of the League are writers who have not previously taken any part in the revolutionary movement and were firmly connected with the bourgeois-liberal movement, like Malcolm Cowley, etc. The working class is taking the best writers away from capitalism. And now, the best people in America, the brains of the country, its artists, scientists, writers, poets, critics, creators of culture and civilization say: "There is a way out!" Here is what 53 representatives of the American intelligentsia say in the pamphlet *"Culture and the Crisis":*

"In the interests of human society, in which all forms of exploitation will be destroyed for the sake of a new cultural renascense, which will bring wholesome creative personalities, we call upon all men and women engaged in mental work to join the revolutionary struggle against capitalism under the leadership of the Communist Party."

The American intelligentsia, for the first time in history, has come over from a struggle of isolated figures, small groups, to a real mass struggle together with the

working class for a new order, for a new culture, for a new art of revolutionary truthfulness.

Sherwood Anderson did not keep aloof from this movement, he was one of the active participants and signed all the most important documents. More than that. He comes out independently. Little of the contemplative attitude of the past is left. The artist has turned into a warrior. When the movement of the veterans of the World War began in America, Sherwood Anderson with a group of writers goes to the President of the United States to demand an interview. The secretary came out, hinting clearly to them that it was not their business to meddle in political matters and conducted them out of the White House. Sherwood Anderson writes an open letter then in the *Nation:* "Listen Mr. President."

In it he says: "With my own eyes I saw: fathers of families searching garbage cans in American city streets; people thrown out of their homes and for weeks sleeping on park-benches, in parks, in the mud under bridges. The vast majority paupers, new in the art of begging." Sherwood Anderson underlines that he is not a radical at all, simply a novelist. "I should like to give all my time, thought and energy to literary work. But it is impossible."

Yes, it has become impossible for Anderson, who even took part in the Amsterdam anti-war congress and then wrote about it in the *New Masses.* The artist has at last become a warrior. He writes in the *Student Review* that "we writers must come more and oftener among workers, live with them, enter into their life." He has understood at last that here, in the working class there is the force that will change this world. And he declares in "Notes of a Writer" also in the *New Masses:* "If the struggle for the liberation of humanity from the yoke of capitalism will require the disappearance of our class—let it. To hell with us! It is not necessary that workers should die on account of us. We shall outlive it. We shall wade through it. And in the end we shall be healthier and better if we will now get it in the neck together with the workers."

Of course the class to which Sherwood Anderson belongs does not have to disappear, but how much proud certainty rings in these words of the writer! A new power has come to them. They may beat us, they may persecute us together with the workers—it will be to our benefit, it will educate us, make us braver. This is what the writer now says who a while ago only silently and in horror contemplated the life of his small people.

The novel *Beyond Desire* marks a turning point in Anderson's development and is closely connected with his revolutionary position. Sherwood Anderson is unable to render the life and work of communist workers, he only sketches them with hasty strokes leaving them fleshless and vague. The artist feels as if cramped, and avoids what is evidently little known to him, although he is by no means a stranger to it.

But the novel, at the same time, reveals a new Anderson. Anderson never wrote about labor and work, although the hardships of labor under capitalism are the most vivid expression of the workers' condition there. Anderson was more interested in people generally and their sufferings, which is why the main point in exposing capitalism escaped him. In this novel, the artist with greater knowledge and vivid mastery describes the curse of toiling for others, the hardships and slavery of involuntary labor in a capitalist factory. The endless work day, the terribly exhausting labor, the defenselessness in the absence of any worker's organisation—all finds its place in the book. The artist pays much attention to his worker heroes, and tells of their life with tremendous sympathy and love. He brings many characters into the story as if it were made up of many stories.

Doris Grave and Nell is the first group of people. Their world is very narrow, their existence gloomy, their days monotonous, their years severe, and their joys few. They toil on without a glint of light or hope in order to gain by this a poor and

meagre livelihood. Earlier Anderson only vaguely hinted at those guilty for such lives. Now there are no two ways about it. The factory is what suffocates them. The capitalist who draws out their souls. Bourgeois society that condemns them to this existence. But they are human and not just slaves. One of Anderson's great virtues is that he could show that among these crushed and oppressed people genuine comradeship, love and mutual help flourish. The picture of these three working women is deeply human, permeated by a great love for them by the author. The figure of Molly is excellently drawn, filled with weariness, caught in the woof of the mill, crushed by the machinery, she works, works, works to her last breath, her last drop of blood. She is still connected with the farm and spends her free days at farm work, but she has broken away from the idiocy of farm existence under capitalism, is not afraid of "the law," helps the communists, stands up for the strike, for struggle, although she does not know exactly what communism is, what a revolution is like. But she sees and knows what the factory is, she knows by her own experience what labor under capitalism means. And this is of most importance to her; it educates her and transforms her, it brings her into sympathy with communism.

Something altogether different is Red Oliver, recalling Norman McGregor of *Marching Men* but without having gone through the same severe school of life. He is a man forever hesitating and uncertain. This is the principal trait of his character. Although a worker, he is a typical intellectual in ideology, behaviour and frame of mind. He does not know that only one thing is needed—to act. And act is the one thing he cannot do. Red Oliver gradually overcomes his "aloof" position, although to the very last he does not get to a clear understanding of his place in the world. He joins the side of the workers when the battle is declared. And dies from a bullet of one of the officers. Red Oliver's death is his act by means of which he goes over to the side of the workers, his step "beyond desire." Action is a phase of desire, this is the main idea of Anderson's novel. His novel is both desire (and this mostly) and action. There is still no synthesis. The artist does not yet know well the people who act and desire, which is why he chose for his central figure Red Oliver, who desires but does not yet act. This partly cramps the novel, makes it less ample. In spite of this however, *Beyond Desire* is not only a document of the creative tranformation of Anderson but also one towards the development of American revolutionary literature.

Sherwood Anderson is on the right road.

Translated from the Russian by S. D. Kogan

S. Ludkiewicz

The Anti-Fascist Cultural Front

The radicalization of the intelligentsia in capitalist countries, which is an integral part of the general revolutionary movement, is now entering a new phase. This new phase is clearly mirrored in the growing wave of the antifascist cultural movement in the front ranks of which are revolutionary writers and their organisations and groups. The crowded meetings and conferences recently held under the auspices of revolutionary literary organisations in France, America, Spain, and even in little Holland, with the participation of great numbers of intellectuals who heretofore had taken almost no part in the political and public life of their respective countries, are an objective indication of the perspectives of the antifascist cultural movement. We have here, without question, a great mass movement which affords the best possible reflection of the ascending curve of the international revolutionary movement that has gone on in these recent years in the crucible of stirring experiences.

The establishment of fascism in Italy—of the fascism of the relative stabilization of the capitalist system which then began—due to a number of circumstances could not serve as an adequate stimulus for the unfolding of the mass antifascist cultural movement. This stimulus was given by the victory of fascism in Germany—of the fascism of the epoch of the universal crisis of the capitalist system; of the epoch of monstrous unemployment and pauperization of not only the masses of workers and peasants but also of wide strata of the intelligentsia, in particular of those active on the cultural front. This, however, is far from being the only difference. Italian fascism came into power at a time when the USSR had not yet recovered from the wreck and ruin caused by the imperialist and civil wars; when even the old factories and mills had not yet been reopened, and when the superiority of the Soviet system could not as yet be visually demonstrated to the workers of Western Europe and America. But German fascism came into power in the epoch of swift development of Soviet construction, of monumental achievements by the Soviet system in all branches of economic and cultural life that are becoming more and more patent to toilers the world over. The advent of fascist rule in Germany is the last attempt of the German bourgeoisie to counteract the penetration of the ideas and influence of the Soviet system; the advent of fascist rule signifies not decline of the revolutionary movement of the German proletariat but its rise, albeit as yet inadequate for winning the victory in this historic encounter. Even the meager information trickling through from Germany indicates quite definitely that the majority of the class-conscious elements of the German proletariat are only now realizing, from their own experience, the mendacity of the ideas and practices of the German social-democracy, the entirely bourgeois character of all its "historic" principles, and the whole banefulness of its vaunted theory of the "lesser evil". It is a fact fully admitted by the German fascists themselves, that the only active fighting force against the Hitler regime to-day is the Communist Party! It is also true that in its name, under its leadership and banner, are fighting not alone the old Communist members of the legal CPG of yesterday. In its militant ranks to-day are not a few of the former social-democratic workers who only now, amid sore trials, have found in themselves the will and resolution for revolutionary action. In the fight against fascism the German working class regains those forces which not long ago were paralysed by parliamentary traditions and by the eminently pernicious legal forms of the labour movement. Active part in this fight against fascism is taken by considerable strata of the German intelligentsia, consisting in the first place of those literati and

artists who were grouped around the "Union of German Proletarian Writers," one of the leading sections of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers.

The reorganization of the IURW and of its sections, which was directly connected with the liquidation of the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers, has created all the possibilities for the direction of these elements by the German "Union".

Unquestionably, the RAPP in the past has exercized a tremendous influence on the development of proletarian literature far beyond the borders of the USSR; nevertheless, its eventual degeneration into a clearly sectarian group became a handicap not alone to the direct participation of Soviet writers in socialist construction, but also to the attraction of wide circles of writers to active participation in the revolutionary literature of the capitalist countries. The liquidation of the RAPP tendences which did not take stock of different roads of individual writers towards the revolutionary movement, the liquidation of stipulations contrary to revolutionary Marxism for the application of an alleged "dialectico-materialist art method", has found its reflection in the turning of many progressive German writers towards the German "Union".

Notwithstanding the fact that the importance of this turning was for a long time not fully realized by the German Union of Proletarian Writers, the liquidation of the old traditions has exercized tremendous influence on literary circles in Germany, and the present situation in Germany, against the background of the Hitler regime, gives conclusive confirmation of the accuracy of the policy of the German "Union".

The Union of Proletarian Writers continues to exists in Germany, although some of the writers are either imprisoned or confined to concentration camps /Renn, Bredel, Wittfogel, etc./, while others, including some of the most prominent proletarian writers /Becher, Ottwald, Kisch, Brecht, Brentano, Weinert, Seghers, Klaeber, etc./ are in emigration. With the aid of terror the fascists have succeeded in bringing down to their knees all the leaders of the social-democratic and "liberal intelligentsia", all the parties without exception, including the S.D. It is nevertheless a fact that even to-day in fascist Germany, in an atmosphere of medieval tortures and brutalities, the really progressive strata of the literary and artistic intelligentsia—even those who are far from being "hundred percent Marxian" and from subscribing to the Communist Party—did not and do not turn back upon their sympathies for the USSR and for the revolutionary ideals of the proletariat. As distinguished from a multitude of SD leaders big and little, not a single writer or artist of renown has bent the knee before the fascist time-servers nor departed from his course. Does not this demonstrate the fact that behind the seeming force of fascism is hidden its real, historically predetermined intrinsic weakness, the weakness of the dying class!

The definite revolutionary positions taken up—already under Hitlerite rule—by such eminent German writers as Oskar Maria Graf, Theodor Plivier, and many others, has shown the whole futility of the frantic appeals made by Goebbels to "the most gifted German writers whose works were not consigned to the flames of the auto-da-fe." By the way, the notorious "Hugenberg Memorandum" would not have been officially made public in London, had the fascists really "succeeded" in putting down Marxism and Communism in Germany, so that it would have been "only" a question of putting down "Soviet Communism"! Indeed, the Hugenberg Memorandum has shown, and the increased terror has further emphasized the fact, that the fascist terror against the revolutionary camp has failed to bring the results anticipated by the fascists.

We Need an Ideological Basis

The establishment of the fascist regime in Germany has exercized a tremendous effect upon those advanced cultural strata far beyond the borders of Germany who until quite lately were prepared to consider the position of the revolutionary movement that

was expressed in the slogan of 'Communism versus Fascism' as a mere "hoax" on the part of the Communists.

The practices of German fascism have turned these circles towards the antifascist cultural front, but the further development of this movement will depend upon the deepening of its ideological basis.

The antifascist cultural movement at the beginning of Italian fascism could not acquire adequate development, chiefly because of the entire political and economic situation of the capitalist world that was so different then from what it is to-day. Naturally, this decisive factor was agravated by a number of secondary factors which had no specific bearing upon the intelligentsia. For instance, the progressive Western intelligentsia at that time yielded to some extent to the "romantic" lure of Italian fascism which, for its own grossly utilitarian purposes, had appealed to the old spirit of Roman culture and Roman art and advocated a return to the epoch of the Renaissance. Italian fascism, in the theatrical garb of a provincial actor, essayed at least to neutralize the attitude towards it on the part of progressive cultural circles in Europe by cajoling the doubters and the skeptics with a "rebirth" of names cherished by cultured humanity—of Horatius and Dante, Scipio, Julius Caesar, and Leonardo da Vinci. A decrepit old world was hoping to experience its second cultural youth!

There are no such weapons in the armoury of German fascism. It is the product of an international situation that has drastically changed; the short-lived and the last flush of a dying world. German fascism has no time even to neutralize the doubters, and it therefore endeavours to act resolutely and quickly. The unbridled terror, the brutal torturing of all political opponents, the barbarous campaign even against bourgeois, yet more progressive representatives of science, culture, and art, the zoological antisemitism,—all of these practices of German fascism carried on under the slogan of German nationalist and chauvinist ideals, were bound to rouse cultural elements all over the world. At the same time these circles—not only from works of Soviet literature and art and from personal acquaintance with Soviet writers and artists, but from the experiences of visits to the Soviet Union—have seen with their own eyes how the victorious proletariat stands guard for the real achievements of science, culture, and civilization, giving the lie to all the torrents of lies and calumnies. The active participation in Soviet life by the academicians Pavlov and Oldenburg and other eminent scientists; by outstanding writers of the older generation like Alexei Tolstoy, Marietta Shaginyan and others; by foremost masters o fthe drama and the stage like Stanislavsky, Kachalov and others—by world-famous names of pre-revolutionary Russia—has demonstrated to these circles that the revolutionary proletariat, far from disowning the great masters of culture, encourages their work and has given them ample time for inward readjustment to the new conditions of life and activity. This the proletariat could afford to do, being conscious that its cause is the only true and just one.

That is why under the banners of the struggle against fascism and for the defence of the USSR there were lately formed in a number of countries new antifascist unions of diverse strata of the intelligentsia: architects, physicians, lawyers, teachers, students, and so on. The rallying centres for these forces of the antifascist cultural front should become, even to a greater extent than hitherto, the revolutionary writers' organizations which unquestionably constitute the vanguard of this front.

Revolutionary writers, frequently world-famous and in many cases descendants of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois circles, having rallied to the revolutionary proletarian movement, have forthwith joined the immediate struggle of the proletariat for the revolution, against capitalism, against fascism. And it could not have been otherwise. The rejection of the individualistic propensities that are particularly strong in writers, coming as the result of ideological realignment, was bound to induce them to seek communion with the class they have now made up their mind to serve, to seek in the working

class the true support for their future work and activity. Hence their active participation in the common front of the revolutionary struggle, and in the revolutionary writers' organizations to begin with.

The Revolutionary Vanguard

Yet it would never do to forget or to underrate the fact that the decisive factor for many writers in choosing the future line of political and creative activity has been the existence of a strong and united body of proletarian writers who have gone through the school of the immediate revolutionary struggle and have managed, on one hand, to attract new forces of proletarian and peasant writers, and on the other, to resist the widespread practice of "utilizing names". We refer to the practice whereby a prominent writer became only an object of political campaigns, when his signature was merely wanted under one or another manifesto or public protest; when it was declared in advance that "so-and-so could not be expected to turn revolutionary" and that it was not consequently worth while to hunt after his "soul". This practice has done a lot of harm in the past, and should no more be repeated.

To the old champions of the revolutionary literary movement, such as Romain Rolland, Henri Barbusse, Charles Wildrac, Paul Vaillant-Couturier, in France; Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, John Dos Passos, Waldo Frank and others in U.S.A.; Martin Andersen Nexo in Scandinavia; Lu-Sin, Komako, in China; Fudjimori, Tokunaga, in Japan; to the names of others prominent in world literature, with the aforementioned names of German proletarian writers at their head, there were added during the last few months alone new names of prominent masters of literature, and whole groups. Thus, the revolutionary literary camp was recently joined by André Gide, who forthwith threw himself wholeheartedly into the service of the proletarian revolution and is already to-day an active fighter in its ranks. There drew to this camp but a few weeks ago Victor Marguérite, who not very long before had raised his voice in support of one of the latest hoaxes of French imperialism, the organization of an "international police". This time "the son of General Marguerite, and an ex-officer himself" has come out openly against French imperialism, and for the cause of the working class. Four months ago the revolutionary literary movement was joined by the group of French surrealists which had so long been clinging to its "independence". The actual heterogeneity of this group—aside from a few common external traits—permits one to assume that the best elements among the surrealists will completely eschew their characteristic high-falutin' talk in which they indulge in order to "startle the bourgeoisie" (*pour éparer la bourgeoisie*) and will find their way to the true course of revolutionary realism that was found by Louis Aragon before them.

A few weeks ago the revolutionary literary movement was joined by the newly organized group of Spanish writers issuing *October,* headed by the poet Alberti and by the novelists Arderius, Arconada, and Ramon Sender, of whom the latter, by his own confession, recently arrived in Moscow as an "intellectual" and left as a "soldier of the revolution". In America the new quarterly *The Anvil* and its group, (formerly the "Rebel Poets") and also *Left Front*, of the Chicago John Reed Club, have appeared. Literally every day that passes brings reports of fresh recruits to the revolutionary movement from among writers who occupy a considerable place in the literary movement of their respective country, like Jean Cassou and Henry Malraux in France, the Spanish poet Emilo Prados, and so on. Most important of all is the fact, however, that at the present time new fighters have joined the young forces of proletarian literature who are creating new revolutionary works, who are taking an active part in the antifascist cultural movement, and who gather beneath their banners large numbers of budding writers and poets directly from among the proletarian and peasant masses.

The names of Michael Gold, Jack Conroy, Robert Cruden, Joseph Kalar in the U.S.A., of Last in Holland; of Hoch and El Kara, Ilemnicka and Vcelicka in Czechoslovakia; and hundreds of other names in all countries throughout the world, are the best proof of the strengthening of the proletarian writers' movement. It is for this reason that, against the background of the general development of the revolutionary movement, the revolutionary writers possess at present powerful organizations in a number of countries. These are: about thirty John Redd Clubs, the Federation of Revolutionary Writers (mostly of national minorities), the League of Professional Groups, etc. In U.S.A.; the Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists in France; the Unions of Revolutionary Writers in Holland, Spain, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia; the Art Clubs in Canada; the League of Left Writers in China; the Union of Proletarian Writers in Japan, and a number of organizations and groups in various countries which have really gained commanding positions on the antifascist cultural front.

The activities of all these organizations are carried on under different political conditions; hence the difference in their methods.

Thus, for instance, the French Association of Revolutionary Writers has developed exceptionally vigorous activity in late months which was by no means limited to the holding of frequent meetings and creative discussions. The French writers are taking an active part at the present time in conducting the Chairs of Literature and Art in the recently founded Workers' University at Paris; and with their assistance there was recently organized a big contest of work by worker- and peasant-correspondents which brought in 30 books by young hitherto unknown worker-correspondents. Nearly every ten days they issue their militant little sheet *Feuille Rouge* that is dedicated each time to some actual problem of the revolutionary or cultural movement. Thus, during the last strike in the Citroën Works the current number of *Feuille Rouge* was issued and the thousands of Citroën workers became convinced that their struggle had the support of the most illustrious names among men of culture in France, led by Romain Rolland, Barbusse, Gide, and others whose appeals were published in the little journal. Special issues are dedicated to the struggle against French imperialism on the cultural front.

On the other hand, in countries where the revolutionary literary movement is either underground or semi-legal, extensive antifascist activity is carried on which transcends far beyond the limits of literary organization. This applies first of all to Eastern countries like Japan and China.

Despite the fact that the majority of prominent revolutionary writers in Japan together with scores of professors and hundreds of students are languishing in jails; despite ruthless persecution by the capitalist courts, and the murder of individual writers by hired thugs (like the recent assassination of the proletarian writer Takidji Kobayashi), —the Japanese revolutionary literary movement carries aloft the banner of the revolutionary cultural front. Hundreds of workers' and peasants' literary circles, alongside of a multitude of workers' cultural organizations and revolutionary theatrical groups, are carrying on a stubborn and systematic struggle.

The Chinese revolutionary writers, working under about the same conditions as those in Japan, (e.g. the recent murders of the young talented writers Ting-Ling and Ying Shu-jen), are nevertheless constantly breaking fresh ground. Although their own literary magazine is banned at present, lately in most of the literary magazines of left bourgeois tendency there appeared works by members of the League—Lu Sin, Sha Tin, and others; the Chinese theatres are producing the plays of Tyan-Hani, while *True Life* by Lu Sin and *Spring Silkworms* by Mau Tung have been filmed and are now shown on the Chinese cinema screen.

This advance of Chinese revolutionary literature has been due to the wave of radicali-

zation among the Chinese intelligentsia. This advance shows also the high creative positions held by the revolutionary literary movement in China.

Under the leadership of revolutionary literary organizations is also a considerable number of journals and magazines with large circulations, like the American *New Masses, Anvil* and *Left Front;* the Canadian *Masses;* the Dutch *Linksrichten*; the Bulgarian *Zvezda /Star/* and *Front;* the Czech *Tvorba /Labor/,* the Slovak *Dav /Struggle/;* the Japanese *Proletarian Literature* and *Literary Gazette;* the Polish *Chronika,* and so on. Only during the last months, in connection with the developing antifascist revolutionary movement, there sprung up a number of new literary journals: *Storm* in England; *Red World* in Sweden; *October* in Spain; and *Commune* in France. All these journals not only reflect the creative activities of individual writers, but they also serve as new rallying centres of forces on the revolutionary antifascist front.

Dangers Which Threaten Our Movement

Yet, in order that this advance should not slide off in the wrong direction, in order that the fresh intellectual elements drawn into the movement, sometimes spontaneously, might be really retained, it is necessary to point out the dangers which threaten this movement. This is particularly true of the antifascist movement in countries like England, France and America. To be sure, the imperialist camp in these countries finds it advantageous to-day to shout about German fascism, because it is above all a question of dealing with an old imperialist competitor. Liberals and groups of Conservatives in England, bourgeois parties in France, etc., are doing their utmost to make use of the mighty wave of the antifascist movement primarily as an anti-German movement; in contrasting their "democracy" with "barbarous fascism", they endeavour in every way to arouse and strengthen national animus against Germany as a possible opponent in a future war. At least, the immediate aim of the imperialist powers of the former Entente is to weaken Germany's claims against the Treaty of Versailles. But the imperialists are pursuing a far more substantial and important purpose in "supporting" the typical petty-bourgeois hue-and-cry about fascism: to conceal their own fascism from the toiling masses in their own country; to weaken the vigilance of the toiling masses and of the large strata of the intelligentsia in regard to their own progress towards a fascism that will possibly not differ in form from the German fascism, towards bourgeois terror and the brutal suppression of the revolutionary movement of the working class. Herein lies the root of the "support" to the antifascist cultural movement by a section of the "democracy" which is trying to influence the less wary intellectual elements in this movement who have not yet emancipated themselves from the spell of their nationalistic past.

Furthermore, the social-democratic parties of the Second International are also trying to make some political capital for themselves out of this antifascist wave. And this must be taken into consideration. Of course, the miserable fiasco and complete bankruptcy of the German SPD has exercized, and will exercize in the near future, a decisive effect upon the masses of the workers in other capitalist countries. The present pilght c. the German SD worker, who had trusted so implicitly in the stability of his trade-union and of his Social-Democratic party, is unquestionably an object lesson which cause the French or the English worker to think furiously about the methods pursued by his own Social Democratic party. We are not going to dwell here upon some of the differences of methods as between the German and the other Social Democratic parties. But we will draw attention to one point. Whereas before the imperialist war the German social-democracy—both theoretically and organizationally the strongest—had played a decisive role in the 2nd International, it has no longer played this role after the war, although it has remained not only the strongest section of the 2nd International, but has also decidedly "gone ahead" of all the other Social

Democratic parties. The reason for this is quite clear. The German social-democracy was the party of the COUNTRY THAT WAS VANQUISHED IN THE WAR, AS AGAINST THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIES OF THE VICTOR COUNTRIES. There were such simpletons who would not see that the whole "internationalism" of this so-called "International" consisted in official concealment of the nationalistic imperialist antagonism existing between the national sections of the 2nd International, those agencies of their respective bourgeoisies. The SP in Poland supported the bourgeoisie in resisting the demands of the German SDP and bourgeoisie for the return of the Polish Corridor and Upper Silesia; the French SP was not averse to retaining the Saar district "for a more extended period", and so on. In fact, the present position of the German SDP is rather to the advantage of the Versaille social-democrats, because they can now support the interests of their respective bourgeoisies against the revision of the Versaille Treaty under the mask of "combatting the fascist regime in Germany." Many were the reproaches made by the bourgeoisie of the victor countries to their social-democracies (coupled with the withdrawing of subsidies and other boons) when, say, at the head of the German Government were their "comrades" from the 2nd International, while they had to labouriously contrive some non-committal common-place formula "upon an internationalist basis". After the self-destruction of the German SDP these "difficulties" have gone, and the parties of the 2nd International feel quite at ease in their nationalist agitation against Germany, for to-day it constitutes an "antifascist agitation".

The revolutionary literary and cultural antifascist front—to which feelers are now being extended by the "also" antifascist Social-Democracy—must be kept fully alive to the essential position existing in the 2nd International at the present moment, namely to the continued fascization of the Socialist Parties which is even more profound than heretofore.

The so-called bourgeois-democratic camp tends towards fascism first of all because it can no longer govern in "the good old way", being apprehensive of the growth of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. For, not alone the bourgeoisie, but also the toiling masses know and see from the example of the USSR, that the working class can successfully govern the country without the help of the bourgeoisie and the landlords. But the "honest and unbribable" social-democrats who are detailed by the bourgeoisie for activity on the cultural front are convinced that the working class is "not yet ripe for government," and for this reason they have to support the rule of capital "for the time being". But do they not see the fascism of their own country; do they not see how the temporary triumph of Hitlerism in Germany has bolstered up the hopes of the bourgeoisie throughout the world? Of course, they do. But since these "honest", and at times "left", social-democrats "do not see the possibility" for the establishment of collectivist society, they feel "constrained" to support capitalism and its fascism. Thus, the theory and practice of the "lesser evil" has entered into a new phase. Now to the SD parties of the 2nd International, fascism officially constitutes the "lesser evil" as against "the greatest evil, Communism". Nevertheless the SD parties of the 2nd International, of course, do not care to share the fate of the German SD. If German fascism, due to specific conditions, and above all to the existence of a huge mass of workers with consciously anti-capitalist sentiments, who honestly believe in the special ways of the German SD, had to resort to brutal terror also against these SD workers, the remaining parties of the 2nd International are going to "take these lessons into account." They are prepared at this time to aid and support the fascism of their respective country that appears to them to be inevitable, on condition that they shall not be thrown overboard. And for this reason they are indeed prepared to "struggle" for other forms of fascism, different from those of the German variety, which would enable them to lead the masses that follow them into the fold of fascism.

Ramsay MacDonald has once more become the idol of the 2nd International! Thus the last stage in the evolution of the 2nd International is taking place.

Thus, the revolutionary antifascist cultural front cannot become truly antifascist unless it takes full stock of all the dangers ahead and shakes off from its shoulders the uncalled for "also antifascist friends" from the bourgeois SD camp.

Lately Trotsky has also become active on the cultural front. Finding no followers among the working class, Trotsky turned his attention to the "activity among the intelligentsia", trying to intercept intellectuals of radical leanings and sidetrack their sympathies from the USSR. Trotsky and his supporters stick at no means in this agitation. They point to the difficulties of the growth of the new world in the USSR and extol his own, Trotsky's "pure" communism, "unvulgarized" by a real content and by a real material basis. Needless to say, in nearly all the countries where the revolutionary movement has been driven underground, the Trotsky supporters are allowed legal possibilities to carry on their activity; for it is directed in the first place against the USSR and the communist parties.

Our Soviet Writers

Nevertheless, in spite of all obstacles, the progressive cultural world is getting better and better acquainted with the achievements of the USSR.

The works of Soviet writers depicting the construction of the new world, the critical analyses by Soviet Marxists who champion revolutionary Marxian ideas, unquestionably take a leading place in the ideological struggle against fascism.

The names of Gorky, Gladkov, Sholokhov, Panferov, Fadeyev, Stavsky, Bezymensky, and of many others, are now quite familiar to vast multitudes of people throughout the world. The Soviet writers, having thrown themselves wholeheartedly into the struggle of the toiling masses of the USSR for the building of the new world, of the world based upon the sacred right of public property, are contributing a wealth of new ideological content to the militant antifascist struggle. The works of Soviet writers which portray the making of the new man who is free from the trammels of private property, nationalism, religious superstition, and other products of the capitalist world, who is shedding a multitude of petty habits and traditions of the bourgeois world,—these works preserve forever the whole historic significance of the epoch through which we are passing.

The antifascist cultural front to-day does not merely follow a negative course. For in its front ranks are the militant forces of the Soviet writers and artists who help every individual writer and artist in the capitalist countries to find the way to his own re-education.

But in order that Soviet writers and critics should be able to render even greater services to the international revolutionary literary movement it is necessary for them to get into closer touch with literary movements in the West and which he international revolutionary literary movement as a whole.

Translated from the Russian by Michael L. Korr

Walt Carmon

Helios Gomez

Working Class Artist of Spain

> *"Although in general I do not like the style of hieroglyphic, pseudo-cubist art, of which Helios Gomez is a semi-servant (he is not that always, he vaccilates, attempting to harmonize two diverse formulas of art) I must admit publicly that in it there is a vigor of accent, a heroism of line and rhythm that make some of his drawings approach grandeur . . . In all his work there are irresistable dynamics: it is an art in motion, breathing action. Underneath his hard lines one feels a torrent raging." . . .*
>
> *Romain Rolland.*

I attended an exhibit of Helios Gomez's work at the Fine Arts Museum in Moscow. The drawings were hung on a balcony between rooms of ancient Greek statuary and Church art of the middle ages. The vibrant bold art of this young Spanish artist nearly shouted its message in this classic-churchly atmosphere.

There is something of this vitality in the artist himself. He is a nervous, high-strung youth. But this energy is a disciplined torrent now guided by Communist conviction and aimed at the enemies of the working class.

Helioz Gomez is the son of an Anarchist worker. In protest against religious tradition his father named him Helios— a pagan name for sun. From early childhood he was imbued with a hatred for the Church, which in Spain particularly, held the working class as in a vise. Many of Gomez's most effective drawings reflect this anti-religious inheritance. In the series reproduced in these pages, the drawings of the monks operating a machine gun against revolting workers, like the other drawings, are taken from recent incidents in the class struggle in Spain. Gomez, the artist is a revolutionary participant.

Helios Gomez

At the age of 14, Helios Gomez was a ceramic worker. Many women, viciously exploited, were employed in this industry. A rebel almost from infancy, he was soon involved in a strike. At the age of 15 he was already in prison for his activities. He learned to make his first drawings there.

Leisure for further studies was provided him by the government in other prisons where he repeatedly found himself for his working class activities.

All this time, however, he was still an anarcho-sydicalist. An honest fighter against working class oppression, but essentially an individualistic one. In 1927, following the Rivera dictatorship he was forced to leave Spain. In 1928 he was deported from Belgium. His firm convictions and boundless energy drove him into continued working class activity.

Finally in 1929, he witnessed the May Day demonstration in Berlin. He tells the story of his acceptance of Communism:

"While workers were being shot down in a demonstration in the streets of Berlin before my very eyes, my Anarchist friends were reciting poems in the cafes. There was nothing left for me to do but join those who were in the forefront of the struggle."

Meanwhile he matured quickly into an artist of standing. He ran the gamut of art schools, cubism, constructivism, surrealism. Never into pure abstraction however. In his early black and white drawings, water-colors and paintings, there is always an adherence to life. He was too responsive to the world about him to run off into a vacuum. He drew street scenes, bull-fighters, peasants, workers. And as his understanding clarified and the artist in him matured, his drawings took on a more definite social character of the working class fighter. His fine art could now also be devoted to the propaganda poster, to a subsciption appeal for the revolutionary press.

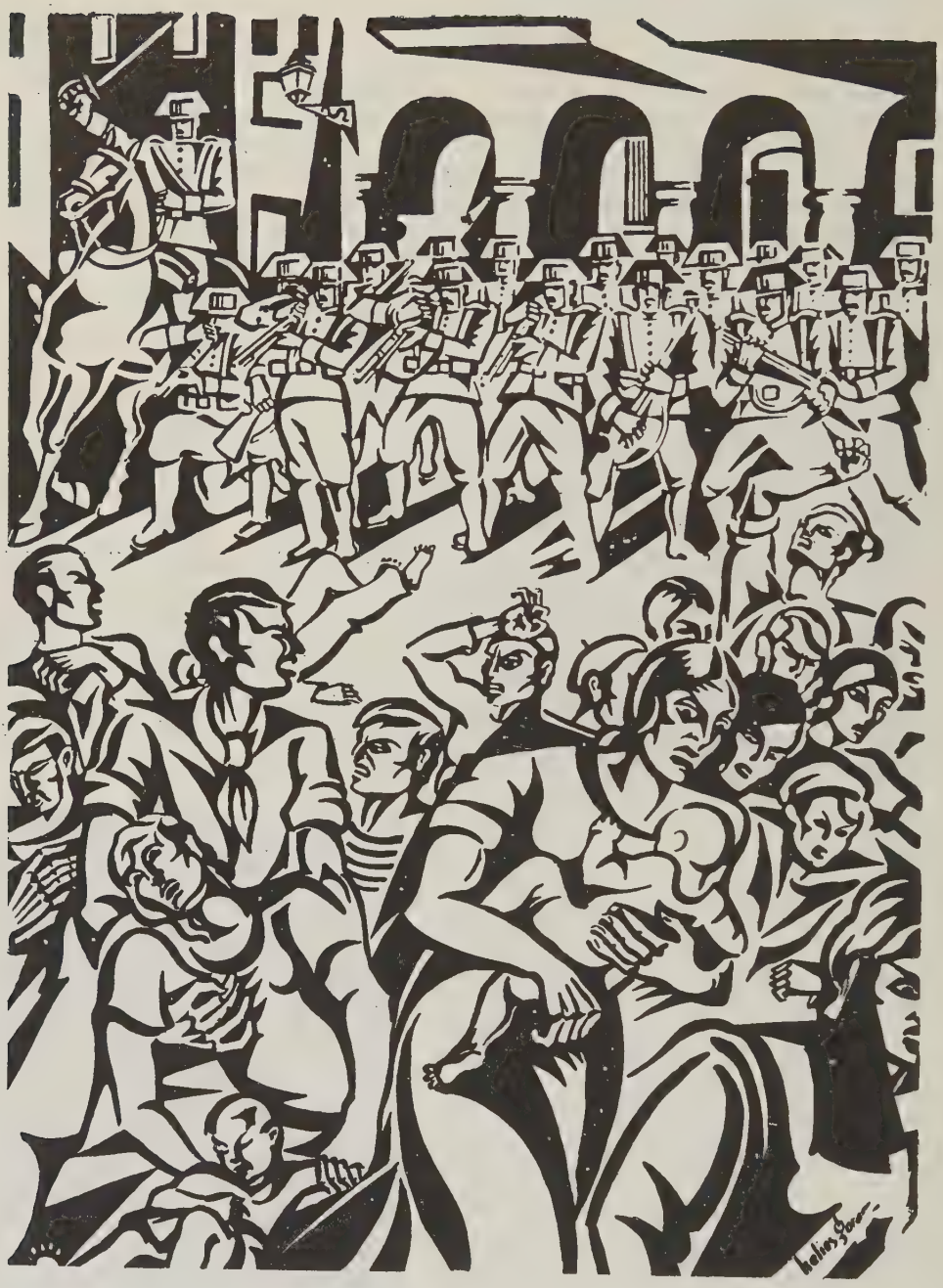
His work received increasing attention. He exhibited in France, Belgium and Germany. On his return to Spain, in Barcelona and Madrid. The Spanish press devoted a great deal of attention to the work of this young revolutionary artist.

But Gomez returned to Spain to become a member of the staff of the Communist paper *Mundo Obrero (Workers World)*. He witnessed the incidents which inspired the following revolutionary drawings. These are now being issued in book form in Moscow and Paris with a foreword by the noted French writer Louis Aragon. Romain Rolland wrote the foreword for his first book of drawings issued by the W.I.R. in Berlin.

Meanwhile many of Gomez's drawings are being shown in Moscow galleries. His striking poster in Moscow streets called Soviet workers to the great May Day demonstration. His revolutionary painting was shown at the recent Red Army exhibit. He is in close touch with the Revolutionary Writers and Artists of Spain (Spanish section of the IURW) and a contributor to their new publication *Octubre (October)*. He is also a member of the International Union of Revolutionary Artists.

Helios Gomez is still a young man. He is only 28. He has brought his boundless energy and talent to the service of the revolution.

SIX DRAWINGS BY HELIOS GOMEZ



At Arnedo: Murder of Peasants Demonstrating for Bread

Hunger Comes to Spain

In Madrid, 1931: Monks use Machine-guns Against the Workers

After the Miners' Strike in Catalonia: Deportation of Revolutionary Workers to Africa

Spanish Class War Prisoners

A Poster for Mundo Obrero *(Workers World) Reading: "Workers, Your Daily — 10 Centavos"*

LETTERS and DOCUMENTS

Marx and Engels to Lassalle

Introduction: From the editor's preface in Literary Heritage *of Moscow*

This collection of correspondence between Marx, Engels, and Lassalle concerning the latter's drama *Franz von Sickingen,* is of tremendous theoretical and political significance. This correspondence is exceedingly important for the solution of the basic problems in Marxist-Leninist literary criticism. The letters of Marx and Engels in reply to Lassalle are excellent documents left by the founders of Marxism showing a concrete example of a political, party approach to the problems of literature and esthetics. They show how Marx and Engels, in their esthetic criticism, in their treatment of the question of literary method, the relation of the specific to the general, the individual to his class, do not consider concrete political practice apart from the historical development of the class struggle, but on the contrary connect them intimately with the viewpoints of the author as representative of a definite class and a definite historical situation. They show conclusively that the abstract moralizing, the subjective treatment, of *Sickingen* by Lassalle are intimately bound up with his idealist, bourgeois-revolutionary viewpoint and is not proletarian. They also show what methods a revolutionary ideologist of a proletarian party would adopt in artistically presenting a tragedy of revolution.

Marx and Engels, in these letters, broach the question of the political allies of a party leading a revolution, of the relation of the individual, the "hero" to his class and expose the true class significance of the Caesarian historical conception of the hero in Sickingen who seemingly can manipulate social classes. The correctness of the analysis by Marx and Engels is further proved by the subsequent activity of Lassalle as organizer and leader of the workers' movement of the sixties, his Bonapartist tendencies to become the "Richelieu of the proletariat" (Marx), his alliance with Bismarck and his betrayal of the working class as substantiated by the publication of his letters to Bismarck.[1]

Lassalianism has long been a flag of opportunism, revisionism, renegades, and all kinds of distortions of Marxism. The slogan "back to Lasalle" has often been adopted, beginning with the Struve faction in Russia and ending with the social fascist of today, who in their "realistic policies," tactics of the "lesser evil," and defense of the capitalist order lean heavily on the "old and tried" tactics and theory of that prime opportunist—Lassalle. In the field of literature and esthetics, where Lassalle has always remained an idealist, the opportunists and revisionists also lean whenever possible on the opinions of Lassalle. The correspondence around *Sickingen* assumes a particular importance in clearing up the relations of Marx and Engels to Lassalle. This is the reason why, notwithstanding the relatively late publication of the Marx and Engels letters this discussion already has a rich literature. There seems to be no biography or other work on Lassalle, whether by Marxian or bourgeois authors, that does not devote a special chapter, or at least a few pages to this question. In this respect, the remark of the bourgeois biographer of Lassalle, Oncken, in 1923, is especially interesting: "And so, in *Sickingen* the social movement during the reformation and in our times recedes to the background before the idea of a united, spiritually free, and dukeless Germany. Such a development of the action as Lassalle gave could just as well have been the work of a bourgeois-democrat and not of a pupil of Marx. This the

[1] Gustav Mayer, *Bismarck und Lassalle, Gespräche und Briefe,* Berlin, Dietz 1928.

teacher felt keenly." [1] E. Bernstein occupied himself particularly with this discussion and it is characteristic that with his political evolution his views on *Sickingen* also change. It was Bernstein who first published Lassalle's long letter of March 6, 1859 on the tragic idea. Living in London after the German Social Democratic party paper *Sozial-Democrat* was prohibited, Bernstein was then entirely under the ideological guidance of Engels and was sharply opposed to Lassalle and Lassalianism. It was also Engels who turned over to him the letters to Karl Marx among which was the one of March 6. Bernstein at once published it in the *Neue Zeit* but without comments.[2] In the biographical study he criticises adversely Lassalles viewpoint in *Sickingen* and his esthetic opinions using almost word for word the language of the Marx and Engels letters. This coincidence can probably be explained by the fact that Engels told Bernstein his views on this drama. It is curious to note that in his criticism Bernstein blames Lassalle for emphasizing tendencies and too much "reflectiveness"—which proves that it was written under the influence of Engels. Bernstein gives an entirely different estimate of *Sickingen*, however, and of its author as well, in 1919 when he issued a new edition of Lassalle's works. Soon after the death of Engels, Bernstein becomes the leader of the revisionists and now, alas, he does not criticise Lassalle, he leans on him. Renegade and social-fascist, Bernstein writes about *Sickingen* in 1919: "*Franz von Sickingen* pictures an historical conflict of the XVI century which arises again in the nineteenth and which the twentieth century tries to solve anew in different fashion: it is the struggle for a united Germany against the claims of secular and church princes. Lassalle exalts Sickingen and his friend and counsellor Gutten as the heroes of this struggle that ended tragically on account of Sickingen's tactical (!) errors."[3] Referring to his views expressed in the biographical study of 1892-1893 Bernstein continues:

"Quoting the introduction to the biography, Lassalle commits an error in neglecting the causal relation between the mistakes of Sickingen mentioned and the fact that Sickingen and Gutten were representatives of a doomed class and were thus compelled in a way to adopt a policy which made success impossible. However, if we take the drama as it is, it develops that Lassalle, in bringing before his contemporary dreamers of a united indivisible Germany a picture of a previous unsuccessful struggle for this ideal, wanted to warn them from a repetition of the mistakes that led to Sickingen's defeat. The essence of these mistakes he exposes in a remarkable paper on the tragic idea underlying "*Franz von Sickingen*, deserving special attention at this time when the very conception of guilt with respect of political acts has grown uncertain."

Thus Lassalle's drama is now to serve as a shield for the patriotic worries of the social traitor Bernstein for the "fatherland."

Franz Mehring also has written a great deal about *Sickingen* in his *History of German Social Democracy*, the biography of Marx, and other works.. But Mehring also, notwithstanding his having been one of the leaders of the German "left" was unable to free himself to the very end of semi-menshevist views, particularly upon questions of literature and art. In dealing with the relations between Marx, Engels and Lassalle, he always defended Lassalle's tactics during the early days of the labor movement as opposed to those of Marx and Engels. In esthetics also Mehring leaned more toward Lassalle than Marx and Engels. His defense of Lassalle's literary methods, evaluation of the classics (especially Schiller), his underestimation of proletarian literature and a host of wrong principles in the theory of art bringing him closer to Kautsky, Trotsky and other centrists of the Second International before the war on these questions, are all due to Lassalian esthetics.

---

[1] H. Oncken, *Lassalle, Eine Politische Biographie*, Stuttgart, Berlin 1923. S. 153

[2] Ed. Bernstein, *Lassalle über die Grundidee seines Franz von Sickingen* (Neue Zeit, 1891, Bd II, S. 588-597.)

[3] Ferd. Lassalle, *Gesammelte Reden u. Schriften*. Hrsg. u. eingeleitet von Ed. Bernstein Bd. 1-XII Berlin, Cassirer, 1919.

Lassalianism, as theoretically presented and as practiced by Lassalle himself as well as by his most talented follower I. B. Schweitzer, was early and always sharply opposed by Lenin. In many articles Lenin shows the opportunism of this trend in the labor movement and exposes those ideologists of the Second International who either openly called for a return to Lassalle, or were just favorably disposed towards Lassalianism, leaving out, for instance, Marx and Engels' sharp criticism of Lassalle when publishing their posthumous works. Lenin in this respect sharply criticizes not only Bernstein but also Mehring. Lenin used the polemics of Marx and Engels against Lassalle in 1911 in "Basic Questions of the Election Campaign" when writing against the menshevik stand of U. Chatsky, L. Martov, and F. Dan, he says:

"It was 'left bloc' tactics, the union of the city 'plebs' (the modern proletariat) with the democratic peasantry which gave power and swing to the English revolution in the seventeenth and the French revolution in the eighteenth centuries. Marx and Engels pointed this out many times not only in 1848 but even much later. Not to quote what has already often been quoted, we shall recall the correspondence between Marx and Lassalle of 1859. With regard to Lassalle's tragedy *Sickingen* Marx wrote that the conflict shown in the drama is not only tragic, but is the same tragic conflict which was so effective in bringing about the wreck of the revolutionary party in 1848 and 1849.' And Marx, already indicating in the main the entire line of future disagreement between the Lassalians and Eisenachians, warned Lassalle that he is falling into error 'by putting the Lutheran-knightly opposition higher than the plebeian-Muntzer opposition.' We shall not enter into whether Marx is right or not in this warning: we think he is, although Lassalle defended himself energetically. What is important — both Marx and Lassalle considered it an evident mistake, absolutely inadmissible to a Social Democrat, to consider the 'Lutheran-knightly' (or liberal land-proprietor in terms of twentieth century Russia) opposition more important than the 'plebeian Munzter' (or proletarian-peasant in the same terms) opposition!" [1]

Lenin did not then have available the entire correspondence on this subject between Marx, Engels and Lassalle and only knew Marx' viewpoint from the quotations in Lassalle's letter. Lenin was also unaware of all the details of the relations between Lassalle and Bismarck. From the material available, however, Lenin with his genius correctly applied the analyses made by Marx and Engels in 1848, 1849 and 1859, of the revolutionary situations and balance of forces during previous revolutions, deepening the analyses and applying them to the revolutions of 1905 and 1917 — in the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution.

The discussion between Marx, Engels and Lassalle, and its application by Lenin are a brilliant page of the history of militant Marxism-Leninism fighting opportunism and idealist trends in the labor movement. Marxist-Leninist literary critics should learn from this concrete instance of a party approach to the question by the founders of scientific Socialism how to conduct an unrelenting struggle against the opponents of the proletarian literary movement. — *Editor Literary Heritage.*

Lassalle to Marx

Berlin, March 6, 1859

Dear Marx:

The very day I received your letter about Engels I answered, telling you I had arranged the matter and giving you the address to which you or he should send the manuscripts. I have heard nothing new on this matter so far. I hope the manuscripts will be received soon as in such matters delay is not advisable.

[1] Lenin, *Works*, Vol. XV, p. 347, Second Russian Edition.

I am enclosing three copies of my latest work for you, Freiligrath, and Engels. Please give the latter their copies as soon as possible.

I can imagine your surprise when you see a drama composed by me! Almost as great as my own when I hit upon the idea of writing it, or, to be more correct, when the idea hit me! Because it did not come as a product of free creation, which one decides upon, but as a compulsion which descended upon me and of which I could not get rid. I, who have not written a single lyric in my youth — suddenly a poet! I laughed at myself like mad when this idea first took hold of me! But who can avoid one's fate! However, I must explain how this fate overtook me.

It was while I was intensely occupied in completing my *Heraclitus*. You have probably noticed in that book a certain ability and hence an inclination for speculative thought. Nevertheless I was infinitely miserable working on that book. The cause of my misery was the gulf that divides these scientific, colorless, theoretical interests from all the living practice that today stirs our blood or to express it more correctly, the merely indirect and distant connection which there is, in the end, between these two fields. And I assure you my misery was great. How often, when some association of ideas carried me away from that world of thought in which I had to compel myself to stay to our burning contemporany issues, to the big questions of the day, which, though externally quiescent, were nevertheless boiling within me with all their original fervor, — how often I jumped from the desk throwing down my pen! As if the blood had stopped in my veins, and only after a half an hour severe struggle with myself could I regain my self-possession, force myself to sit down and again submit to the iron concentration of thought my work demanded. It is hard indeed after '48 and '49, when so much blood that has been spilled is calling for vengeance, to be compelled to occupy oneself with theory (excepting only work on political economy, as it is also practical activity), — especially when one sees that no theorizing brings any direct benefits, that people continue to live calmly, as if the best and greatest works and thoughts had never been written or uttered! And to occupy oneself with speculative thought on ancient Greece — I could not, at best, describe to you what an effort it cost. But I shall always consider this as one of the testimonials of will power given me by myself. Pardon, dear friend, this lyric effusion. You know that I am not generally lyrical and on the contrary, am used to keep my feelings to myself. It is however, sometimes, imperative to unburden oneself to a friend. And you are the only friend left me among men. Mendelsohn is dead, and the countess, much as I value the friendship of this excellent woman, is nevertheless a woman and incapable of penetrating with exhaustive understanding all the mysteries of a man's mind. I have really lived very little together with you. It has just the same always seemed to me that in you I have a real and true friend. And you know yourself that I have always considered you such. I have, especially now, many socalled good friends. But for the friendship of which I am now speaking these lack at least the mental development and similarity of intellectual interests.

But to return to my story. And so I brought *Heraclitus* to an end, but I could not have done so if I had not found an escape in occupying myself nights, as if for pacification, with the special study of a subject closely connected with our essentially political interests, etc. but not so essential as to absorb me completely. Having grown accustomed in early youth to busy myself alternately with four or five disciplines, I at night devoted myself to a study of the middle ages, the period of the reformation, on which I already had done some work previously, especially the works of Gutten, etc. The works and life of this remarkable man intoxicated me. Once, affected to the very depths of my soul by some of his things I was marching back and forth in my room. Some days previous to this I had turned the pages of a worthless contemporary play. This awoke an association of ideas. I said to myself — as I could not possibly attribute this to myself at first — God, if one of these people spending their small talents on such

trash would only consult me about a theme. And I thought how I should recommend Gutten to them, and of how they would go about constructing their plan of such a drama, and then from Gutten — with whom the thing would again have remained stuck in pure theory—I passed on to Sickingen as the main hero. The idea had hardly flashed across my mind, when the entire plan of the play occured to me in its completed form, as if by some intuition, and I had at the same moment a most imperative feeling from which I could not free myself any more: "You must do this thing." And no matter how diffident I grew before this task, it absorbed me all the same. Now I could revel in indignation and hatred, give free rein to their inrushing waves, could at last pour out my heart! Thus I found a vent for the choking of the heart which would not otherwise have let me bring *Heraclitus* to completion.

That was how this work originated. And I must confess, I consider it very beautiful—I do not know whether I am blinded by subjective feelings, however, you will not take this frank confession as an expression of vanity, it is really something diametrically opposite. But even if this were the most beautiful creation in the world—I shall never write another drama. This one seems to have been imposed upon me as if by some fate above, and it will not occur again!

For some acquaintances not as familiar with speculative thought as you, I have written a short paper on the formal, basic idea underlying my play. This is, of course, only intended for private reading and by no means for publication. That you may not think me too pedantic and so foolish that I have prepared a certificate of incompetency for myself and my tragedy as if it required a *fabula docet* (moral), I must say that the commentary was called out by some objections raised by a close acquaintance, presumably in a Hegelian spirit; this also explains the form in which the paper is cast. I have also made use of the opportunity, as you will see from the text, to throw some light, in a general way, on a dispute of mine with some of my acquaintances here about the political situation and our relations to it. Once the paper has been written I thought it proper to send you a copy. You, of course, do not need it to grasp the speculative idea behind the drama. It will however, be of interest to you inasmuch as it will give you a perfectly clear idea of what I intended to say in my play as distinguished from the meaning that could be put into it by others, as well as to what extent intent and performance agree. And so please read the paper both before and after reading the drama and then give it to Freiligrath who, less familiar with speculative thought, may find it not altogether lacking in interest.

Finally, my self-evident request — to write me fully giving your candid opinion as to what you think of this play of mine. (From the preface you will see that it is not intended for the stage in this form. For the stage I have prepared another, much abridged version. The chances of its being staged, however, with the present political conditions are nil.) And so, I await your truthful opinion, also, by the way, as to whether it will be useful in the way I expect.

I clasp your hand heartily, sincerest greetings to your wife, Freiligrath, and Engels.

Your *F. Lassalle*

MANUSCRIPT ON THE TRAGIC IDEA, ENCLOSED WITH LASSALLE'S LETTER OF MARCH 6, 1859

The formal tragic idea which is the basis of the drama and the catastrophe with which it deals, — the deep dialectical contradiction which is the essence of every act, especially a revolutionary one, — I have not, of course dwelt on in the preface which was of a general nature, and in the drama itself is only indicated clearly in the fifth act.

The constant strength of all dominant classes that protect a prevailing order lies in the unerring, developed consciousness on the part of the classes devoted to it, as already

dominant, developed. The constant weakness of every truly revolutionary idea, struggling for practical realization, lies in the insufficient consciousness of the members of the class devoted to it whose principle is not yet effected, as well as in the lack of organization of the means at its disposal. The dialectical contradiction which always repeats itself in this case consists of the following. The strength of a revolution lies in its enthusiasm, this direct faith of the idea in its power and immortality. But enthusiasm—being a supreme faith in the omnipotence of the idea—is by its very nature abstractly unconcerned with the final means of practical realization and the difficult complications of reality. Enthusiasm must therefore tackle the complications of reality, go into action with the help of final means in order to achieve its ends in final reality. Otherwise in the vision of its desire (the aim) it will lose sight of the reality of realization.

Under the circumstances it seems necessary to admit the triumph of the higher realistic common-sense of revolutionary leaders when they take into account the final means, hide from others (and so from even themselves) the genuine and final ends of the movement, and by means of conscious deceit of the governing classes, nay, by their utilization, achieve the possibility of organising new forces in order, by means of this cleverly captured part of reality, to conquor reality itself.

Such an endlesly realistic superiority over Gutten does Sickingen display in the third act, as he generally maintains over this purely theoretical revolutionist the superiority of a realisatic view of things of a practical-political statesman of genius. But in this tackling of the finite by enthusiasm, in this submission to it, it does not realize itself but quite the reverse, negates its formal principle—the infinity of the idea—yields to the power of its contrary, finiteness, as such, the abolition of which is its aim, and hence must perish.

In reality, although it is diffecult for reason to admit this, there seems to be insoluble contradiction between a speculative idea constituting a force and revolutionary enthusiasm, and finite reason with its prudence. Most revolutions that failed, crashed — as every student of history will admit — upon this prudence, at any rate all those revolutions have failed which have attempted to support themselves upon prudence. The great French Revolution of 1792 which was victorious under the most difficult circumstances, was successful only because it could throw prudence to the winds.

This solves the riddle of the power of extreme parties at a time of revolution and this also solves the riddle why during a revolution the instinct of the masses is generally more correct than the consciousness of the intellectuals. "And what the reason of the wise surpasses, is indeed performed, etc." It is the very lack of education of the masses that saves them from the reefs of prudent modes of action.

In what has already been said is also contained the solution and inner necessity of the dialectic contradiction between the infinite aim of the idea and the final prudence of compromise.

For (1) as was already mentioned, the interests of the dominant classes, just because their principle is dominant and is therefore perfectly clear and conscious, cannot be fooled. Individuals may be fooled, but classes — never!

(2) A compromise as a concession to the existing must inevitably—as much from the formal side as in actual content — depart more or less from its principles, i. e. from that which constitutes the strength and justification of the revolution, must pass over to the principal of the opponent and thus theoretically admit defeat, and then only the execution of the sentence pronounced by itself is left. The end can only then be reached by a means — as old Hegel has shown with masterly profundity and as Aristotle partly knew long ago — when the means is already beforehand permeated with the very nature of the end. The end must be accomplished and realized in the very means and the latter stamped with the essence of the end in order that it may be achieved by that means (that is why in Hegelian logic the end is not reached by a means but is discove-

red in the means itself as already achieved.) Hence an end can be achieved only by a means that corresponds to it in its very nature and consequently revolutionary ends cannot be achieved by diplomatic means.

Or (3) speaking in terms of reality, a revolution can only be made with the help of the masses and their passionate self-sacrifice. But the masses, just because of their socalled "crudeness," because they lack education, do not understand compromises, are interested — since every undeveloped mind can only admit extremes, knows only yes or no with nothing intermediate — only in the extreme, integral, direct. Instead of removing the deceived opponent before him and having his friends behind him, such calculating revolutionists (Revolutionsrechner) inevitably end up in keeping their foes before them and losing their adherents. Thus virtual prudence proves actually the greatest foolhardiness.

It is only natural that those individuals that are more outstanding in the world of reality, that possess keener eyes, prudence and education, are the more ready to fall into the error of this fateful illusively realistic calculation. This explains why, for instance, during the French revolution (and something analogous has also happened during the English revolution) abstract idealists, Jacobins, came nearer finding what was possible and realizable at the moment, than the Gironde, priding themselves upon their education, realistic view of things and statesmanship, who earned at the hands of the people — that hated this prudent statesmanship — the strange opprobrious appellation of "statesmen."

This "craftiness" of Sickingen when the idea is at stake, although it does not detract from his revolutionary greatness and radical decision, does not turn him into a pacifist as he does not in the least betray the revolutionary ends with respect to which he goes farther than any and is "crafty" only in the methods of achieving them, — this "craftiness" is Sickingen's fault and is, of course, "the great error" Aristotle requires of tragedy.

But, could be argued, this "great error," however great it may be, is nevertheless only an intellectual error and not an ethical one and is consequently not tragic.

This can be parried in three ways. First of all I can not agree that the dialectics of a deeply intellectual, internally inevitable, and therefore infinite conflict of ideas is not of itself a deeply tragic motive as can be proved by the antique tragedy, which is why Aristotle limited his requirements to the "great error." Secondly, this intellectual fault is also an ethical fault in one that puts himself so high above the existing order that he wants to abolish it and put his own principle in its place and must hence really be so much higher spiritually or it will have to be said that he is merely conceited.

Finally, this intellectual error is primarily ethical in nature just because it arises from a lack of faith in the ethical idea and its inherently infinite power, and too much faith in evil finite means. It thus embraces a lack of certainty in and conviction of the ideal, also a lack of complete and endless candor, and consequently, since both are necessary to the revolutionary point of view, it involves a deviation from principle, a partial break.

One does not observe this phenomenon in religious strife as the complete mystic conviction in the omnipotence of the godly precludes such a possibility.

(Luther's historical greatness and power lay in this, that on those points which he really wanted to gain at all costs he knew no prudence, made no concessions, entered into no compromise with the dominant powers and did not take into account "feasibility," but I speak of his first period — appealed directly to the common man.) This accounts for the frequently marvellous triumphing power with which these fanatics accomplish the impossible, almost unattainable. This also accounts for the dramatic quality of these inspired fanatics. The force of their action lies in their singlemindedness, because every deed is singleminded.

Thus Sickingen's fault is an ethical one primarily, but a fault which, if one can say so, is extenuated by its intellectual quality, in that it originates in a conflict of ideas which continually repeats itself in all crucial periods, ceasing to be a fault of an accidental individual and becoming in its turn a necessary eternal point of view, whose indisputable relative correctness and at the same time deeply esoteric untruth bring with it its tragic fate, its dialectical destruction. *Mutato nomine de nobis fabula narratur,* and so it goes on forever. It is this kind of fault, at once ethical and intellectual, and just because of this based on an eternal and necessary conflict of ideas, that, to my mind, constitutes a most deeply tragic conflict.

Or, to express my view definitely and clearly, every really ethical fault is intellectual, and only those are ethical faults that are also intellectual. Because an ethical fault as distinguished from a moral one, which is connected entirely with an individual and his inner world, an ethical fault consists of nothing but the practice and realization of an objective and relatively correct thought and mental position which cannot however cope with its dialectical contrary, losing its harmony both in the mental and in the actual world, becoming theoretically onesided and practically — guilt.

In the fifth act Sickingen removes from himself the burden of the fault, intellectual and ethical, by admitting it and going over to a penitential act. Casting aside both diplomatic doubts and craftiness, he puts his fate and that of the country on the edge of a sword. But it is too late — as it must be according to the tragic idea. The offended gods avenge themselves and, unfortunately the dialectics of offended ideas avenges itself even more brutally and mercilessly than any of the Greek gods. Life and history are the brutal logic of practice and how brutal they can be!

Sickingen is now compelled to make an incorrect move: subject both himself and the country (during the siege and sortie) to pure chance, while the country and his adherents are not behind him so that the actual strength of the sides is not brought out and is not the decisive influence; this great diplomat and realist, attempting to calculate carefully beforehand and exclude all the hazard of chance is by virtue of this very attempt compelled in the final end to stake everything upon chance, — this is the cruel dialectical punishment which fell to his lot. Instead of openly appealing to principles, loosing their revolutionary forces he turns, in the march on Trier, both the historical idea and the national cause into an undertaking lacking in all general significance, clothing it in the semblance of chance. Consequently, however much he desired with great foresight to exclude all elements of chance, he has to rely on chance himself, and since his calculation on deceit by means of the semblance of chance and the unessential must fail against the conscious nature of the existing order, he must accept the decision of his fate not from a carefully prepared accident, as he expected, but from a genuine unexpected accident. Hence he perished not because of the superiority of the old order — this would really be anything but a tragic end, as the inevitable fall of the old order, although far from an achievement of Sickingen's great ambition, is clearly felt in the fifth act — he perishes on account of his own mistake.

It seems also necessary to me that Balthasar should get his opportunity of telling Sickingen of the true state of affairs only in the fifth act, not succeeding in doing so during the third act. It would have detracted from the formal greatness of spirit of Sickingen or from his ethical enthusiasm — which I can admit even less — if Balthasar had unfolded before him the true state of affairs earlier and Sickingen had continued to maintain his point of view. He should then inevitably have lost some of his mental and ethical significance. As it is his intellectual fault does not debase him because he supports himself on something equally essential and legitimate and the fault is extenuated by the circumstance that the onlooker or reader will undoubtedly be on his side until the fifth act. By the same token his ethical fault up to the conversation with Balthasar is entirely unconscious and so doubly tragic and appropriate to his pure nature

while after this conversation it would have been a conscious one and consequently debasing mentally or ethically.

Only when it is already too late can there be talk of a mistake into which Sickingen was drawn in the victorious rise of his prudence, and now Balthasar must rise as much above Sickingen as the latter did over Gutten in the third act. The peasant scene subjoined to this dialogue presents something like the chorus and the surroundings which respond to the thoughts expressed by Balthasar.

In the succeeding scene, however, Sickingen regains his clearly heroic preeminence over the theoretical superiority of Balthasar: while the latter is depressed and moody and it seems as if all is lost, Sickingen instantly straightens himself out and adopting Balthasar's point of view develops and executes a plan of recuperation.

The lending of superiority to Balthasar instead of Gutten also seems necessary to me.

Gutten's character, as I have rendered him, is charged with lyricism and hence the latter role does not suit him. On the reverse, with respect to this, as I have already mentioned purely spiritual revolutionist, Sickingen is, and remains to the very end, the stronger, politically more farseeing realistic hero. He foresees the course events take and must take as the result of having won only the religious freedom which Gutten considered necessary to save before all.

In the second place Gutten had no other means of influencing Sickingen than inspiration. But in this respect Sickingen is not in the least backward himself and in fact, in his concentrated, perfectly practical pathos he has, in the third act, long decided to act and has already developed a suitable plan, while Gutten thinks that he needs being urged to action.

And finally, inspiration alone — and this brings us back to what we said at the beginning — could never serve as a more sure and powerful means than the realistic perspicacity of Sickingen. In ignoring the final means it is also abstractly onesided, as the very viewpoint of final means, an dif it inwardly does hit the mark more surely, it is powerless to bring out with sufficient force its actual inner right and so draw nearer to it the opposite viewpoint. Thus both points of view are only relatively legitimate and abstractly in opposition. And Sickingen is here on the superior and stronger side. Only the even more realistic nature of Balthasar with his views matured by many years of experience and great knowledge of the laws of history and the movements of people could raise Sickingen's realistic viewpoint to higher levels. Only realistic wisdom can overcome realistic prudence and raise it above itself. The reconciliation however, consists of partly the fact that, insofar as the religions aims of Sickingen are concerned, their subsequent triumph is evident and, as has already been mentioned, is clearly indicated in the fifth act; partly and particularly in that insofar as the more distant and important national-political aims are concerned, these are the subject of a renewed struggle in an analogous if ampler form in our day when this severe task has been taken up — as if to realize the prophetic hint in Gutten's last remarks. I consider it of no little importance that a tragedy based on the history of culture — such as mine, where the aims and struggle of ideas come so close to contemporary times — that the consciousness of the reader, not simply as human consciousness generally, but because imbued with the contents of the play, again becomes something like the chorus to whom the tragic action and suffering of the heroes is addressed.

The consciousness of the modern world brings, on the one hand, reconciliation to the tragedy, as in the renewal of the struggle lies the greater triumph of the hero and his ambition, and on the other hand, — this consciousness receives from the tragedy consolation and faith for itself in its difficult struggle, insomuch as the very renewal of the struggle after three hundred years and the consequent proof of the eternal verity of these aims is also the strongest evidence of their inevitable triumphant achievement.

LASSALLE TO ENGELS

Berlin, March 21, 1859

Dear Engels :

I was heartily glad to receive again a few lines from you after such a long interval. It looks as if everything is again coming out right.

Your small commissions I shall attend to, and I have already told Dunker what was necessary. I am eager to see the contents of the pamphlet. Marx's work will also soon see the light; I have no idea why it is so slow coming; it is being explained by the tortoise speed of the proofs which must be sent to London first. I am the more anxious to read it as I have been carrying about in my head an economic work and am getting ready to deliver myself of it. I shall not do it, however, if Marx, as I am almost certain, has forestalled me on the most important things I have to say. That is why I am impatiently awaiting the appearance of his book. But even if matters stand as I suspect, it is also no great matter. If what has to be said, has already been said by someone else, I am ready to remain silent. And I know no one outside of Marx whom I should so readily allow to push me aside.

It was not very nice of him not to send you *Heraclitus* as he has read it already and with your work in comparative philology, this book might not be lacking in interest for you. If I had known of this work you are engaged in I should have sent you a separate copy, unfortunately I have not a single one left now. — So you have seen a notice of my *Sickingen?* Some ten days ago I sent Marx three copies for him, for you and for Freiligrath, accompanied by a long, very long letter. But I sent it by a book dealer and who knows when the packet will reach you! At any rate, in a letter from Marx received today he tells me he has not yet got the parcel.

I must, however, laughingly protest against the expression in your letter, however well intentioned, that I "have also thrown myself into this specialty (drama)." God save me from such a thing! Up to, during, and after writing this drama I always had the firm conviction that I shall never write another play and I have never before had the desire to write one. I do not wish to even if I could; but I could not even if I should wish. This one drama I could and had to write. I was fated to do so. *C'était écrit là-haut!* (It was foreordained from above.) I speak about this in my long letter to Marx. But you will understand this without the letter when you have read the play. I hope you will do so as soon as you get it.

However, — regardless of the fact that to my surprise the play has received favorable comment — I shall not write another one.

From now on I stay on political economy, history and philosophy — I have in mind history in the sense of social-cultural development — that is, and I hope for it very much, if the practical movement will not call me again and stop all important theoretical work for a while.

How willingly I should leave unwritten all that I know, if instead we succeeded in doing something we (the entire party) can.

With greetings and handclasp.

Your *F.Lassalle*

Beginning March 28 my adress: Bellevue St. 13.

MARX TO LASSALLE

London, April 19, 1859

Dear Lassalle:

I have not acknowledged separately the receipt of £ 14 s. 10 as the money was sent by registered mail. But I should have written you sooner if it had not been for a damned "cousin from Holland" that came unexpectedly and robbed me of all leisure in the most outrageous fashion.

He has left and I can breathe freely again.

Friedlander has written me. The conditions are not as favorable as those about which I wrote you, but they are "respectable." When some secondary points will have been settled — this should happen, I think, during this week, — I shall write you.

Here, in England, the class struggle is developing excellently. It is to be regretted that there is not a single Chartist organ left at this moment, so that I was compelled to cease my collaboration in this movement some two years ago.

I am now coming to *Franz von Sickingen.* I must first compliment you upon the composition and action, which is more than can be said of any modern German play. Secondly, aside from a critical attitude to the play, it affected me strongly on the first reading and so, on readers more emotional it must have an even stronger effect. And this is the second, very important side. And now the reverse of the medal: first of all — a purely formal matter — since you chose to write verse, you could have rounded your measures more artistically. In the main, however, irrespective of how shocking this carelessness will be to the *professional poets,* I consider this really better as our poetical epigones have nothing left but smooth forms. Secondly: the conflict chosen is not only tragic, but is the very tragic conflict which was the basic cause of the wreck of the revolutionary party in 1848-49. I can therefore only approve most highly the intention of making this the central theme of a modern tragedy. I ask myself however, is the subject chosen by you adequate to present this conflict? Balthasar can of course imagine that if Sickingen had not made a secret of his rebellion under the mask of a knightly internecine strife, and had raised the flag of battle against the emperor and open war against the Dukes, he would have been victorious. But can we share the illusion? Sickingen (and with him Gutten, more or less) perished not because of this craftiness. He perished because as a *knight and a representative of a perishing class* he rose up against the existing order or rather against its new form. If you take away from Sickingen all that is purely personal, his special training, natural gifts, etc., we have left — Goetz von Berlichingen. In this pitiful figure the tragic opposition of the knighthood against the emperor and the dukes is given in its adequate form and Goethe rightly chose him for the hero. Inasmuch as Sickingen — and even to some extent Gutten, although with respect to him, as with respect to all class ideologists the formulation should be changed considerably — is struggling against the dukes (his demarche against the emperor can be explained only by the fact that from emperor of knights he has become emperor of dukes), he is simply a Don Quixote, although historically justified. The fact that he begins the uprising under the mask of a war of the knights only means that he begins it as a knight. To begin otherwise he had to appeal directly and at once to the cities and peasants, that is to those very classes the development of which is equivalent to a negation of knighthood.

If then you did not want to reduce the conflict to the one in Goetz von Berlichingen — and this was not your intention — Sickingen and Gutten had to perish because in their own imaginations they were revolutionists (which can not be said of Goetz) and, altogether like the educated Polish nobility of 1830, became on the one hand the tools of contemporary ideas, and on the other, actually represented the reactionary class. But in that case the nobles representing the revolution, — behind whose slogans of unity and liberty the hope of the old imperial power and fistic right is concealed — should not have taken up all interest, as has happened to you: the representative of the peasantry (they especially) and revolutionary elements in the cities should have made an appreciable and active background. Then you could have expressed, and in much greater measure, the most modern ideas in their purest form, while as it is the main idea with you actually remains, together with religious freedom, civil *unity.* You would have to Shakespereanize more, while at present I consider Schillerism, making individuals the mere mouthpieces of the spirit of times, your main fault. Did not you to a certain

extent, like your Franz von Sickingen, yourself fall into the diplomatic error of putting the Lutheran-knightly opposition higher than the plebeian Muntzer one?

Further, I do not find any characteristic traits in your characters. I leave out Karl, Balthasar, and Richard of Trier. And yet is there another period with such sharp characters as the XVI century? Your Gutten, to mind, represents too much only "inspiraton": this is boring. Was he not at the same time pretty clever, a desperate wit, and did not you therefore treat him most unjustly?

To what extent even your Sickingen, also by the way drawn too abstractly, is a victim of the conflict, irrespective of all his calculations, can be seen from his finding it necessary to preach friendship with the city, etc. to his knights and how willingly he takes it out upon the cities himself by right of the fist.

In many places I must reproach you with too much discussion of themselves by the characters, which is also due to your bias for Schiller. Thus on page 121, where Gutten is telling Maria his life history it would have been highly natural to put into Maria's mouth the words:

All the gamut of sensation

and so on to

And weightier than load of years it is.

The preceding verses from "They say" to "grown old" could be made to follow after, except the remark "A night is all a maiden needs, to mature and become a woman" (although it shows that Maria knows more than mere abstract love)—is entirely unnecessary; and Maria's discussion of her own "aging" is altogether impermissible. Only after she has succeeded in telling all that she could in "one" hour could she express her entire mood in the sentences on her growing old. I am shocked, further, by the following lines and the words "this I considered right" (i.e. happiness). Why rob Maria of her naive views on the world characteristic to her according to earlier speeches and turn her into a doctrine of rights? Some other time I may tell you my opinion more in detail.

I think the scene between Sickingen and Karl V very good although the dialogue on both sides sounds more like lawyers' speeches; the scenes in Trier are also very good. Gutten's verses on the sword are excellent.

But enough for now.

In the person of my wife you have won a warm adherent of your drama. Only she is not satisfied with Maria.

Greetings

Your *K. M.*

Apropos: in Engels' articles "Po and Rhine" there are horrible misprints a list of which I am giving you on the last page of this letter.

ENGELS TO LASSALLE

6 Thorncliff Grove, Manchester, May 18, 1859

Dear Lassalle:

You are probably somewhat surprised that I have not written you so long, especially as I owe you my opinion of *Sickingen*. But it was just this that has delayed me so long. With the present poverty of beautiful literature I seldom read such works and it has been long since I read one that would leave a definite firm opinion after thinking it over in detail. The usual balderdash is not worth it. Even the few fairly good English novels which I still read from time to time, like Thackeray's for instance, although they have an undoubted literary and culturally historical significance have not been able to interest me to this extent even once. But due to such a long lack of exercise my critical faculties have grown dull and I must take considerable time be

fore I can give a definite opinion. Your *Sickingen* deserves a different attitude than those literary products and so I did not grudge it the time. The first and second reading of your national German drama, in every sense, both as to theme and treatment affected me so strongly emotionally that I was compelled to put it aside for a while; the more so since my taste, crudened by these days of literary poverty, have brought me to a state (I confess it, to my shame), that even things of slight value make an impression on me on first reading. So, in order to achieve a perfectly unbiased, perfectly "critical" attitude, I put *Sickingen* aside, i.e. lent it to some acquaintances (there are still a few more or less literary-bred Germans here). *Habent sua fata libelli*—when you lend it seldom returns, and so I had to obtain the return of my *Sickingen* by force. I can tell you that after a third and fourth reading my impression has remained the same and being certain that your *Sickingen* can stand criticism I am now giving you my critical opinion.

I know it will be no great compliment to say that not one of the official poets of Germany today could write anything even distantly approaching this drama. But it is a fact, and one too characteristic of our literature to pass it by in silence. To stop first on the normal side I must note that I was pleasantly impressed by the skillful plot and thoroughly dramatic character of the play. In the versification, it is true, you allowed yourself some liberties which are more troublesome in reading than on the stage; in its present form it probably could not be staged. I was visited by a young German poet (Karl Siebel), a countryman and distant relative that has worked a good deal in the theatre; as a reservist of the Prussian guard he will perhaps be in Berlin soon, so I may take the liberty of giving him a note to you. He is of a very high opinion of your drama, but thinks it entirely impossible to stage on account of the very long monologues during which only one acts while the others time and again must exhaust their supply of mimicry not to stand there like supers. The two last acts prove that you could, without difficulty, make the dialogue vivacious and quick, and as with the exception of several scenes (which happens in every play) this could be done in the first three acts also, I have no doubt that in preparing your play for the stage, you will take this into consideration. The intellectual content must, of course, suffer by this, as is inevitable, and the perfect blending of great intellectual depth, and historical content, with which you justly credit German drama, with Shakesperian vivacity and wealth of action will prohably be achieved only in the future and perhaps not by Germans. It is truly in this blending that I see the future drama. Your *Sickingen* is wholly on the right road, the principal characters in fact represent definite classes and tendencies and hence definite ideas of their time and the motives of their actions are to be found not in trivial individual desires but in the historical stream upon which they are being carried. However, the next step forward should be in making these motives more lively, active, so to say, spontaneously occupying the foreground by the course of the action and on the other hand making the argumentative speeches (in which by the way, I recognize your old oratorical talents, brilliant before a court of justice and popular assembly) become unnecessary. You recognize this as the ideal aim yourself in establishing a difference between a stage play and a literary play; I think *Sickingen* could, even though with difficulty (because to achieve perfection is not so simple), be made over into a stage play in this sense. The characterization of the persons is involved in this. You quite justly object to the present dominant poor individualization which is reduced to trivial cleverness and is a circumstantial indication of the decay of epigonean literature. It seems to me however, that the person is characterized not only by what he does but also by how he does it, and from this point of view the intellectual content of your drama could only gain by a sharper contrast and juxtaposition of the separate characters. The characteristics of antiquity are inadequate in our age and in this, it seems to me, you could without harm have paid more

attention to the significance of Shakespeare in the history of the development of the drama. But these are secondary matters, and I only mention them that you may see I have also given somes thought to the formal aspects of your play.

With regards to the historical content—you have very vividly and with permissible indication of subsequent developments, presented the two sides of that movement which are most important to us: the national movement of the nobility, represented by Sickingen and the humanistic-theoretical movement with its later development in the theological and church sphere — the reformation. Here I like best the scenes between Sickingen and the emperor, between the papal legate and the archibishop of Trier (here you have successded, in the antithesis between the worldly, educated in the classics and esthetics, politically and theoretically far seeing legate and the limited German priest-duke, in giving an excellent individual characterization which yet follows distinctly from the *representative* character of the persons); the characteristics of Sickingen and Karl are also very neatly rendered in the scene between them. In introducing Gutten's biography, the contents of which you justly consider essential, you chose a very risky means of introducing the content into the drama. The dialogue between Franz and Balthasar in the fifth act in which the latter tells his master of the *genuinely revolutionary* policy he should follow. After this comes the really tragic moment; it seems to me there should have been stronger indications of this in the third act where there are many opportunities for it. But I am harping back to secondary matters. The situation of the cities and dukes is also presented very clearly in many places and in this the, so to say, *official* elements of that movement are exhausted. It seems to me however, you have not stressed sufficiently the unofficial plebeian and peasant elements and their accompanying theoretical expression. The peasant movement was in its way just as national just as opposed to the dukes as the movement of the nobility, and the collossal struggle in which it fell is sharply brought out by the ease with which the nobility, leaving Sickingen to his fate, takes up again its historical role of court servility. It seems to me therefore, that even with your views on the drama which, you will of course understand are to my mind too abstract, insufficiently realistic, the peasant movement deserved more attention, the peasant scene with Jost Fritz, it is true, is characteristic, and the individuality of this "rebel" is rendered very correctly, but to counterbalance the nobles' movement it does not adequately represent the then already high crest of the wave of the peasant movement. According to my views on the drama, the realistic should not be overlooked because of the intellectual elements, Shakespeare for Schiller; the introduction of the then many sided plebeian society would lend entirely new material to enliven the play, would give an invaluable background for the action on the proscenium of the national movement of the nobility, would first throw the proper light on this very movement. What a variety of quaintly characteristic characters are to be found at this period of decay of feudal ties in the penniless ruling kings, poverty stricken freelancers and adventurers of all sorts—a Falstaffian background that, in an historical play of *this* type would be much more effective than in Shakespeare! But besides, it seems to me, that this neglect of the peasant movement is the reason you have drawn the nationalist movement of the nobility incorrectly in one respect and so failed to see the *genuine* tragic element in Sickingen's fate. To my mind the mass of the then imperial nobility did not think of joining forces with the peasantry; this their dependence upon the income from the oppressed peasantry did not permit. An alliance with the cities was more feasible; but this was not effected or effected too late. But success of the national revolution of the nobles was possible only if an alliance with the cities and peasantry, especially the latter, was effected. And this, to my mind, was the most tragic circumstance, that an alliance with the peasantry was impossible, that the policy of the nobility had to be necessarily trivial, that at the very moment when it would take the lead in the national movement the mass of the nation, the peasantry raised a protest against this leadership, and so it had to fall inevitably. I have no means of judging in

how far you are historically correct in the assumption that Sickingen was connected in some way with the peasantry, and this is really unimportant. By the way, as far as I remember, Gutten's writings, where he appeals to the peasantry carefully avoid this ticklish question of the nobility and attempt to direct all the anger of the peasants against the priests. However, I do not in the least take issue against your right to consider Sickingen and Gutten as statesmen who took upon themselves the liberation of the peasantry. But then there is the tragic contradiction immediately that they both stood between the nobility which was decisevely *opposed to this* on the one side and the peasantry on the other. To my mind this constituted the tragic conflict between the historically necessary postulate and the practical impossibility of its realization. Neglecting this point you reduce the tragic conflict to more trival dimensions, in which Sickingen instead of waging open war with the emperor and the imperial officers wages war against only one duke (although with correct intuition you here bring in the peasants) and he perishes according to you simply on account of the indifference and cowardliness of the nobles. But this cowardliness would be much better motivated if you had earlier stressed the growing wrath of the peasantry and consequent upon the previous peasant rebellions and "poor Conrad," the undoubted change of the nobility to a more conservative frame of mind. This is only one of many ways in which it was possible to introduce the peasant and plebeian movements into the drama, there are at least ten other ways just as suitable or perhaps more so.

As you see I approach your work with the highest criteria—in fact the highest both esthetic and historical, and the fact that only thus can I find any objecions to raise is the best proof of my high regard for it. Mutual criticism has long, in the interests of the party, assumed a very candid character, on the whole however, we are all very pleased at every new proof that whatever field the party enters it always shows its superiority. And this time also your play proves this so.

World events taking a very heatening turn.One cannot imagine a better basis for a radical revolution in Germany than the Franco-Russian alliance. We Germans must have the water rise to our necks in order for us to achieve in the mass a Teutonic madness, and this time the danger of choking is coming very close. All the better. At such a crisis all the existing forces must perish and all parties fall apart one after another, from "Kreuzzeitung" to Gottfried Kinkel and from Count Rechberg to "Hecker, Struve, Blenker, Zitz and Bloom." During such battles a moment must come when only the most determined, the most uncompromising party is capable of saving the nation and at the same time the conditions must be given when it will be possible to finally cast overboard all the old rubbish—inner schism on the one hand and Polish and Italian appendices to Austria on the other. In Prussian Poland we must not yield an inch, and what. . .[1]

Translated from the Russian by S. D. Kogan

[1] The end of this letter has not been found. *Ed.*

LETTERS FROM WRITERS

Theodore Dreiser—Jack Conroy—Edwin Seaver

Needless to tell you, I like *International Literature* very much. I think that from a foreign point of view, it is the most useful and effective thing that comes out of Russia, and the most interesting.

It does seem to me, though, that you editors might more carefully scan the world press for comments not so much uncritically enthusiastic about Russia but, on the other hand, comments which show plainly and most often unthinkingly the inroads which Communistic ideas are making on the world at large. Summaries of that kind coming out of Russia and being distributed all over the world would not only hearten the believers in Communism but suggest ways and means of furthering the inroads commented upon.

I have recently seen here, in *The New York Times,* an account of an address by A. P. M. Fleming of the Metropolitan-Vickers Company of Manchester, England, at the Chicago World's Fair. In this address, he called upon the capitalistic world to unite all its intellectual and inventive and creative force in order to offset the admitted force and effect of united Russia. He said, "Why is it that Russia can do so much more than any capitalistic country, or all of them together, disunited?" and while he is not interested to do anything for the mass, he is anxious to do something for the class by uniting all class genius to this end. That, and related things, are what should appear in *International Literature.*

More and more, as I observe the world, I am satisfied that the Russian revolution is the one and only thing that has opened the door to a better and more equitable, more creative and more human social order.

Theodore Dreiser

July 4, 1933

American Proletarian Writers and The New Deal

The problems of the American proletarian writer are more complex and more fraught with danger since the economic crisis has forced President Roosevelt to assume a demagogic role. The new President is no undisguised reactionary and frank apologist for Capitalism as was Herbert Hoover. On the contrary, he professes to be fighting for "the common man" and "against the money changers." His inaugural address, though a mass of glittering generalities and full of sound and fury signifying nothing, was hailed by liberals as a courageous challenge to "malefactors of great wealth." The President declared that the "money changers," after wrecking the financial and business structure of the nation, had abdicated, and that henceforth "the people" will rule. He hinted that, in order to protect the "people's interests," he might have to ask for the power of a dictator. Anybody who understands the primary function of Fascism (i. e.: to "freeze" what is left of a disorganized capitalistic state, to integrate its units, and to "make it work") will recognize the animus impelling the President's utterances, but unfortunately a great many who label themselves as liberals or radicals do not, or pretend that they do not. Norman Thomas, the Socialist leader, immediately praised the President's inaugural speech and shortly after it called upon him. They spent quite a long time in friendly discourse, and it is reported that Mr. Thomas commended President Roosevelt for his prompt and efficient action in closing every bank in the United States, ostensibly to protect the small depositors.

"We are," says President Roosevelt in his book *Looking Forward,* "at the threshold of a fundamental change in our economic thought . . . in the future we are going to think less about the producer and more about the consumer. Do what we may to inject health into our ailing economic order, we cannot make it endure for long unless we bring about a wiser, more equitable distribution of the national income.

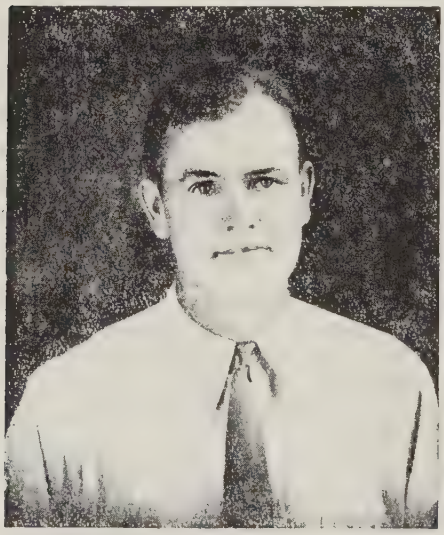
"It is well within the inventive capacity of man, who has built up this great social and economic machine capable of satisfying the wants of all, to insure that all who are willing and able to work receive from it *at least the necessities of life* (Italics mine. J. C.) In such a system the reward for a day's work will have to be greater, on the average, than it has been, and the reward to capital, especially capital which is speculative, will have to be less."

This, then, is the bold, iconoclastic program of the Fearless Franklin who, as intrepid as St. George of old, will slay the Capitalistic dragon. One of his first recommendations was that the unemployed be herded into concentration camps to toil for "not more than a dollar a day." This must be the irreducible minimum required for "the necessities of life." This scheme for forced labor is borrowed from Mussolini, who has tried it in Italy. Hitler also proposes it for Germany. The unemployed will receive, as one journalist has said of the working classes

in Germany, "not enough to live on, but too much to die on."

When the hurricane struck in 1929, business leaders professed not to see it and refused to admit it existed for almost three years. A series of startling revelations as well as the exposure of the thieving methods of business demi-gods such as Insull, the collapse of Kruger, shook the world. Farmers and workers were becoming increasingly militant. A change of tactics was inevitable. Only a year or so before the *Saturday Evening Post* had been eulogizing Kruger and his ilk as admirable products of the new era of Capitalism, a Capitalism which functioned in the interests of all the people as distinguished from the dog-eat-dog policy of the "empire builders" such as Gould, Astor, and Hill.

When this buncombe became too transparent even for the most credulous, President Hoover and a synthetic ogre conveniently labelled "Wall Street" were set up as whipping-boys for the sins of Capitalism, a system which the new President has described as "everlasting." By using Hoover as a burnt sacrifice and masking itself in the sheepswool of piety and affected regeneration, the old order hopes that, like the ancient wrestler Antaeus, it may arise from the flat of its back with strength renewed. Magazines that formerly blessed the name and practices of shady gentlemen like Insull and Kruger now bleat loudly for "social justice," call upon the people to "clear the rascals out," and even employ near-Marxism terminology. One of the priests of the New Capitalism of the Coolidge-Hoover era was Bruce Barton, who frequently envisioned Jesus in a business suit and carrying out the ideals of modern industrial lords. The times demand a new tune and we find the saintly Mr. Barton commenting on an article on



Jack Conroy

Soviet Russia by Maurice Hindus which appeared in the *American Magazine:*

"Across the sea the other nations begin to take on a different aspect. Three years ago Russia was only a 'menace,' something to be afraid of, to be throttled. Today we view it as the struggle of a great people toward the light. We rejoice that men like John Calder, of whom Maurice Hindus writes, are providing this people with levers by which to raise their standards of living. We are confident that whatever is brutal and wrong in the Soviet philosophy will wash out in the process of establishing a permanent order."

The Same Wolf—fangs

The American proletarian writer must not be beguiled by the piping of such a soft tune. Mr. Barton has learned that, because of the vigilance of militant workers within and without the Soviet Union, an attempt to "throttle" Russia as in intervention days would be extremely risky. But if one peers a little more carefully beneath the innocent bonnet of Little Red Riding Hood, the same cruel wolf fangs are visible. Liberals have always tried to segregate the Russian "experiment" as an exotic growth peculiar to the land and its people and entirely unsuited to American soil. Mr. Barton says nothing of the Marxist-Leninist levers which are the primary cause of "the struggle of a great people toward the light." Since the imaginative stories of wholesale murder by the OGPU and of Red Army troops mowing down "wild children" with machine guns have become too ridiculous even for jingoistic sheets like the *Chicago Tribune,* the attack must shift to a new quarter. The *Chicago Tribune* recently was forced to apologize for some lurid trash about the Soviet Union copied, strangely enough from the "Socialist" *Daily Forward* of New York City.

Now the cry goes up from liberal and even conservative magazines and newspapers for drastic changes in our social system, but in an "American" way. An official of the American Civil Liberties Union, speaking in St. Louis, declared that their organization would not be permitted to exist in Russia, but if it were, it would be defending the kulaks and aristocrats, since they constituted an "oppressed minority." An organization of the unemployed in the same city declined to co-operate with the Communist-led Unemployed Council at a demonstration for relief, explaining haughtily that they "needed no orders from Moscow." Forced by the tremendous social currents of the day to a shift of positions, such "friends" of the workers retain their old fealty to the "system." The thoughtful observer must perceive that "American" in such cases may be defined as synonymous with "Fascistic."

The American proletarian writer must recognize the new guise of the enemy and shout it abroad, to strip the hypocritical mask from his face. Nobody speaks a good word for "Wall

Street" nowadays. Politicians pant and sweat for "the forgotten man." *The Weekly Financial Review* says in its March 17th issue:

"The oppressive shadow of Wall Street Giant that has clouded the horizon of American progress these many years is beginning to fade—the protections and safeguarding of the deposited and invested funds of American citizens are becoming paramount to the profits that may be garnered by the hungry coterie of affiliated banking interests whose schemes and plans have been controlled from their skyscraper citadels on Manhattan. With an entire nation pledged to the principles of a "new deal" — things are looking *down* for Wall Street — and looking *up* for main street."

This same journal remarked a few weeks ago that "Communist agencies" were involved in the strike of the Briggs Co. employees in Detroit. Now that business is beginning to revive, the magazine said, "we" cannot afford to have it retarded by strikes and industrial disturbances. If "Communist agencies" are at work, it concluded, they should be effectively crushed.

We must fight!

The ancient lies have only been refurbished, and the acid tooth of time will eat away the gilding. But meanwhile the fascistic coils will be tightening . The militant worker and the revolutionary writer must resist as never before both the open assaults of their enemies and the blandishments of their pseudo "friends." Will Rogers, the cowboy humorist whose *bon mots* are syndicated extensively, has been a vociferous advocate of Fascism for a long time. Now he blossoms forth with lush praise of the President, and hints that he should take even more stringent measures. If he should issue an order demanding the execution of all male children, the frolicsome cowboy earnestly avers, we ought to heed it without questioning, for the way the fool people have conducted themselves in the past. Comedian Rogers, too, is continually castigating "Wall Street." When the banks opened up after the recent enforced holiday, Rogers reported that his confidence in the financial structure of the nation was so great that he did not even go to town, leave alone think of drawing his "little dab" out of the bank. Since Rogers is believed to make in the neighborhood of a quarter million dollars a year from his syndicate, movie, advertising and other ventures, we assume that his "little dab" is safe. Rogers poses as a proletarian, and even misspells some of his words in order to show that he is "just folks."

In opposition to such specious blather we must stress at every opportunity that the Marxist-Leninist way is the only way out for the workers. Communism, we must teach, is not a system peculiarly adapted solely to the Russian soil, but a science so broad in its ramifications that it touches every nation and every branch of human activities. This we must reply to those who wish to erect a fence about the "Russian experiment" and to find an "American" way of solving the capitalistic crisis. Many writers who were fooled aesthetes have come to recognize this fact.

"What is taking place in Russia," writes Waldo Frank in his book *Dawn in Russia,* "is the most precious social event, the most precious social life, of our crucial epoch... We must defend the Soviet Union with our spirit; if need be, we must defend it with our bodies."

Writers such as Erskine Caldwell and Edward Dahlberg have been critized for presenting only the degraded and passive sections of the proletariat. In reply to such criticism, they have retorted than many workers *are* bestial and apathetic. While admitting the truth of this, we must point out that the militant action of farmers who are resisting mortgage foreclosures, the Negro sharecroppers of the South who are organizing despite the persecution and terror directed against them, the valiant struggle of the unemployed councils in many cities—all of these activities connote a wealth of literary material which is pertinent and vital. And some writers are taking heed of this. Fielding Burke's *Call Home the Heart* was a straw blown by the winds, will re-vitalize American literature. Grace Lumpkin's *To make My Bread,* winner of the Maxim Gorky award for 1932, was even more promising. Sherwood Anderson in his *Beyond Desire* has abandoned somewhat his attitude of a man stumbling blindly through an incomprehensible world. Erskine Caldwell's *God's Little Acre* is an advance beyond *Tobacco Road* from the revolutionary viewpoint due to the introduction of a textile mill striker, who, however, is not fully clothed with reality, suggesting that Caldwell would profit from a more careful study of southern mill conditions. The honestly mistaken writers will welcome criticism of their work. It is the cynical "sympathizers" whose purpose is misdirection that we must fear.

Revolutionary Literature Grows

Commercial necessity is always a stultifying factor with the revolutionary author. His work, after it is written, must be published and marketed, and the marketing facilities of radical publications and publishers are severely limited. A revolutionary publication is barred from bookstores and newsstands which purvey periodicals devoted to salacity and sexual innuendo. *Jest* which calls itself "a magazine of social satire," regales its readers with tantalizing visions of buttocks and breasts, and carries advertising for "French action photos. Hot views of Parisian lovers." Such publications do not outrage the moral sensibilities of bookstore and newsstand proprietors, but *The New Masses* does. A publisher quotes from a review of Tiffany Thayer's latest sexy thriller: *"An American Girl* is the most vivid of Thayer masterpieces. The whole thing ends with a murder and several episodes that make Balzac's *Droll Tales*

look like bedtime stories." There is "an exotic Hollywood party scene to shock the sensitive." The path of the writer who will not descend to such pampering of depraved tastes is indeed a lonely and thorny one. You may safely speak with the utmost realism of every organ of the body save the belly.

Thus the revolutionary press is constantly circumscribed and pitted against tremendous odds. But since the first of the year several revolutionary publications have been launched: *The Left Front,* official organ of the John Reed Club of Chicago; *The Anvil,* successor to the *Rebel Poet; Dynamo, '33. Contact* has been captured from the "objectivists" by Norman Macleod and will henceforth be issued as an addition to the increasing roster of revolutionary periodicals. *Blast* and *Hard Times Stories* have been announced. Several of the John Reed Clubs are issuing excellent mimeographed mouthpieces. A notable example is *Leftward* of the Boston John Reed Club.

So let none of us be deluded by the phenomena of the last stages of a decaying order. Revolution is just as unwelcome as ever; fighters for the rights of workers will be just as rigorously suppressed. Boris Israel, well-known revolutionary journalist, attempted to organize the road workers on a government project near Memphis, Tenn., recently, distributing leaflets urging them "to unite to smash hunger." These beneficiaries of "The New Deal" were toiling in the fervent Southern sun ar muscle-cracking work for a dollar a day. Israel succeeded in persuading a number of them to strike for two dollars a day. He was immediately arrested and thrown into jail, charged with attempting to overthrow the government of the United States. This, of course, was a tacit admission that the government of the United States is synonymous with hunger, for Israel had exhorted the workers to "fight hunger." A local lawyer who appeared to defend Israel was also thrown into jail for attempting to encourage mutiny and sedition. The workers were induced to return to work with a raise of 25 cents on the day; Israel remained in jail.

This is the course of the painless Marxism which liberals discern in the new acts of the administration, such as the Industrial Recovery Act. Fitzpatrick, celebrated cartoonist of the liberal *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* pictures Karl Marx gazing in amazement at the smoking stacks of factories re-opened under the new dispensation and crying: "Well, blow me down!" "U. S. Control of Industry" is the legend inscribed upon the smoke. Marx's dream coming true! What a cynical and contemptible lie! In the city of St. Louis the Communists recently led a strike of Negro nut pickers who were getting $ 1.40 for a fifty-two hour week. Some increases were secured, but the workers are still far from that happy Utopian state envisioned by the *Post-Dispatch.*

"The New Deal?" spoke one of the disinherited standing in a breadline. "What does the New Deal mean to the likes of us guys if we ain't got no chips?"

July 1, 1933 *Jack Conroy*

Culture and the Crisis in America

The American scene looks like what it is: the Christian paradise—hell on earth, ill-will to men.

If this were a matter of opinion merely I should have need to enlarge on my statement. But you have only to open our newspapers at random any day of the week, our bourgeois newspapers whose role it is to cover up the sores on our social body with their filthy bandages of hyprocrisy, cynicism and sentimentality —you have only to glance at these newspapers, I say, to see for yourself. Here you will see paraded cheek by jowl, and with the utmost naivete and impudence, the enormous misery of the submerged masses and the incredible greed and cruelty of their exploiters.

Under such conditions it is idle to talk of culture. For the bourgeoisie, as Maxim Gorky has pointed out, do not need culture. Every day, and right on our own doorstep, we find new evidence that "culture is by no means an inner necessity of the capitalist world."

Only recently the New York *Times* announced that the New York City Public Library's budget for book purchases had been cut from $250,000 to $50,000—had been reduced to one-fifth of what was already considered an absolute minimum. This new budget must be devoted almost entirely to replenishing the shelves with standard works, existing copies of which have become too worn to be used any more, with the result that there is not money enough even to buy single copies of best-sellers, such as Sinclair Lewis' new novel, not to mention the better and therefore less trumpeted works of our foremost writers. If this is true of the principal library in the richest city in the world, you can judge for yourself what it must be like in the smaller cities, the towns and the villages. And if this is true of books of well known authors you can judge for yourself what encouragement is held out for the young and unknown writer.

In the same way educational budgets everywhere have been cut to the bone—what am I saying?—to the bleeding marrow, and our business men are clamoring for still more drastic reductions. And so it goes all down the line on the entire cultural front.

Our Congress had no difficulty voting $5,000,000 to provide army training camps for our homeless youths, to teach them to be the enemies of their class, but it would not vote five cents for what our bourgeois critics still call culture. And our Congress was right. For bourgeois culture today consists precisely of this training for the class war behind the smoke screen of democracy. Who wants a doctor of philosophy with a phi betta kappa key strung across his spare ribs? The woods are full of Ph D's ready to shovel snow or even sell their

immortal souls for a mess of pottage—well, something or other to eat. The point is, can you break a strike? stampede a workers' meeting? throw a gas bomb into a hunger march? bless your exploiters? Then, my son, you are an educated man, a real cultured guy. The great I has spoken and don't I own the universities?

It is idle, then, to talk of culture with a capital C. We who consider ourselves writers, intellectuals, have got to begin from the ground up. Realizing, to quote Gorky again, that "the exhaustion of the masses means the exhaustion of the soil on which culture is grown," we must draw the line of the barricades sharply and uncompromisingly between the masses, the workers, who are the only hope for any real culture, and the enemy who is exploiting the masses and has only hatred and contempt for culture as we reckon it.

Culture is not something that we have. It is something that we have got to get rid of and it is something that we have still to achieve.

To those who, like myself, are not politically minded, the present factional disputes on the American front are apt to be disheartening, if for no other reason than that they tend to feed the doubts of those who are moving in our direction but are still hesitant about joining forces with us. And yet we cannot, we must not be thus disheartened, for as surely as B follows A, and C follows B, so will the stand we take in the inevitable, ultimate Communist-Fascist line-up depend upon the stand we take now.

Anybody can see the enemy in the open exploiter. It is necessary to see the enemy in those at present exploited whose goal is to become exploiters in turn under all sorts of altruistic and chauvinistic banners.

The Communist Party is the only genuinely revolutionary party in the United States today. If there be those among us who are experienced enough to be critical in matters of party policy, it seems to me that the proper place and the proper way to register such criticism is inside the party and along party lines. To register such criticism from the outside, to snipe at the party in guerilla fashion, is only to play into the hands of the gathering storm of American fascism.

We can handle our enemies. Protect us from our friends.

Comradely yours

July 15, 1933 *Edwin Seaver*

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

S. Eisenstein

The October revolution is 15 years old.

My artistic career dates back 12 years .

Family traditions, upbringing and education intended me for a totally different career.

I was studying engineering. But a subconscious and unformulated inclination to work in the field of art induced me to pick a course within engineering that led, not to mechanical, technological fields but to one closely allied to art—to architecture.

The revolutionary tempest, however, freed me from the inertia of the course I had marked out, and let me develop inclinations which by themselves did not have the strength to free themselves.

This is the first thing I owe the revolution.

It took the shattering of the foundations of the country and two years of technical engineering work on the red fronts in the north and west to make the timid student break the chains of the career marked out for him by solicitous parents from early youth, abandon an almost completed education and assured future, and plunge into the unknown future of an artistic career.

S. Eisenstein

From the front I return not to Petrograd to complete studies begun, but to Moscow to start something entirely new.

And although all about me the thunder of the coming revolutionary art is rolling and scattering I, having broken through to art generally, am totally immersed in art "in general."

During my first steps the connection with the revolution is purely superficial.

However, armed with technical-engineering method, I eagerly delve deeper and deeper into the fundamentals of creative art, instinctively seeking the same sphere of exact knowledge that had succeeded in captivating me during my short experience in engineering.

With the help of Pavlov, Freud, a season with Meyerhold, I get a disordered but hectic hold of some of the mysteries of this new field. Very much reading and first independent steps in decorative and stage work at the Proletcult theatre mark this single handed struggle against the windmills of mysticism erected by the solicitous hands of servile sycophants around the approaches to art methods against those who want to penetrate the secrets of art by common sense.

The undertaking proves less Quixotical than at first appears. The wings of the windmills break off and one perceives the same dialectics in this mysterious region that are at the basis of all phenomena and all processes.

At this time I had been a materialist for a long time by inner disposition.

And now at this stage I unexpectedly discover the relation between the things I came across in my analytical work and what was going on around me.

My pupils in art, to my great surprise, suddenly point out to me that in the field of art I am following the same method that in the adjoining room is being followed by the instructor in political science on social questions.

This is enough to put on my work table the works of materialist-dialectitians instead of those on esthetics.

The decisive year 1922—a decade ago.

The essay in personal research in a particular branch of human activity is merged in philosophical research of social phenomena as taught by the founders of Marxism.

But I do not stop there. And the revolution, by means of the works of those geniuses enters my work in a totally different fashion.

My connection with the revolution becomes a matter of blood and bones and innermost conviction.

In my creative work this is marked by a transition from the rationalistic but almost abstract eccentric *The Sage* (a circus spectacle made over from Ostrovsky's comedy *A Good Deal of Simplicity to Every Sage),* through the propagandistic-agitational theatrical poster-play *Hear Moscow* and *Gas Masks,* to the revolutionary screen work *Potemkin.*

The tendency to closer contact with the revolution calls for ever deeper instilling of the basic principles of militant materialism into art.

The succeeding films, together with the social requirements carry on the practical experimental work of developing a "means" for creative film expression, to convey a maximum of positive activization of revolutionary art and arm pedagogically the generation of young bolsheviks who are to take the place of the cinema masters of the first Five Year Plans of the revolution.

The center of gravity of the later work *(Ten Days, Old and New)* lies in the experimental and research fields.

Personal work is intimately bound up with planned scientific and pedagogic practice, (The State Institute of Cinematography.)

Theoretical works are written on the basic principles of cinema art.

The philosophy of life seems formed .The revolution accepted. All activity turned completely to its interests.

The question remains, to what extent consciously and with unbending will.

At this stage comes the trip to other countries.

Foreign countries—the ultimate test which one's biography can put to a Soviet citizen grown inseparably with the growth of October. The test of a free choice.

Foreign countries—the ultimate test for the "masters of culture" to consciously verify "with whom and against whom."

Foreign countries—the ultimate test for the creative worker can he create at all outside the revolution and continue to exist outside it.

Before the gold mountains of Hollywood the test arose and was withstood with no heroic pose of renunciation from earthly charms and goods but a modest organic impossibility of the creative building powers to work under other social conditions and in the interest of another class.

And in this impossibility to work creatively beyond the class line of demarcation the full strength and power of the revolutionary pressure came out, the pressure of the proletarian revolution that sweeps from its path like a storm all that is inimical to it and like even a more powerful storm draws in and holds all those that once chose to go in step with it .

That is how every one in the galaxy of Soviet workers in art act, and think.

Many of us that came to art by revolution.

All of us that call to revolution by our art.

Anna Karavayeva

In my autobiography, I consider only those factors which consequently in any way influenced my creative development as being of interest and noteworthy for the reader. The first of these factors is the variety of people who surrounded me. Hence the diversity of the characters and the human fates, which so forcibly captured my imagination. My father, a tailor who only managed to become a clerk during the last three or four years of his life, was, like so many of his other relations, a descendant of a one time rich family of fish merchants. This family, which had long ago been ruined, had scattered itself over many branches and paths of life. And what a medley it was: a couple of houseowners with modest property and "bonds", gilt-edged securities—and then a crowd of smaller fry—blacksmiths, tailors, civil servants, musicians, actors, cabinetmakers and metal workers employed at the Motovilikhin factory. Of course, they were all dissatisfied with their fate—their complaints and hopes had taught me from my early girlhood how unlucky and treacherous is life for so many of us. We even had a few *lumpenproletariats* in our family; people used to say, that "God had broken their spine." I clearly remember one of these "unlucky ones"—Uncle Nikandr, dishevelled grey haired old man, whose chest, covered with a thick ashgrey, shrubby growth, was always glaring through his torn shirt. He always turned up at family festivals, inevitably drunk, cursing everybody with the dreadful language of the outcasts. He, and others like him showed how mercilessly life could turn the cold shoulder to some people. "Outcasts" and "oppressed" individuals constantly figure throughout my childhood and girlhood. But the variety of my familiar human environment, with its not little number of working people and the loving attitude to us children in spite of life's difficulties—all this softened and dispersed to a great extent many of the gloomy impressions of life. Although, in growing older, we still continued our aquaintance with fears. Yes, indeed, life is alluring and inimitable but one has to fear many things, as one fears the plague or an earthquake. How is one to set oneself up in life? From the first moment of my conscious life. I, like many of my own age was convinced that first and foremost life is a result of honest and scrupulous labor for one's "bread and butter," accumulated knowledge and the ability to understand people and to help one's neighbor "as far as you can"—because there is nothing so difficult and complicated as life. Therefore, that deep impression made upon me —even in my student days—by Professor Kotliarevski's rendering of Tolstoy's sermon of "little good" and "self improvement" is not to be wondered at. If, to all this, one adds S. S. Vegnerov's conception that Russian literature is "heroic," it will be easy to understand that idealistic confusion reigning in the minds of so many

A. Karavayeva

of us. I earned my living ever since I was 15 years old; I deeply and acutely remembered the Cossack lashes which scourged our town in 1905; I taught in a Ural village and there learnt to value my few friends and to beware of my enemies—even in the clothes of that lean, torn-bloused old priest eavesdropping at my class lessons. My undergraduate years were also poisoned by the struggle for existence—literary proof reading, tutoring, etc.—and all this I thought gave me a knowledge of life. But when I understood and found out the purpose and the aim of the proletarian revolution and, in the light of this, the origin and the purpose of human relationship—that great world rejuvenating force of the class struggle, then all my past "knowledge" appeared before me as the sorriest illusion ever cherished by any reasoning being. When I got rid of it, it was as if I had discovered a new universe and a people. Gladly, as though I were on holiday, did I commence my reeducation, for there was not a single notion which did not either need to be radically modified, or completely annihilated or else to be turned upside down. *State and Revolution, The Communist Manifesto, The Poverty of Philosophy,* everything which I dug out of these books cemented, so to speak, the new building of my newly discovered universe.

In 1922 I joined the Communist Party—this gave me a new creative force. Thus I commenced to write.

My first tale *Over the Sparks* appeared in a small almanac *Sheaves,* published by the Altai branch of the State Publishers in the city of Barnavul in the fall of 1921, in aid of the Volga famine sufferers. My first publications—*Fliegel, Medvezhatnoye, The Golden Beak, Crows,* are above all saturated with this joy of discerning and rejecting from the old world the old exploiters' relations, ignorance and injustice.

The pre-revolutionary village reality of the earlier years of my social activity filled me with horror and dismay for those many human lives which it had wrecked; but in the post October epoch it supplied me with the hero of my tale, *Medvezhatnoye,* Sergei Zhukov, who self-denyingly fell in the battle against the old peasant world. However, I repeat, on my further acquaintance with life I was able to portray people who conquered, not only external difficulty but with still greater difficulty surmounted contradictions within their very selves. Those who are unable to cope with these contradictions are, like Andrey Soushkov in my *Shores* doomed. In similar fashion Stepan Bayoukov, the spiritual brother of my earlier hero, Sergei Zhukov in *Medvezhatnoye* is a fighter for the Soviet village and also because he was strong enough to conquer his inner peasant "sense of proprietership." *(The Farmstead)*

During the reconstruction period, in observing people, and pondering over the significance for them of all that material wealth which they produce, I personally saw how this very same material wealth was renovated by that lofty role determined for it by the hitherto unseen state practice of the proletariat of one sixth of the world. It was with the intention of portraying examples of "labor which creates man" (Engels) and of a man who, through socialist labor is remaking both himself and his world—in this case, his village—i.e., it was with the intention of showing up the fundamental purpose of Soviet industry that I wrote my novel *The Timber Mill.*

Becoming interested in Socialist competition I studied this matter at the Tregorni Textile Mills in the spring of 1929—mainly, it is true, with regard to the opinions and attitude of various groups of workers to this parting of the ways. My collection *The Shops on the March* and my tale *The Steep Ascent* are based upon the material which I gathered there.

It would be too weary to recount my errors, whether committed willingly or not. But I think that many, in glancing over the amount of creative work produced will feel dissatisfaction—for too little has been done. And, of course, not as regards mere quantity. The backwardness of literature, about which so much has been said is caused, not only by the fact that too few great men and deeds have been described, but also by the fact that far too much has been simply noted down without being comprehended. Our litera-

ture distinctly lacks philosophical deepness and variety of thought. In this matter, much of the blame falls upon our respected and absolutely indispensable Marxist criticism which has, albeit, made many errors. Instead of being a friend and offering a helping hand it has frequently acted as a stern judge. It has also often erred in finding fault with the "unwritten world" and, without being aware of it, enveloped literature with boring and immobile cannons and formulae as to "how" essays on socialist construction should be written. Not to mention the dry academic "scientific" style of many critical articles, it should be said that they often forgot to explain to the reader the exact influence of any given article upon the Soviet Power and the building of socialism.

The historical decision of the Central Committee of the All Union Communist Party of April 23, 1932 regarding the reorganization of "art literary organizations" opens a "wide field for all groups of Soviet literature." The striving to participate in the Socialist construction on the part of our scientific-technical and artistic intelligentsia is such an indisputable and significant fact that any division between persons for a lofty common cause, becomes, as the Central Committee of the Soviet Union Communist Party pointed out "a means of cultivating cliques." In approaching the construction of a classless society, belles-lettres are also elevated to a higher level —to that of socialist literature. Its main criteria is the measure in which, with all the peculiarities of its expression and its approach to actuality, it helps the creation of a classless society.

L. Kassil

I live like this... I began my existence in 1905. It happened in the village of Pokrovsk now grown into Engelstown, the capital of the Volga Germans. The thing happened in the summer. It was hot. There was also a hot time that year. It was 1905. The year of the "great rehearsal," the year of uprisings and pogroms, the year of revolution. That evening there was an illegal meeting at the home of the "public physician" (my future father) of local workmen, railroadmen,, bone grinders, and visiting students. The corner policeman had been told a party was being given to celebrate... the anniversary of the battle of Poltava. The church calender actually had the day (June 27) marked as one of prayer and thanksgiving for the victory of Peter the First over the Swedes. So when the policeman approached the parlor window mother made a big show of playing a bravura on the piano with military gusto and an agricultural student recited melodramatically Pushkin's verses on the Battle of Poltava. The policeman stopped to listen.

"...*Peter comes,*" impressive basso of the student—"*His eyes aglow, of awful mien*"...

The policeman looks suspicious: hm! royalty mean?... awful?...

"—*And movements quick. His beauty keen,*" hurriedly adds the student. Satisfied, the calmed policeman moves on.

In the evening, however, an altogether unconspiratorial uproar starts. The Esdecs (Social Democrats) are quarreling with the Esers (Social ist Revolutionaries). Vainly father goes to the window to read loudly:

Tell me, Uncle, was it vainly
Moscow, burning and ungainly,
To the French was left?

(In his excitement he had mixed up the battle of Poltava with that of Borodino.) Mother also got carelessly excited... So the guests had to leave hurriedly. And I was born.

2

Born, I grew, nipple raised.

At first it was really mother, then a wet nurse —substitute for mother, and only then a soothing nipple—substitute for nurse. I could not get away from the soothing nipple until I was four, stealing a suck whenever I could from this rubbermade source if illusion. At four I found a substitute for the soothing nipple—my thumb. (The index finger was busy with the nose.) Thus the various stages of suckling (mother-nurse-nipple-finger) were wounded out. The physician father wisely explained the futility of sucking thumbs, that besides being unsanitary, you can suck nothing really worth while our of a thumb. This truth sank home deeply. The

L. Kassil

adherence to this hygienic principle in my literary work is the origin of the thirst for truth, of a proper respect for everything genuine, vital, "nourishing," of the love of facts, data, functionality; dislike of illusionary, empty nothings, these soothing nipples of philistine art. This brought me to Mayakovsky.

3

Mayakovsky's portrait hangs over my desk. Over the door hangs the ancient, partly decayed, emblem of the imaginary land of Shvambrania, where with my younger brother, we had lived many years to escape from the injustice of the old world of the grownups. From the emblem over the door to the portrait over the desk can be traced the course of my so called literary career.

My childhood was cleft in two by fantastic Shvambrania and the terror of the faults-book of the tsaristic highschool. A book that was intended to break the free spirit of youth. In free Shvambrania the spirit of the faults-book was blown away. But Shvambrania was only a substitute happiness, an elastic, rubber, Utopia. It was a "soothing nipple" country. Generally, however, my childhood of policemen, governesses, measles and croup and Christmas trees was so standard and so lacking in anything unusual, so typical of the time and the social group to which we belonged, that it could not have served as material for my books were it not for one fateful circumstance. When the notch in the doorway that marked our growth reached 132 centimeters from the floor, the revolution crashed. The rest of the 50 centimeters I already grew with the revolution. This half meter of new epoch was decisive. The revolution raised and educated me. It tore the faults-book and its remarkable reality made Shvambrania useless. The revolution invaded the biography of the son of a doctor, raised it high and turned it inside out, filled it with the singularities of its time, gave it the right to tell its tale in the language of art and stamp itself into living images, in books of individual fate—fate, errors, and rewinning of one's sight of a definite part of my generation.

These two books came: *Conduit* (1929) and *Shvambrania* (1932). They absorbed a good deal of what was most interesting in and characteristic of my early biography. Little is left to add here.

4

My childhood was spent mostly in reading, dreaming, and being ill. I was ill with many ills.

I even suceeded in going through a tropical yellow fever on the Volga. Many doctors attended me which makes it more difficult to understand how I lived through it, but I did nevertheless. Read tremendously. Hoped to be an architect or shipbuilder. Made such models of Volga boats that the papers wrote one up. And I stopped envying one of my street urchin friends who bragged they had a piece in the paper about him: "An unknown thief robbed the merchant Erokhin's house taking a samovar and carpenters plane." At one time I was ambitious to become a naturalist. But once an entire collection of bugs woke up and left me. The bugs escaped together with the pins. The ether with which I had presumably killed them was evidently too weak and had evaporated. I did not sleep nights having nightmares of raids of vengeance on the part of bugdom. Miserable bugs, in mortal torment, with pins stuck through them. What abominable meanness!

Then I was bent on becoming a hero. But mother would not let me join the army. Categorically. During the first years of the revolution I got a passion for social work. I organized children's circles at the library.

Then upon graduating from high school I attended the Saratov Practical Arts Institute for a year and the school of physics and mathematics of the Moscow University for three years .In 1925 my first story was published, was actor, author and editor of *Blue Blouse,* the live paper at the university. Worked as a piece work apprentice to an electrician, made art posters, ran a movie house and lectured for *Osoaviakhim.* This was a very difficult time for me. I lost my way, fell out of step, so to say, and could not get back into step. Or as aviators say, more aptly, I lost speed. I got into a mortal tailspin. But I somehow succeeded in righting my plane. I began to gain height.

The art of writing I learned in my letters home. My first big letter was one describing the Lenin funeral. In others I told the folks about Moscow. I told of its streets, its streetcars, the people, the theatres, stadiums. I described marches, construction, steeples, flights, exhibitions. My younger brother as I afterwards found out, calmly published parts of my letters in the *Saratov Izvestia* and on the money he got had a good time—went to the movies and ate pastries to my health. Soon, however, Moscow editors opened their doors to me. I wrote for the *Izvestia.* But even before that I had found my way to the oil cloth covered door in Hendrik alley. The door bore a small plate with the name of the great Mayakovsky. I ran up the steps, but my heart was rolling down the steps from excitement. I rang and the door opened.

By this door I came to literature.

5

The great poet of the revolution, Vladimir Mayakovsky, my older friend and teacher always, thought the Soviet newspaper the best school for a young writer. And I studied the art of writing on a newspaper. The paper taught me to be joyous and angry together with the entire country when taking up my work. It taught me to be frugal with words, write simply, clearly, concisely and to the point. It bred a wholesale disgust for "esthetic exercises"

to literature written "just like that." I am not interested, do not care to write "just like that."

A childhood incident impressed itself sharply upon me. An angry old woman was beating a cat mercilessly out in our yard. The cat had done something. The old witch had tied the cat to a bench by means of a towel (so it could not run away) and was beating it over the head with a broom. My brother and I silently witnessed the horrible scene. Father came in accidentally. He scolded the old woman and freed the cat. Then we got our share. "What have you got against us?" I tried in defense. "It was not we." Father got extremely angry: "Not you?! And to look on calmly while others torture an animal is alright? O, you!..."

To this day I blush when I think of the shameful incident. How did I, really?... But the incident helped me to cultivate a most uncompromising, fierce intolerance of philistine neutrality. The dull indifference of the philistine is disgusting to me. And a writer looking on indifferently at the gigantic construction going on, the class battle raging all over the world, is not much removed from the colorless philistine.

I aim to have every detail, every line I write replete with revolutionary intent. Just as the magnetic particles are imbedded in a piece of steel.

I aim to have not only the half-metre, but my entire 182 centimetres an integral part of the proletarian revolution.

6

I walk a lot, ride, fly, and swim. I have lived in a border kolkhoz. I took part in the first trial exhibition of Soviet gliders, in the first flights of the giant airplane ANT-14, of the Soviet dirigible B-3. I have gone down the shafts of the subway being built in Moscow, I have visited the great inventor of the interplanetary rocket K. E. Tsiolkovsky in order to reserve a place for myself... for the first flight to the moon. This is not a chase for thrills... No! It is just love of our machinery, love of our men, of our Soviet heaven and earth. I have just as much joy in writing of the planetarium, a factory kitchen, a meeting or a match, a railroad station or first aid station, kindergardens or steel plants, schools or houses of correction, cooperatives or museums, academies or lotteries, hospitals or airports —all the magnificent variety of our new, inexhaustibly vast, difficult and exciting reality.

Often and gladly I write about children and for children. I find it very interesting to talk to the youngest citizens of our young country. Soviet children are wonderful readers. Their thirst and interest are not to be satisfied by a soothing nipple. Literature for them must be made of the "whole cream." They are keen to detect any false note.

I am in most intimate contact with my small readers. We meet often. The youngsters appreciate that I can bark exactly like a dog and that under a glass on my desk there are a lot of photographs of automobiles. I have their respect because I know all the makes of automobiles and can tell a mile away any Volga steamer, give its name before the revolution and tell the year it was built. And, to tell the truth, I am prouder of these accomplishments myself than of all my writing in which I find, so far, small satisfaction.

However I look at the world gaily and am glad to be alive !

Moscow, June, 1933

Vladimir Sobolev

STAVSKY: A Soviet Writer at Work

There was a time when bored Imagists shut themselves up in the cheap apartments of the Hotel for Pilgrims of the Beautiful and thought mournfully of how

They are not our songs
That the street sings.

Not long ago a certain writer told me of the tragedy of a man who had been born in the corner house of a street called (he was a long time choosing a suitable name for the street)—no, it was not on a corner and not even in a street, but simply in an alley. My companion spoke of the tragedy of a writer for whom the world was bounded on one side by Prechistenka on another by Arbat and on the third by long boulevards. Beyond lay a world that was strange to him—a world that contained the memorial to Menin and Pojarsky, the Cathedral of St. Basil the Blessed and the Fine Arts Museum. My companion recalled a line of Grusinov's "You will never learn sitting in comfortable armchairs how 'Russe' lives and breathes and has its being," and went on to speak of a writer whose tragedy was that growing up within the environment he did, he never realized his own tragedy, was cheerful, industrious and never regarded his literary "furnished rooms" as an Hotel for Pilgrims of the Beautiful. He was convinced of the usefulness of his own art, although it was really quite useless and never said of himself—

They are not our songs
That the street sings.

"Is that to be the subject of your new story?" we asked the writer who had been telling us about the other.

"Yes," he said.

And we thought that the story would surely be an autobiography .We came to this conclusion because we knew the writer knew that he lived in literary "furnished rooms" and looked out on the world, on people, events and "the street"—through unwashed windows. The world outside the windows was a strange one for him. Even the sharp, distinct electric constellations of the squares and streets seemed an inexplicable cosmic fog to this hermit, this literary anchorite.

After the writer had left us, we began to talk about the "breeds" of Soviet writers, of the type of writer necessary to our times, the type that was being bred by our times. We spoke of a sane outlook that could always be depended upon and of the chaotic, restless, blind "inner nature" that could so easily lead astray the most talented of writers although he might have the best intentions in the world. Then we talked of the place of the writer as a worker, in socialist construction, of his place as a member of the collective, of the necessity—for some—of getting out of their stuffy, lonely rooms as soon as possible under the open skies of their country, blown by the health giving wind. Because—

"Because it is impossible to write if you do not know life, isn't it? It is absurd to talk about talent, talent!—What the devil is the good of talent if the owner of it sits in his study squeezing his story drop by drop out of his 'imagination'—although the latter may be the finest of its kind. Am I right, Timothy?"

Quite right!

Just look into life—no, not like that, you go and start from life itself from its very centre, comprehend it if you can and it will unfold such beauties to you, and show you such wonders that your talent will hardly be able to keep up with it. I'm right, there, Timothy, am I not?"

"Quite right!'

"Just look at the extraordinary things that are being done! What people come within your ken.

V. Stavsky

What wonderful abilities develop—in every field. Where is the hero in literature? Where is the Party in literature? This is old stuff! People have been talking about this a long time? All the more reason why we should talk about it. I'm right, am I not, Timothy?"

"Quite right!"

It was Vladimir Stavsky, the writer, who asked the question and his comrade at arms who answered it, was Timothy Ignatov, of the Red Army with whom Stavsky had fought against the Whites on the Eastern front, who had just come up to Moscow from somewhere near Kazan to visit the writer. He sat at the table, thoughtfully turning the glass salt cellar round in his fingers and listening. He showed not the faintest surprise at hearing this same young, strong fellow who had been at the front with him talk about art, about simplicity and truth in writing with as much assurance as if he was sitting not at his writing table but somewhere in the trenches taking advantage of a momentary lull to clean his rifle.

Stavsky never loses touch with friends or indeed with any of those he was thrown into contact with on the difficult paths of Revolution. Friendship which is generally a comradely intimacy or a profoundly personal affair with other people expands in the case of this man to the farthest limits of a association, a useful association with the whole of the "outer" world.

From these contacts the writer draws all the inspiration necessary for himself, his growth and development and his creative work. His study in which the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin occupy the place of honor on the shelves is stacked to the ceiling with letters, rolls of papers, packages of manuscripts, documents, books and newspaper cuttings. His numerous correspondents often become the heroes of his stories. Here is Andrei Nemyka of Tikhoretskaya. He is an exception. He is not a hero yet but he is going to be—in Stavsky's new story. Here is his letter to "Dear Comrade Vladimir Petrovitch Stavsky—" in which he says that he "burnt that anti-Soviet text book on literature as you told me"—and that " a great deal of time is lost through my being half illiterate—the work I should get through in a couple of hours takes me twice as long by the time I rub up my dull wits." But Andrei Nemyka of Tikhoretskaya is not the only one. Here is Mishka Grinchenko, the 16 year old son of the heroine of *The Start*. He appeared in Moscow in person and settled down to live with the writer.

Stavsky has received up to a thousand letters already. Some of them are the usual "readers' " letters and many are from far off friends—collective farmers, workers, school children who are just as near to him as Timothy Ignatov. They are letters that must be answered, they contain or ask for advice, they tell him the latest news of the collective farm and of the further adventures of his heroes.

"There is a terrifying and wonderful strength in these letters," said Stavsky, rooting about among the papers. "They contain for me, the assurance that my work is necessary and useful. If I thought I was writing for nothing, I would leave it off at once and go into the army or a factory." (Stavsky may be perfectly easy on that point: the State Book Distributing Agency has just received a formal request from readers for 400,000 extra copies of *The Start.)* A round dozen or so of good stories could be collected from the heap of letters here.

"Find me a few writers," said Stavsky, laughing, "just a few—of those who sit in their rooms writing. I'll give them any amount of material to work on, all they'll have to do will be to write it up. The question is, if they've got used to sitting over their work in their rooms, will they be able to cope with this material? Letters can only be of use when a writer is kept in touch with life by other threads."

Of these "other threads" Stavsky has numbers. Newspapers lie before him on the table: *The Rostov Hammer, The Rostov Collective Farm News,* the Tikhoretskaya and Krasnodar papers. Stavsky the writer is almost entirely the product of Stavsky the worker correspondent, Stavsky the editor of one of the Donbass miners' papers, Stavsky of *Pravda.* Nursed in the Bolshevik press, he has learned to look upon a writer's work as responsible, practical work. It is difficult to label him as a sedentary "writer at work on his manuscript." Stavsky's manuscripts are not born at the writing table, his tales are not thought out while tramping up and down a few yards of dwelling space. His productions arise out of life itself, out of movement, struggle, during his journeys from one village to another, during the sowing campaigns, but of speeches at meetings, out of conversations on benches outside Cossack huts, out of all that is bred by contact with reality. Stavsky actually entered the literary field just at the time when he was working most earnestly at grain collecting and traveling about from village to village.

"Last year I was sent by *Pravda* traveling all over the Kuban Region for seven months. It's the greatest happiness to be a writer in these days, to work, to fight and be—not merely a writer. I got so much out of my last trip to the Kuban—"

Stavsky gave vent to a whistle at this point.

"My last trip increased my sources of energy by—but I can't even tell you how much—"

He took down scores of negatives from the shelves and held them up in turn for my inspection keeping up a running fire of approving remarks, as if he was examining them for the first time.

"That was taken when I was on the sowing campaign. I was all over the Kabarda district.

"That was taken in Dagestan. See—a collective farm. Oho! And what about this one? The village of Chokh. Oho. And this? Waterworks? Oho! And look at this—Kabardian collective farmers—fine folk, eh? And that's me on the horse—like a trick rider! And here's another—."

Afterwards stacking the negatives neatly away he said:

"I've no time to print them, though. How can I fiddle about with that, whenever I've spare time I'd rather go hunting, there's my gun on the wall spoiling for want of practice."

It is no wonder the gun is spoiling—Stavsky works from early morning till late at night. "Isn't that a bit too much of a good thing, Stavsky?" we ask.

"I've plenty of energy for that."

Stavsky's energy suffices not only for work on his manuscript (and this work includes much more than the actual writing at his table). He has as much energy as appetite for living—the great appetite of a man who has realized the inexhaustible richness of life. He has as much love for life as for his profession of a writer. He never misses an opportunity. As soon as delegates from all parts of the country arrived in Moscow for the First All Union Congress of Collective Farmers, he visited them in their hotel to find out from them the effectiveness of *Cossack Villages* and *The Start*. When he arrived in the village of Vassyuinskaya, in the Kuban Region, he called a conference of the heroes of his tales. He is glad when the discussion of his books leads the collective farmers to a discussion of the affairs of the collective farm— it means that his book must have some real connection with life.

"I've just finished a book now, you know," he says, raising a pile of manuscripts from the table. "It's not ready for the press yet. I think it's better than *The Start;* still, I'll have to work on it a good bit. It's about the Kuban collective farms, about a certain seven big days, only seven and the tactics of the class enemy. Party work—youth. The book is called *Petruss Khijni*—it's the first part of a big work to be called *Attack*. It's about youth, I was saying. Yes, I keep that well to the fore in the book. The Komsomols were quite right to get at me that time for not treating youth properly in *The Start*. They had something to complain of. I plan to write a play soon. I've got the idea firmly rooted in my head. I'll write a play that can be put on at any Cossack village club. Do you know what our clubs are like? They accommodate six hundred people. Real theatres. No joke, I can tell you."

Then suddenly he remembered something—and returned to his book.

"I'm going to publish *Petruss* in time for the Writers' Congress—even if I have to spit blood to do it."

Stavsky assures us that he knows all his own deficiencies. It may be so. At all events he often thinks and speaks of them. "To tell you the truth, I regard everything I've done as work of a very low standard. I think one of the greatest dangers that threaten a writer is Snobbishness.

"The Soviet writer has the love and trust of the reading mass and works in that atmosphere. Our writers often become favorites in advance,' even before they have produced any really good literary work. And so it often happens that their heads are turned, believe me—I know it from my own experience. Good thing my comrades knocked it out of me in time. We must fight for more modesty, for Bolshevik modesty and simplicity. The finest examples of this we can take are Lenin and Stalin."

Stavsky the writer is only at the start. He is running in the right direction and the morning is beautiful and the road is wide and the "street" sings and the songs of the "street" contain his first words.

Am I right, Timothy Ignatov?

Quite right!

Nathanial Buchwald

The First International Olympiad of Revolutionary Theatres

In accordance with the decision of the first Plenum of the International Workers' Dramatic Union (now—International Union of Revolutionary Theatres), the first International Olympiad of International Revolutionary Theatres was held in Moscow in May, 1933. Twenty-five groups participated in the Olympiad of which sixteen were from foreign countries. In addition, delegations of twenty-two countries took part in the conference on the revolutionary theatre movement which was held immediately after the Olympiad. Within the period of May 25-31, afternoon and evening perfomances were given in the large Music Hall by agit-prop brigades of France, England, Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, Switzerland, Poland, Denmark, Belgium, Norway and Mongolia. The USSR was represented by a number of Young Workers' Theatre groups (TRAMS) of Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov, Dniepropetrovsk (Jewish Tram) Tiflis (Turkmenian Tram). The conference on the revolutionary theatre movement was attended by representatives of these groups in addition to delegations from Japan, the United States, Spain, Latvia and other countries which could not send any performing groups either because of fascist terror or financial difficulties or both. Conspicuous among the foreign delegates were such well known leaders and masters of the revolutionary theatre as Moussinac of France, Piscator and Wagenheim of Germany, Hijikata of Japan and others. Leading masters of the Soviet theatre as well as outstanding playrights and dramatic critics also took part in the conference and in the deliberations of the jury of the Olympiad.

Politically the Olympiad reflected the spirit of militant class struggle of the workers in capitalist countries. The leit motifs in the repertory of

Left to right: Lubimov-Lanskoy, director of the MOSPS Theatre; Podolsky, executive member of the IURT; Leon Moussinac, French director, novelist; Paul Gsell, international secretary of a world-wide organization of the professional bourgeois theatres; Vladimirov, director of the Moscow Small Theatre; Diament, secretary of the IURT; and at extreme right, Seki Sano, director of the Left Theatre of Tokyo.

The Music Hall where the Olympiad was held

the foreign groups were: struggle against fascism, against imperialist war and for the defence of the Soviet Union, against attacks on the standards of living of the workers, against the treacherous policy of the social fascists bureaucracy, etc. The struggle against fascism figured prominently in the repertory of the Dutch, Danish, Swiss and Czecho-Slovakian groups in whose sketches and mass recitations Hitler and hitlerism came in for special scathing criticism and denunciation. Outstanding among these anti-fascist sketches was one by the Danish group showing Hitler seated at a table in front of a miniature model of the German Reichstag. At Hitler's command, the Reichstag burst into flames. The audience greeted this scene with much applause and laughter.

In every one of the perfomances of the foreign groups the players were at one with their play, for the majority of the performers were young workers, fully a half of them members of the Communist Parties or Communist Youth Leagues of their respective countries. For them acting is merely one of the forms of struggle against the class enemy. At home the same performers who in the evening appeared before a workers audience had very frequently taken part during the day in a hunger march, a picket line demonstration, and encounter with the police, a heroic fight to beat off the attack of a fascist band. In all capitalist countries, with varying degrees of brutality, workers' agit-prop groups are persecuted as dangerous revolutionary organizations—dangerous because effective in their propaganda, in their work of mobilizing masses for revolutionary action. In Germany, Poland, Japan, Latvia and other fascist countries where white terror and political reaction are rampant, agit-prop groups lead an illlegal existence utilizing at the same time every opportunity for legal and semi-legal activity. They are frequently arrested, sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment, tortured by fascist hangmen,—the 'play goes on'. And the play is not a make-believe, but a real struggle of two worlds, of class against class.

To the Moscow audience this aspect of the Olympiad and its participants was in itself dramatic. The Soviet workers who daily jammed the huge Music Hall fully appreciated the splendid militant spirit of these brave revolutionary theatre brigades and realized that the tense lines of the sketches and the mass declamations had derived their fire and fervour from the flames of the class struggle throughout the capitalist world .

A Proletarian Welcome

On the other hand the Soviet environment in which the Olympiad took place added an element of solemnity and eloquence to the event. The foreign guests were deeply touched and overwhelmed by the earnest attention and heart-

felt welcome accorded them in Moscow. The profound interest shown in the USSR to their work and to every aspect of creative self expression of workers, the hospitality and spirit of solidarity displayed by the Soviet workers both in the theatre and in the factories which the Olympiad participants visited, the absorbing attention paid by the leaders of art and theatre in the Soviet Union to each and every group and finally the contrast between the conditions under which workers theatres are compelled to work in capitalist countries and the splendid opportunities the Soviet Trams have for developing their art and experimenting with new forms of theatrical expression—all this filled the proletarian guests with a spirit of enthusiasm which was truly boundless. In some measure this spirit was reflected in the letter addressed by the participants in the Olympiad to the leader of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin:

"This is our first visit in the Soviet Union and these days are a tremendous experience in our lives. We have seen living socialism at work. We have seen the goal of our struggle, the goal that is here visible, tangible, all pervading. We have seen the fatherland of the proletariat, the truly free, truly splendid country, which is growing in strength, which is creating an unprecedented blossoming of proletarian all-human culture and art. And we say to you, Comrade Stalin:

All our strength, all the power of our art we will devote to the cause of transforming the whole world into a Union of Soviet Republics. . ."

Yet the Olympiad was not only a demonstration of the militant revolutionary spirit of the proletariat in capitalist countries, not only a striking contrast between the attitude toward culture in the Soviet Union and in bourgeois countries, not only an international gathering which in itself exerted a revolutionizing influence upon the masses of workers in all countries, —the Olympiad was also and mainly a critical review of the content and forms of the revolutionary theatre, particularly of the professional agitation and propaganda theatre. This was really the main purpose of the Olympiad.

From this standpoint every performance of every group was interesting both in its merits and its faults. Most of the groups that participated in the Olympiad had their own specific merits and distinguishing qualities; the faults and shortcomings on the other hand were of a common typical nature, faults of incorrect ideological approach towards the agit-prop theatre, shortcomings which showed that not all of the agit-prop groups had recovered in the same measure from their "infantile deseases."

Development of Agit-Prop Forms

On the formal side the agit-prop theatre in capitalist countries began its development in the direction away from the theatre, away from the stage, from external scenic effects. This was quite natural. The form and style of the agit-prop theatre were dictated by the circumstances under which the groups had to carry on their activities and by the tasks they had to perform in the revolutionary movement. The main thing required of an agitprop group was a maximum capacity to adapt itself to the needs of the moment and a maximum mobility in passing from position to position, from mass meeting to mass meeting. The work of the agit-prop group was calculated not for the stage but for the bare platform, for a meeting hall without a platform, for a bierhalle or for the street corner. This circumstance naturally determined the technique of the play. There could be no question of using scenery, lighting effects or make-up. All that was left to the agit-prop group from the component elements of the theatre was the bare word and through the power of *speaking* their lines, the agit-prop players had to bring home to the spectator a dramatization of the class struggle. The raw untrained proletarian performers, who have turned actors over night, had to assume the tremendous burden of raising the spoken word to a maximum of expressiveness, to endow the spoken word with those dramatic and theatrical overtones which on the stage are

The French Blue Blouse group of Bobigny, a suburb of Paris

The Belgian Proletarian Theatre group of Brussels

Foreign theatre groups leaving Lenin's Tomb

attained with the aid of scenery, properties, lighting, costumes, make-up, etc.

By and large the agit-prop theatre has mastered the spoken word, lifting it to a maximum of vibrant expressiveness. In point of mass recitation, of ringing tone, of rhythmic reading, the agit-prop theatre has made important gains. The speaking chorus and the rhythmic group movement has become one of the main forms of the agit-prop theatre, so that gradually an agit-prop group could be identified by its external features, by the manner of distributing the lines as between individuals and the chorus, the manner of semi-military group movements of the performers, etc. Thus, a kind of formal agit-prop style has made its appearance. In the hands of creative directors this style has been used with tremendous effect in bringing about a complete *rapport* between stage and workers audience; but under inept leadership the agit-prop style has soon degenerated into a cliche, into a rigid form which stifled the spirit of the script and which grew duller and duller with repetition.

The worst part of it has been the tendency in some countries to make virtue of necessity raising the technical limitations of the agit-prop theatre, imposed by the circumstances, to the level and dignity of a principle. There arose a well known "theory" to the effect that true revolutionary theatre can get along without the "bourgeois trappings" of the professional theatre, that the proletarian theatre has no need of trained actors, that sincerity on the part of the worker—performer is quite sufficient to impress the audience with the spirit of his part, that the worker playing the role of the class enemy needs merely to understand the political meaning of his part and be imbued with a proletarian feeling of hatred toward the class enemy . This "theory" was carried so far that in some countries, some leaders in the agit-prop field put forth the thesis that one need not possess any previous training to write or direct or stage a proletarian play; that any class conscious worker can be both playwright, director and actor in the agit-prop theatre. On the other hand, every technical means, such as scenery, costume, make-up, etc. was rejected and decried as bourgeois and every attempt at systematic training was ridiculed as bourgeois intellectualism. . .

The First International Olympiad

From the very beginning of its existence the International Workers' Dramatic Union waged a consistent struggle against this kind of "leftist" vulgarization. But due to the feeble connections between the center and the foreign sections, the sections were generally far behind the center in point of ideological orientation. The first Plenum of the International Workers' Dramatic Union decided to organize an international review of the workers' theatres and this review (or Olympiad) was scheduled for May then shifted to August 1932 . But due to the inability of a few important sections to send groups at that time, the review was postponed until May 1933. This, in brief, is the history of the first International Olympiad of Revolutionary Theatres.

The results of the Olympiad have shown that the two years since the first Plenum of the International Workers' Dramatic Union have not passed in vain. In the course of this period the international organization has become more consolidated, the central apparatus has been perfected and extended. The ideological and organizational ties between the center and the sections have grown stronger and the agit-prop theatres have begun rapidly recovering from their "infantile deseases." The participants in the first International Olympiad of Revolutionary Theatres consisted of groups that have back of them considerable periods of earnest training, and the value of training and mastery of the theatrical medium was fully recognized by all the players of all the groups.

The agit-prop cliche (speaking chorus, bare words on a bare platform, uniform costumes, scant attention to the auxiliary elements of the theatre) was still in evidence at the Olympiad, but in the majority of cases skill, invention and training went a good deal in animating the cliche with streaks of genuinely creative revolutionary theatre.

The French *October Group* presented a typical agit-prop playlet (dealing with the Citroen Strike in the automobile industry) in which mass

recitation, the orchestration of voices, the coloring and variety of intonations and the plastic groupings have been lifted to the significance and eloquence of effective art form.

The *October Group* was not the only one that showed the agit-prop style at its best. The Danish players thrilled the audience with their nuances of this style, with the inventiveness of their *mis-en-scenes* and with their knack of turning an agit-prop play into a *show* presenting a maximum of spectacular effect with minimum of theatrical trappings *(The Rotation Machine)* The Dutch agit-prop group also demonstrated the agit-prop style at its best and livened up proceedings by introducing fetching grotesque bits of showmanship with the aid of a couple of masks and a few pieces of bright material *Religion is Opium to the People)*. Masks were also used effectively by the German dance group.

The Belgian group was among the most interesting and creative agit-prop brigades, operating with a minimum of technical means and attaining very impressive results with the use of placards, sartirical scenes, mass recitation, movement and song. Without sacrificing the spirit of the agit-prop theatre this group displayed a high degree of theatrical effectiveness.

On the other hand, the English, Czecho-Slovakian and the Swiss group presented samples of agit-prop work which showed that the cliche and artistic poverty of the agit-prop theatre has not been eliminated everywhere. Even if the players of those groups spoke or recited their lines quite effectively they did not advance the agit-prop style much beyond its crude initial stage.

Soviet and Foreign Agit-Prop

The scope of this review does not include an analysis of the work of each group at the Olympiad (a detailed critical review of the Olympiad group by group will shortly be made public in the report of the jury of the Olympiad which included outstanding leaders of the revolutionary theatre in the Soviet Union and abroad). But it should be pointed out here that the Olympiad naturally divided itself into two categories so far as general quality was concerned: the agit-prop groups of capitalist countries fell into one category and the Soviet TRAMS into another. That the latter displayed superior artistic form and skill goes without saying. But the TRAMS cannot be measured by the same yardstick as the foreign agit-prop groups. The Soviet agit-prop theatre grew out of non-professional workers theatrical circles of about the same type as in the agit-prop movement in capitalist countries. Under the leadership of the *Komsomol* (Communist Youth League) the more capable of the non-professional agit-prop brigades and individual players were professionalized and formed into Workers' Youth Theatres (in Russian: *Theatr*

Trade Union Collective of Soviet Metal Workers in a Scene from Vsevolod Ivanov's Armoured Train

Rabochey Molodezhi; hence the abbreviation TRAM). Surrounded with tender attention and given every material opportunity for development, the TRAMS naturally developed far beyond the limits of the agit-prop theatre as it is known abroad. Animated by the spirit of socialist construction, by the fervour and zeal of shock brigades and by the struggle against the remnants of bourgeois ideology and class resistance in the Soviet Union, the TRAMS also presented a thematic pattern quite different from the subject matter of the foreign agit-prop brigades.

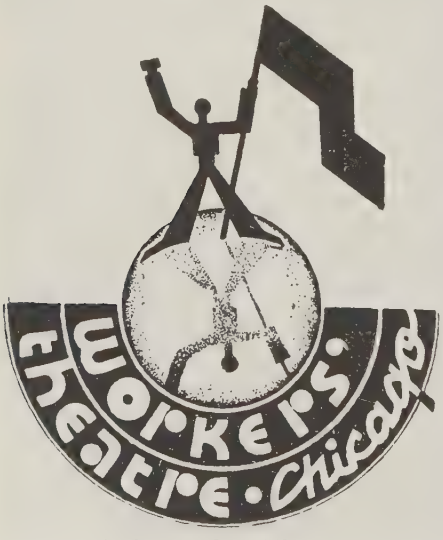
Yet it cannot be said that the principal value in the juxtaposition of the TRAMS and the foreign agit-prop brigades was that of contrast. Both groups had much to learn from each other. To the TRAM performers who work under conditions of material security and full opportunity to develop their creative capacities, it has been both inspiring and instructive to see the substantial achievements of many of the foreign agit-prop groups working under the worst possible conditions of poverty, persecution and strenuous struggle on several fronts.

On the other hand, the foreign groups had a good deal to learn from the TRAM. For after all, much of the work of the TRAMS can be adapted (with further simplification, perhaps) to the circumstances of the agit-prop theatre in capitalist countries. Many of the TRAM performances are portable and require only such limited stage fittings as many of the agit-prop groups abroad can easily afford. Though some of the TRAMS gave performances of plays calling for bulky scenery and elaborate stage presentation, the distinguishing feature of the TRAM work at the Olympiad was not the complicated technique but the superior, more complicated form of agitation through the medium of the theatre, a higher measure of skill and discipline, greater inventiveness in utilizing simple technical devices for telling spectacular effects. The *montage* form of dramatic narrative organically interwoven with elements of song and dance can surely be borrowed with profit by the foreign

agit-prop group. The higher degree of the rhythmically organized spoken word enriched through vocal and orchestral music, which was shown in the performance of the Oratorio *Lenin Front* by the Jewish TRAM of Dniepropetrovsk was in itself a whole school where the foreign agit-prop players could learn to lift their work to a higher level.

The primitive manner of utilizing the element of music, especially of singing, is one of the weakest points of nearly all agit-prop groups abroad. Even if they cannot avail themselves of orchestras or of accordions (which are used with tremendous effect by the Soviet groups) they can surely develop the use of the song in a higher measure than has been the case up to now. The Dniepropetrovsk TRAM showed a superior form of rhythmic organization and discipline which could be adapted to the limitations of the agit-prop theatre anywhere. The Moscow TRAM of the Co-operative and State Trade Workers presented another oratorio where remarkable scenic effects were produced with the aid of such simple auxiliaries as megaphones, red flags and streamers, and where mass recitation interwoven with song and brightened with visual effects combined to make a *show* at once dazzling in appearance and stirring in emotional effect. The latter show was quite portable and all the "scenery" and properties could be packed in a medium sized grip.

The agit-prop theatre (the former "blue blouses" the "living newspapers" and the TRAMS of today) have been exerting their influence upon the agit-prop theatre in capitalist countries. Only through such an exchange of experiences as was made possible through the Olympiad, and only under the ideological and organizational leadership of the International Union of the Revolutionary Theatres was the possibility created for the spreading of the rich experience and high degree of artistic skill of the Soviet agit-prop theatre in the revolutionary theatre movement abroad.



Insignia of the Workers Theatre of Chicago

The Conference Following the Olympiad

The conference of the delegations of the various sections of the International Union of Revolutionary Theatres was an organic part of the Olympiad. At this conference, organizational and artistic problems were discussed with a view to improve the work of the agit-prop theatre abroad. The difference between the former International Workers Dramatic Union and the present organization is a difference in scope. The former organization occupied itself almost exclusively with the agit-prop theatre and this in itself tended to create the impression that other forms of the revoluionary theatres could not come within the scope of workers' theatre. The I.W.D.U. paid almost no attention to the professional theatre while the I.U.R.T considers the problem of establishing new professional revolutionary theatres and drawing the existing ones into the revolutionary movement as one of its principal tasks. The necessity of widening the periphery of the revolutionary movement in capitalist countries, has determined this change of attitude toward the professional revolutionary theatre.

The emphasis of *quality*, the struggle against sketchiness and superficiality and the slogan of more profound character portrayal which have been advanced as the urgent problems in Soviet literature and the theatre, have also found their expression in the theses of the second plenum of the I.U.R.T. held in Moscow in November 1932. In the light of these theses the agit-prop theatre abroad began reorganizing its work.

It cannot be expected of the agit-prop groups abroad to discard entirely the sketchy symbols of the characters in agit-prop plays and to go in for profound, searching character portrayal. But the new turn in the direction of quality, of artistic effectiveness may and should be translated in terms of higher theatrical forms of the agit-prop theatre, in the sense of better literary and dramatical quality of the scripts and of greater technical and scenic inventiveness that would allow to attain new forms of revolutionary theatre with a minimum of expenditure of time, money and materials. At the same time the foreign workers in the field of revolutionary theatre should omit no opportunity to establish stationary revolutionary theatres utilizing the services of the art intelligentsia which is ready to join in the struggle against fascism, war danger and political reaction in general.

In the course of the past year much has been accomplished by way of extending the revolutionary theatre front and enriching the arsenal of art weapons in the hands of the working class. The first International Olympiad of Revolutionary Theatres and the conference of the representatives of the sections of the I.U.R.T. mark a new high stage in the development of this international action in the field of the revolutionary theatre.

Bela Uitz

Fifteen Years of Art in the USSR

We are dealing with history. We can not go into all details on account of the limited space available and must hence touch only on the dominant forces—the essential traits of the development of Soviet Art and how the Bolshevik Party guided this development through the various stages of Socialist progress.

The October revolution gave Socialist art a definite economic basis. The four big steps of the Soviets in the creation of a classless society are distinctly evident in the art exhibited: War-Communism, Nep, Reconstruction and Socialist Construction. The exhibition also shows the progressive changes in the attitudes of most of the best artists to Soviet art.

Socialist art, as represented in this exhibition, clearly lags behind Socialist construction, although in several branches it is well abreast of the times: the poster, illustrations, satire—the light cavalry hits clean and is often deadly to the enemy.

In order to understand the backwardness of the art of painting as compared to the advancement of Socialist construction one must take into account the forces available for building up a Socialist culture.

War-Communism

During the period of war communism the party had to throw all its forces into the then raging civil war and could pay only the most cursory attention to the fine arts. The People's Commissariat of Education, as the central organization, encouraged and guided the activities of artists but special organizations with a clear understanding of the fundations of art in the revolution were altogether lacking. The then existing organizations failed totally to fill the requirements put to them by the proletariat. The Party adopted a waiting policy with respect to the art of painting, as bourgeois influence was still strong in this field which did not serve the revolution directly.

It would be wrong, however, to assume that nothing in the field of revolutionary art was created during the period of war communism. The authority of the Russian Communist Party asserted itself with tremendous influence. The various schools of painting, the Futurist-Cubists primarily, threw themselves into the breach with great enthusiasm, but the results were either as with the Futurist Cubists altogether abstract, or in the style of "Art for art's sake" which was the slogan of the liberal bourgeoisie and all artists that were caught by the grandeur of the proletarian revolt. The vast majority of the artists had not the slightest conception of Marxist-Leninist teachings and were imbued with purely bourgeois idealism.

The artists, inclined to be abstract, painted inane things of the sort that passed for "pure" art and were occupied with the purely technical problems of color, tone, line, space, rhythm, mass, motion, etc., while ideologically concerning themselves with petty bourgeois individualist problems they presumed to be "above" classes. Thus neither the Cubists nor any other ists could logically create any truly proletarian revolutionary works of art. To this school Rodchenko, Halewitch, Kliun, Tatlin, etc. can be ascribed, judging by the paintings exhibited.

The Realists, Naturalists, Impressionists, of this period stood aloof from the daily struggle of the proletariat. They continued their work on the problems of bourgeois art and painted churches, landscapes, portraits, etc. in this vein. Such passive representations of nature we have in Bayekayeva's *Evening, River, Rilov's Birds, Winter Road;* also Krilov, Konchalovsky, etc.

It would, of course, be unreasonable to suppose that the most heroic struggle in the history of humanity, a struggle headed by the proletariat with the Bolshevist Party leading it, had not affected individual great artists with the most passionate enthusiasm. Kustodiev, for instance, tells, with great love and devotion as well as masterly technique the story of this heroic period. In his *Mayday* the victorious march of the Leningrad workers, filled with the joy of life is shown with splendid craftsmanship and coloring. His *Bolshevik* symbolizing the Party as the leader, guide, and central force of the revolution, in the full consciousness of his power, waves the flag not only over the Soviet Union, but over the entire world. This painting, monumental in composition, shows besides a masterly handling of the problems of complementary colors, the rhythm of chiaroscuro—warm and cold tones, a remarkable synthesis of class content and an extraordinarily high artistic level.

Kustodiev's paintings of the Russian middle class with its endless eating orgies, cats, laces, churches and so on are also of a high artistic order as well as of great political clarity.

Another great artist with a highly developed technical mastery devoted to landscape painting also soon joined the proletariat whose struggles find expression in his work. This was Brodsky. His paintings *Lenin, Stalin, 28Commissars, 2nd Congress* and others are well known.

The vast number of paintings under the influence of the Proletcult of Bogdanov with its petty bourgeois tendencies is given rather scant attention by the exhibition. In its desire to emphasize quality the exhibition has also given little room to the paintings of independent artists of this period in view of their very limited

artistic value. (The exhibition is so rich in material as it is, that in spite of the spacious quarters there is an evident shortage of space).

Nep and Reconstruction Periods

The introduction of the Nep brought to life some of the remnants of the old bourgeoisie and developed a new Nep bourgeoisie. Bourgeois ideology in art which was then still quite potent took on a new lease of life for a short blossoming. This led to the revival of a series of bourgeois art organizations of which in Moscow alone there were over 20, like: Omh, Sharzvet, Tchetire Iskustva, Ost, etc.

There were, during these two stages three forms in which the art of the period crystallized. The Party was never neutral on questions of art and it took an energetic course towards winning the artists for the proletarian cause. It thus created a separate organization AHRR to "embrace the broad masses of artists." This organization succeeded in turning the majority of artists to proletarian subject matter for their work, as evidenced by the three great Red Army exhibitions held (the five-year exhibition, then the decennial exhibition conducted entirely by AHRR and now the Fifteen-year exhibition), in which the members of AHRR took a prominent part.

As opposed to this group, the revolutionary middle class artists gathered in the organization LEF which became the center of the socalled "left" artists, among them adherents of Trotsky and Bogdanov, who considered the class struggle secondary to technical and psychological problems.

A third crystallization center was the network of Fine Arts highschools where the young generation of artists originated. The most active students, mostly Party members, coming to a great extent from the factories, from the civil war fronts, worker and peasant youth, built the first communist nuclei in these schools. This is of the utmost importance to art in the period of Socialist construction as up to then there were no stable communist units among artists.

The aim of these schools—the development of red artists—encountered the difficulty of obtaining teaching forces trained in Marxist-Leninist dialectics. There were excellent art instructors but the pupils were head and shoulders above them politically, organizationally, ideologically. Thus a specific contradiction arose between artist and teacher, technique and ideology. The professors lost their authority due to their political backwardness and the students were insufficiently trained technically.

The art school and the development of art generally, influenced each other mutually, of course, and the influence of the art school increased in proportion to the growth of political, ideological and organizational maturity of the communist nuclei there on the basis of reconstruction and the course towards Socialist construction.

LEF, the "left" organization in the art field, which recognized the class struggle but only as of secondary importance, broke down with the strengthening of the proletarian sector, while AHRR that accepted the class struggle for a primary base grew steadily. The pentennial and decennial Red Army exhibitions already mentioned showed tremendous progress towards a proletarian, socialist content.

The struggle now took on another form. On the one hand the petty bourgeois elements, together with some communists built a new organization, October, that acknowledged the class struggle without putting it foremost. On the other hand a new AHR shook off the national trammels though still retaining the vulgarly materialist character of a passive view on nature.

However, the influence of the bourgeoisie was then continually lessened and with it that of the "art for art's sake" movement of the liberals. At the end of the reconstruction period both AHR and October stood firmly on the basis of the class struggle although differing somewhat on the value set by it.

The First Five-Year Plan

The youth that came out of the communist nuclei of the art schools played its role already during the period of the first Five-Year Plan. This generation, better trained ideologically and organizationally than the older artists, took the lead. It saw immediately the error of attempting to spread Russian national forms over the entire Soviet Union. It turned AHRR, which stood for proletarian content in international form, into AHR, which stood for proletarian content in national form. It also built a new organisation, RAPP, that put up a sharp fight against the many art organizations where bourgeois influence still flourished. It took up the struggle also against "October" succeeding in dissolving it and winning a large number of its members towards the principle of proletarian content.

In 1930 the influence of Soviet art reached out to capitalist countries and the IURA (International Bureau of Revolutionary Artists) was formed.

The very first events in the Five-Year Plan of Industrialization and Collectivization see marked changes in the views of very many artists. All art organizations now go in for Socialist content. RAPP, whose membership by the way should have been thinking of their considerable technical deficiencies, did not understand this transformation and continued fighting against artists who were coming closer to the proletariat. The Party, however, saw this transformation as well as the sectarianism of RAPP. The well known decision of April 23, 1932, hence, dissolved all then existing art organizations and created the new Association of Soviet Artists under Party leadership.

Today the Party can push forward with full force in this most sensitive field of Socialist

culture—Socialist art. In spite of all the seemingly insurmountable obstacles, by means of communist nuclei, it has led the artists to Socialist construction and won them over to the Soviets.

A Cross Section of the Exhibitions

The strong points: we already find rich material on Socialist construction in artistic rendering: shock-brigades, collective farms, factories, production conferences, new structures going up, struggles against the class enemy, civil war themes—these we see repeatedly in the exhibits of which the following stand out: Gerasimov's *Lenin,* Brodsky's *Stalin,* Shumin's *Battle Orders,* Juon's *Worker Battalions Move Towards the Front*—paintings by Petrov, —Vodkin, Deineka, Riaschekin, Yakovlev, etc.

Weak still, technically, are the younger artists who have not as yet overcome the "contradiction" of their school days, like Koslov's *Portrait of a Commander,* Maleyev, Lukomsky.

The powerful influence exerted by artistic ideologies of the old world, however, is now totally gone. Not only has the capitalist world and bourgeois ideology lost its hold on Soviet Art, but the latter is now on the reverse exerting a strong influence on the artists of capitalist, colonial and semi-colonial countries. In Germany, France, England, America, Japan, Holland, Bulgaria, Czecho-Slovakia and other countries many art organizations exist that are extraordinarily devoted to the study of Soviet art. These artists approach the proletarian content of painting in their own national spirit, which is, of course, as it should be.

In this respect one of the shortcomings of the exhibition must be mentioned, a shortcoming so much the more unpardonable since it contradicts a fundamental principle of the Communist Party. The RSFSR is only one of the federations entering into the USSR and this one federation unites some 30 nationalities, among them Germans, Turks, Tartars, etc. Nationalities with great historical and cultural pasts as well as present development. The national forms of the Socialist content of the paintings exhibited are however, very poorly developed. This is exceedingly regrettable.

Summarizing, however, the fifteen year exhibition shows that the complete lack of "Party art" in 1917 has been overcome and in 1933 we have a complete change in that all artists have become Soviet artists.

CHRONICLE

Soviet Art Exhibits

Two great exhibitions opened in Moscow: "The Artists of the RSFSR for 15 Years," and "15 Years of the Red Army," the former being subdivided into three sections: paintings, graphic art, and sculpture.

Aout 350 took part in the first exhibition. Of these only 77 artists had exhibited their work before the Revolution, the rest being products of the Revolution in the full sense of the word.

The post-revolutionary scope of the exhibitors is embodied in numerous pictures showing the newly rising industrial cities, the huge constructions, the machines and the people who work them, industrial workers and collective farmers, new generations of builders and students,—in a word, the physical face of the Soviet country.

N. Bukharin, analyzing the roots of the development of Soviet pictorial art (*Izvestia*, July, 1933), says among other things:

"The march of the Revolution, despite unavoidable specialization, tremendously *enriches* the living sphere of the people, heightens the interests, *complicates* life in the good sense of the term. The very type of our economy, based as it is upon socialist planning, affords the best guarantee against hideous onesideness. We are wiping out the difference between town and village; in a single plan we unite all the spheres of labor, science, and culture generally; we see already the development of certain forms which will eventually do away with the distinction between mental and physical labor...

"The motifs of 'chamber art', 'Bohemia', 'garret', 'cabaret', 'alcove', and the like, can no longer find any room in our pictorial art. We are doing away with hideous separation of theory from practice, of science and production. We are re-creating, upon a powerful basis, the Integral Man, the builder of the socialist society who works, thinks, governs himself, lives the full life, and has boundless perspectives before him. That is why this collective worker has proved capable of such unparalleled extension of the thematical scope of pictorial art."

"This Exhibition," Bukharin concludes, "thrills precisely by this wealth of thematics, while the prevailing *style* is that of consistent realism, which by no means hinders the unfoldment of artistic individuality."

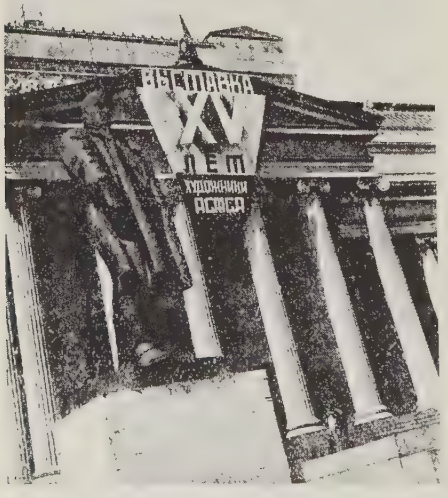
D. Zaslavsky (*Pravda*, July, 1933) is most of all impressed by the exceedingly varied nature of the exhibits, and he exclaims:

"How absurd appears the bourgeois calumny about the alleged stunting of individual development under the proletarian dictatorship! What a lot of venomous and spiteful words has been said about the alleged socialist "stamp"! Reality gives the lie to this calumny. Among the hundreds of masters exhibiting here, there will not be found two people exactly alike. In the course of fifteen years the artists of all schools and tendencies were able to try their strength. And the pictures of Konchalovsky, Petrov-Vodkin, and others, demonstrate the fact that under Soviet conditions their craftmanship, far from being stunted and restrained, has become even more unfolded and flourishing, that these eminent masters have learnt from the new life, have endeavored to grasp the new phenomena and to embody them in their respective individual manner.

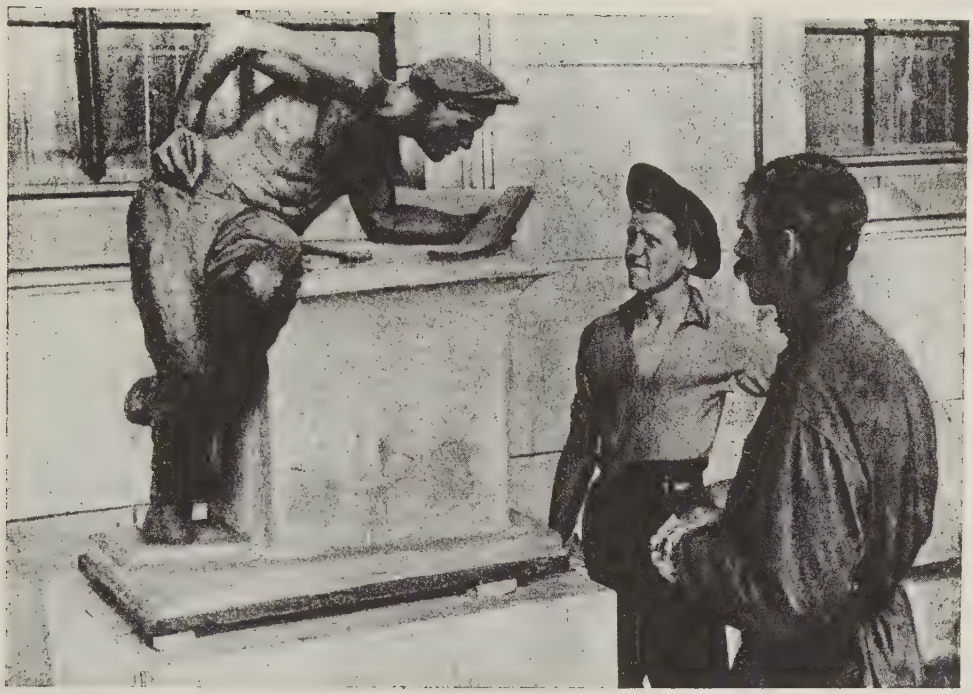
"Freedom to create, full possibility for the manifestation of artistic individuality, is the outstanding trait of this Exhibition."

Of the younger artists in the Exhibition the most talked about are: Deineka, S. Gerasimov, Johanson, A. Gerasimov, N. Denisovsky, Skalia; of the older masters: Yuon, Petrov-Vodkin, Konchalovsky, Brodsky, Bogayevsky, Mashkov, P. Korin, P. Kuznetsov, M. Nesterov, and D. Sternberg.

N. Bukharin (in the above-quoted article) gives particularly high praise to Deineka, among the young artists: "He is the bard of labor and



The Entrance to the Exhibition of 15 Years of Soviet Sculpture at the Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow



A Worker and his son, at the Exhibition of 15 Years of Soviet Sculpture

struggle. His figures are steel-cast, yet throbbing with life. While asserting his style, he is distinctly concrete. He has already found his own "face," and his work can be recognized at once, at the first glance upon the canvas. His themes are the people who toil and struggle, the proletarian. The things are merely accessories, the products made by these people. The whole stress is laid upon the living people. In him we have already an accomplished artist of the new mould."

B. Yefimov (*Soviet Art,* July, 1933) says that in Deineka's work "color, line, and form, are skilfully subordinated to the artistic idea of the picture; for Deineka is a wise artist, par excellence."

S. Gerasimov (according to I. Brodsky in *Soviet Art,* July, 1933) "impresses by the colorful and splendid sensibility of the portayal of his types ... His pictures (e. g. his *October in Moscow)* depict with great expressiveness the courage and valor of our warriors, their seasoned discipline and will-power embodied in their clenched teeth and energetic faces."

Of the older masters unusual attention was drawn by M. Nesterov with his *Portrait of the Korin Brothers.* I. Brodsky *(Soviet Art),* says: "Ever since the time of Serov we have not seen such portraits, so profoundly psychological in content and so beautifully painted."

B. Yefimov *(Soviet Art)* also notes this work, but he declares that in it "the enthusiasm passes into a sort of fierceness, while the object of this fierce content does not belong to us."

Of views expressed about the other artists we glean the following:

"Petrov-Vodkin's *Leningrad in 1919* is by far the strongest of all his works in point of craftsmanship." (I. Brodsky in *Soviet Art).*

"Petrov-Vodkin attracts attention with his picture, *The Death of a Commissar.* It has a strange charm, it creates a great impression, it will positively remain; nevertheless one cannot help noticing its subtle mysticism; the Commissar did not die, but was beatified." (Bukharin in the above-quoted article).

"Bogayevsky's fancy was always drawn by geological cataclysms, charmed by the spectacle of upturned earth and perennial chaos, and he has found embodiment for his poetical fancy in his picture of *Upturned Earth at Dnieprostroy.* (D. Zaslavsky in *Pravda).*

"One feels so gay and at ease when looking upon the canvases of K. Yuon. His pictures are pervaded with extraordinary gaiety and sunshine that communicate themselves to the specialist and the mass spectator alike." (I. Brodsky in *Soviet Art).*

"The 'nail' of Konchalovsky's works is his *Pushkin* with its defiant treatment of the subject: the poet is shown half-undressed, sitting upon a bed, amid crushed linen and a (splendidly painted) coverlet. To "art purists" this

"For the Kolkhoz"—a drawing by A. Avokumov, Staff Artist of the Komsomolskaya Pravda *(Young Communist Truth)*

would appear to be a profanation, nevertheless it is historically true." (Bukharin in *Izvestia).*

The section of posters and cartoons (which play a big role in Soviet art) has brought together all the splendid artists in this field.

"One cannot pass without emotion," writes B. Malkin (*Izvestia,* July, 1933), "by the famous 'Rosta Windows'—one of the most remarkable phenomena in the history of the Soviet poster which followed upon the fresh traces of life and created a tremendous impression by its pithiness, poignancy, and expressiveness ...

"The 'Rosta Windows' poster was originated by the poet Vladimir Mayakovsky in conjunction with a group of artists who banded themselves together for this exceptionally important work of artistic propaganda; among the founders were Cheremnikh, Maliutin, Kozlinsky, Radakov, and Brodaty.

They were subsequently joined by Deni, Moor, B. Yefimov, K. Rotov, Ganf, and the Kukriniksi. This genre of artistic work harbors vast possibilities, which was conclusively demonstrated by the wealth and variety of the display in the Poster section of the Exhibition.

A series of high achievements was also demonstrated in the sculpture section. Here again only about half a dozen masters had made their mark before the Revolution, the rest of the sculptors belonging distinctly to the post-revolutionary period. Sculpture in RSFSR is even younger in this sense than painting.

Of the older sculptors there were particular notices in the press about the recently deceased N. Andreyev, and also about Domogatsky. Among the young sculptors are two women, Lebedeva and Mukhina (referred to as "the core of Soviet sculpture" by A. Efros in *Izvestia,* July, 1933), and also Zelensky, Kardashev, and Slonim.

The Red Army Exhibition

The most characteristic feature of the Exhibition of "15 Years of the Red Army" is, according to Bukharin *(Izvestia,* July, 1933), its "absolutely revolutionary themes. In speaking of this great mass of pictures, one can by no means refer to a mere 'drift' in the direction of Soviet themes; for the starting-point is distinctly new, and the whole mass of canvases breathes the collective spirit of the new epoch. The great class-battles of our time are presented here upon an international plane, and the triumphant motif of our proletarian revolution is taken up here by a whole group of foreign painters, from Britishers to Japanese."

The *Heroism of Struggle and Labor* are the basic content of the Exhibition. "Here," says Bukharin, "we perceive the surging of the hot springs of mass activity, the great throb of Revolution; here we perceive the roar of the civil war, the booming of guns, and the clatter of hammers; here revolves the gigantic flywheel of revolutionary upheaval. In the foreground are the living people: the masses, the active forces, and the leaders. The Red Army appears here as the embodiment of organized mass action, as a militant and at the same time a great cultural force, as the organizer and pioneer of this new, growing culture of Socialism."

The Exhibition includes the pictures of Igor Grabar, *Lenin at the Direct Wire,* and of I. Brodsky, *Lenin at Departure of Troops for the Polish Front.* Generally, the first hall of the Exhibition is dedicated to Lenin and Stalin . In this hall the picture of A. Gerasimov, *Stalin at the 16th Party Congress,* represents the best work of this emotional artist.

N. Bukharin says of this picture that "it impresses by the solemnly effective display of colors, by the red banners, the blaze of electric lights, and the imposing figure of Stalin against this background. It is a canvas drawn in major tones, one of the best portraits of the Party's leader. One misses, however, in this picture the emphatic expression of the most characteristic traits of Stalin: the firm purpose, the steel rigidity of the facial muscles, the brief, energetic gesture; while the closed, silent mouth does not correspond to the motion of the hand as shown upon the picture. With all this, the canvas deserves positive appraisal as a great composition brightly and temperamentally executed."

Igor Grabar (*Izvestia,* July, 1933) considers this Exhibition as a "tremendous event in the life

of Soviet art, and he mentions B. Johanson's canvas, *A Communist on Trial,* as "one of the most impressive canvases in the Exhibition." In his opinion "there is nothing superfluous in the picture; everything is plain and understandable to the mass spectator, and at the same time there is much in it to be admired by the professional art critic, by the expert in form, color, and composition, and to be pondered upon by the advocate of refined formalism."

It is interesting to note that a picture on the same theme (with the same title) has been painted by Deineka. And it is the consensus of opinion that Deineka's is the weaker. "By the side of it, Johanson's picture impresses by its depth, pictorial force, and strength of expression." (B. Perelman in *Soviet Art,* July, 1933).

Bukharin refers to both competing canvases as "remarkable". At the same time he notes the boldness and confidence of Johanson's brush: "The types are more brightly and freely depicted; they speak for themselves, needing no literary comments. The negative types—the enemies—are not grotesquely drawn; the 'fat neck' is taken in the necessary proportion; the dapper adjutant is typical; the prisoners under interrogation are shown with the necessary strictness and simplicity... Whereas Deineka gives a stylized composition; nevertheless the composition is expressive both as regards simplified portrayal and decorative setting."

Among other things exhibited, great approval was accorded to S. Gerasimov, I. Mashkov, Igor Grabar, Denisovsky *(Voroshilov at Military Review),* Katzman, Ryazhsky, Bogorodsky and the sculptor Sherwood.

Bukharin writes about Mashkov that "he has given a strongly and expressively painted portrait of Yegorov, and a splendid portrait of the partisan Torshin. In the last-named picture there is fascination in every detail: in its deep content, 'psychological' treatment, and the blending of the colors."

As for Igor Grabar's *Lenin at the Direct Wire,* Bukharin writes of "its excellent double illumination and decorative brilliancy; but the portrait of Lenin himself cannot be considered a happy one in this picture. It is 'literature', literary retrospect of West-European sympathy for the 'great thinker of the Mongols', is about what Lenin looks like in Grabar's picture. It is not the live Ilyich as all of us have known him, but an artificially wrought image, very noble, very intellectual, but not the identical one."

Altogether, there are more than 1,000 pictures in the Exhibition. The basic "tone" is given by the artists of the younger generation.

The Soviet Schools

A contest of model schools of the RSFSR was recently concluded in which 700 schools, selected from several thousand competitors for the title of "best Soviet industrial school," took part.

Scientists, professors, and teachers had analyzed step by step the pupils' copybooks, bulletins, and specimen lessons submitted in the contest with testimonials by the respective organizations, and checked up the general progress and literacy attained by the pupils. When the data submitted was found inadequate, the judges of the contest paid visits to such schools, had chats with the teachers, and attended the lessons.

The following four were judged the best schools;

1. The Chebakovo village school in the district of Yaroslav;
2. school No. 25 of the October district, Moscow;
3. school No. 180, Leningrad, and
4. the Akhtynsky school, Daghestan.

These schools proved to be models of high literacy, thorough development of the pupils, and sound political education.

The material for the contest, gathered in the rooms of the Central Pedagogical Laboratory in Moscow, made an extremely interesting exhibition which was described by S. Nurenberg (*Izvestia,* June, 1933) as follows:

"Files of neatly written copybooks. Appliances and models are hung on the walls. Photographs of the schools' agricultural plots showing ripening asparagus, sweet potatoes, cauliflower, and choice wheat. Testimonials from agricultural shows, honor certificates granted for *High Skill in Tilling the Ground...* In the

Kolkhoz Meeting *by A. Avakumov*

copybooks is reflected a politechnical education which should impart serious knowledge on how books, automobiles, or dynamo machines are made, how to look at a picture, the role of nerves in the living organism, what is valuable and necessary to us in the writings of Leo Tolstoy, and the exact location of Nicaragua."

The Chebakovo school has been in existence since 1906, but during the first eleven years of its existence it was attended chiefly by children of kulaks and well-to-do peasants, and it was only after the Revolution that its social composition was drastically changed, while the level of instruction was raised extraordinarily high.

"In this school," writes D. Zaslavsky (*Pravda*, June, 1933), "the peasant children learn a great deal more than did the pupils in the senior classes of the old gymnasium. There is nothing surprizing in this. The Soviet school imparts the things one really has to know. Whereas the pre-revolutionary school, even in the city, even of the best type, and for children of the elite, imparted to the pupils a lot of rubbish in which but few grains of great knowledge were imbedded ...

"At examinations in this very school the local 'marshal of nobility' Samsonov (a 'patron' of the school) used to amuse himself by asking pupils: how much would it be if twelve horses were multiplied by ten pigs? He would then laugh uproariously at the poor pupil's perplexity while the humble teacher dared not intervene."

"Things are quite different now," he goes on. "The children look upon a map on the wall, and little Nura Smirnova, with a ruler in her tiny hand, traces the course of a ship sailing from Leningrad for Vladivostok (a round-the-world trip). And little Nura knows not only all the seas and straits through which the vessel will pass, but also all the countries en route, and in which ports it will be coaled. And any of the pupils will promptly answer, where and what mining wealth exists in various parts of the Soviet Union and which new gigantic factories and mills were built during the Pyatiletka."

The majority of the pupils in the Chebakovo school creditably wear the red tie of the Young Pioneer and are able not only to write neatly in their copybooks but also to do practical work.

"In the Chebakovo school the children, before starting work on their farming plot, had surveyed it and made draughts and calculations of the ground that are embodied in their geometry books. The pupil in the old school, if he did not know Greek, would never have guessed that "geometry" means land measuring; but the peasant children in this school realize as much without a knowledge of Greek. Thus, under one of the drawings in the copybooks it is plainly written: Plan of the collective horse-stable, made for the 'First of May' collective farm."

The school has the attention and care of the surrounding kolkhozes, and the attendance is 98 per cent. Much of the progress of the school is attributed to the teachers and to the efforts of the principal, N. M. Golovin.

"Golovin, the son of a Yaroslav peasant," Zaslavsky goes on, "is the teacher of the *whole district*, in the real sense of the term. The chairmen of the four kolkhozes around the school are his former pupils, and all the young collective farmers have attended his lessons. He and his wife have been working here for many years, they know everybody, and everybody knows them."

No less unusual is the second school that gained equal distinction, School No. 25 of the October distict in Moscow which is under the patronage of the newspaper *Izvestia* and bears its name. This school has become widely known to pedagogues in all parts of the world, carrying on lively correspondence with professors and teachers of America, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

According to a report by Tatyana Tess (*Izvestia*, June, 1933), "progress by the pupils in this school is a high as 98 per cent, and in the first seven grades, the full 100 per cent."

The school has been built upon such sound principles that it has become a sort of workshop for the re-education of backward pupils from other schools. Thus, a few pupils had been transferred into the 8th grade here from school No. 19. At the start, each of the pupils made more than 30 mistakes in dictation exercises. After one year in this school the same pupils made not more than three mistakes, and even these had to do with the rules of syntax. In the same manner, disorderly and wayward pupils turned into diligent and orderly pupils after a short period of study in this school.

"At the same time," says T. Tess, "the children in this school have not been particularly picked. It is just an ordinary district school and the pupils are typical of the general run of children in the metropolis."

Success has been due entirely to the capable and thoughtful work of the teachers. "This work has not only depth, but also wide scope, as it attracts ever larger numbers of young people to take up pedagogical work," says T. Tess. "A former pupil of school No. 19, the peasant girl Shura Korablina demonstrated a specimen lesson in the class-room that was judged a model for the whole of the Republic."

Among the points which gained the prize for this school are the exemplary discipline and the high level of knowledge gained by the pupils.

"What used to be the object of pride in the old gymnasium?" T. Tess asks. "The glutton who could eat a score of cakes one after another; or the strong boy that was feared by the rest of his schoolmates; or the naughty boy who planted dead rats on the teacher's seat. No pride was taken in good and well-behaved pupils... In our school the object of pride has

become the Red Banner of Progress in school work, and during the examination tests it was keenly fought for by each grade in the school."

A good illustration is furnished by the following case which occurred during the examination tests in school No. 25. The pupil Kozushin was given a few problems in mathematics. The boy took a glance at the problems and was manifestly displeased. He then went up to the teacher and said:

"It's like this... These problems I did not so very long ago and I remember them too well. Could you not give me more difficult problems?"

The schools that have gained distinction in the contest are the models upon which other schools are being built in the RSFSR, schools which not only impart specific knowledge to the pupils, but also equip them as future builders of the socialist commonwealth.

Revolutionary Cultural Movement Grows

FRANCE

The French Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists (AEAR) has issued the first number of its journal *La Commune.* The editorial board of the journal comprises H. Barbusse, A. Gide, R. Rolland, and Vaillant-Couturier. The managing editors of the journal are Louis Aragon and Paul Nizan.

The first number of *La Commune* contains fragments of R. Rolland's *L'âme Enchantée (Charmed Soul),* poems by Aragon, a story by Vaillant-Couturier, remarks by Lenin on Klausewitz, etc.

SPAIN

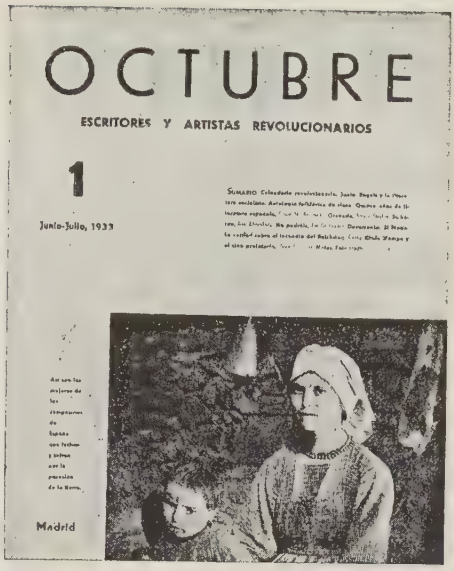
The prominent Spanish revolutionary writer Ramon J. Sender, author of the novels *Magnet, Social Order,* and *Seven Red Sundays,* during his two months stay in the USSR wrote a series of sketches for the radical press of Spain, notably for the Madrid newspaper *La Libertad* and the organ of the Communist Party *Mundo Obrero* which are being published under the title *In the Land of Proletarian Dictatorship,* and with a sub-title "Impressions of an Honest Journalist in the Soviet Union."

Before leaving the USSR, R. Sender addressed an open letter to the editors of the *Literary Gazette* (July 5th), which concluded as follows:

"I came here as an intellectual. Today I leave as a soldier on the front of socialist construction.'

R. Sender is at present working on his novel *S.O.S.* which deals with the decline of bourgeois culture in Europe.

The Revolutionary Writers and Artists of Spain (Spanish section of the IURW) have recently issued the first number of their magazine *Octubre* dated June-July. The appearance of this new bimonthly adds to the growing list of new revolutionary publications.


OCTUBRE

ESCRITORES Y ARTISTAS REVOLUCIONARIOS

1

Junio-Julio, 1933

Madrid

First issue of October, *new bimonthly of the Revolutionary Writers and Artists of Spain*

The first issue is illustrated with a number of cartoons and photographs, among them a cartoon of a skeleton-peasant, offering his hide to the church and the government because he has nothing more left to give them.

The issue features a letter from Engels to Minna Kautsky, and includes also a review of "15 Years of Spanish Literature," a story by Ilya Ehrenburg, an article on "The Truth About the Burning of the Reichstag," reviews of books and the cinema, and notes on literature. A poem by Emilio Prados and illustrated folk songs complete the issue.

The editors call on workers to write for this new magazine about their lives and struggles. And they announce for the second number an article by Ramon Sender and a poem by the noted poet Alberti, both of whom have been recently in Moscow, as well as a critical piece by the Soviet critic Sergei Dinamov.

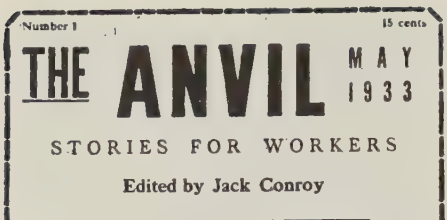
U.S.A.

The John Reed Clubs of the United States have held three highly successful district conferences in New York, Chicago and San Francisco in preparation for a national conference to be held in October.

The Chicago John Reed Club, with the cooperation of other John Reed Clubs throughout the country has concluded a successful antiwar exhibit of paintings, posters, charts and photographs.

An exhibit was held at the gates of the Chicago World's Fair despite police interference.

At the same time the National John Reed Club executive has issued a call to all American



Number 1 15 cents

THE ANVIL MAY 1933

STORIES FOR WORKERS

Edited by Jack Conroy

CONTENTS

for May, 1933

First issue of The Anvil, *new revolutionary bimonthly edited by Jack Conroy*

artists, whether club members or not, to join in a great art exhibit, on Fascism, Hunger and War to be held in New York City on December 1.

An invitation has also been extended to the Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists of France.

Meanwhile the John Reed Club and the National Student League, which has taken root in most leading American colleges have both been honored by an unexpected recognition of their importance.

A recent legislator's investigating committee in Wisconsin has smoked up evidence to the effect that the U.S. Secret Service pays students to spy on rebellious classmates. This fact was brought to light when William H. Haight, Jr. student at the University of Wisconsin and a member of the R.O.T.C. told the committee of his work as a paid agent of the U.S. Secret Service.

Haight named 18 students who he said were communists. He said he concentrated his activities on the John Reed Club there and the National Student League at the request of the secret service.

Two New Revolutionary Publications

Two new magazines of revolutionary literature have appeared in midwest America: *The Anvil* in May, and *Left Front* in June.

The Anvil, a quarterly edited by Jack Conroy at Moberly, Missouri, breaks with some of its past associates of the Rebel Poets Group, headed by Ralph Cheney, in a clear cut statement by Conroy on the issue of turning more sharply leftward — to Communism.

This is followed by the work of a group of younger worker writers, some of whom appear for the first time, others who have contributed to the *New Masses, Rebel Poet, Left,* and other revolutionary publications. Walter Snow, formerly on the staff of the New York *Daily Worker,* contributes a section of his first novel (part of which appeared in No. 3 *International Literature).* Joseph Kalar, H. H. Lewis, Boris Israel, Langston Hughes, A. B. Magil and others round out a good number of what promises to become a fixture on the horizon of American revolutionary publications. The editor and associates are comrades who have matured ideologically and artistically through consistent service in the revolutionary press. The reception accorded the first issue of *The Anvil* in America speaks well for a long and well deserved life.

Left Front, a bi-monthly, issued by the John Reed Club of Chicago, followed soon after the appearance of *The Anvil.* Marred somewhat by its imitative typographical innovations, its first number is nevertheless, an unusually fine issue. *The Daily Worker* of New York reprinted its leading story "The South Side Sees Red" by Edith Margo, dealing with the black and white workers on the south side of Chicago. Edith Margo is a new writer. So are John Van Zandt, Ralph Munson, and J. S. Balch, all of whom appear with well written revolutionary sketches. Book reviews, poems, statements of the John Reed Club and the Chicago Workers Theatre complete an impressive first number.

A feature of both *The Anvil* and *Left Front* is the low price of the magazines making them available to workers.

JAPAN

Langston Hughes, American Negro writer, author of the novel *Not Without Laughter* and a number of books of verse, was arrested in Tokyo on his way from the Soviet Union to the United States.

He was grilled for six hours by Tokyo police and finally ordered to leave the country at once. Eleven Japanese writers who visited him in his room were also arrested and later released.

Fear of closer contact between the revolutionary writers of Japan and the United States undoubtedly prompted the action of the police.

The Japanese press in its comments on the case, specifically mentioned also the fears that Hughes may have carried messages to the Japanese writers from Seki Sano and S. Hijikata, two noted Japanese theatrical directors now working in Moscow.

CHINA

Literature, Theater and Cinema

Revolutionary literature continues to grow in China despite the violent oppression of Kuo-

mintang reaction. The activities of leading revolutionary writers united in the Chinese League of Left Writers (Chinese Section of the IURW) extends not only into books, magazines and daily newspapers but into the theater and the cinema, as well.

Two volumes of collected articles *Three Rooms* and *Two Hearts* by Lu Sin have been published. These include all the articles by this leading revolutionary writer written since 1930 and up to recent date. They are an attack against the bourgeois "New Moon" group, imperialism, and feudalism in literature.

Of great importance to revolutionary literature has been the publication of two books by Mau-Tung: a novel, *Midnight,* dealing with the war between Chiang kai-shek and Feng yue-hsiang, and a volume of short stories, *Spring Silkworms* on the ruin of Chinese agriculture.

Among other volumes issued were *The Line of the Outpost* by the young writer Sha-ting; *Wan-bao-shang* by Li-huh-ing; a collection of stories *The Banquet* by Ting-Ling (who was recently kidnapped by Shanghai police—reported in No. 3 *International Literature);* and the novel *One Year,* and a book of short stories *The Bee* by Chang-tiang.

Of interest also are the translations of Soviet writers. Two collections: *Shu-Tsin* and *A Day's Work,* translated by the noted Lu Sin, include 20 Soviet writers. Among other translations issued were: *October* by Yakovlev, *Armored Train* by Ivanov and *Brusski* by Panferov.

The Theater and Cinema

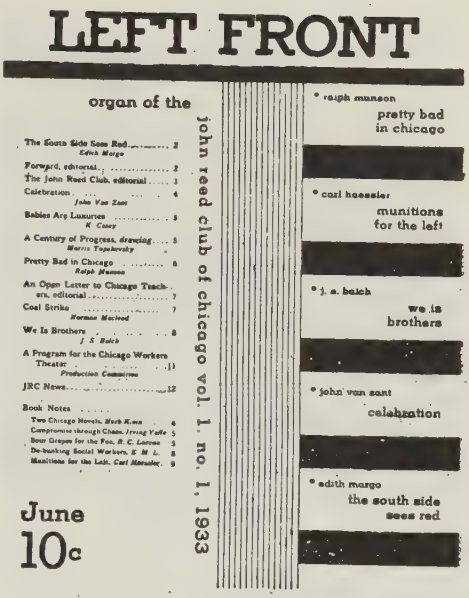
This year the Chinese League of Left Theaters stepped beyond the limits of "Blue Blouse" agit-prop performances in workers districts and schools. Some months ago bourgeois circles of Shanghai organized concerts and performances for the benefit of refugees from Manchuria. The League of Left Theaters took quick advantage of this.

The majority of theatrical performances staged were given by the League of Left Theaters and they drew large and enthusiastic audiences. Among the plays were *A Friend At War* (dealing with the Shanghai War of the reactionary 19th Army) and *The Alarm* (on the Japanese invasion of Manchuria), both by the noted Chinese revolutionary playwright, Tiang-Hani.

The work of this revolutionary playwright has also been extremely successful in screen productions made by the oldest and largest film concern "Min Sin" which in the past year has been forced to enter this field by the revolutionary mood of the Chinese masses.

Among other scenarios of revolutionary writers produced by the same conservative concern are *Stormy Waves* by a member of the League of Left Writers on the flood of 1931; *Spring Silkworms* by Mau-Tung; and *The Righteous Life* by Lu Sin.

Another film concern the "Liang-Hua" produced successfully *Three Modern Girls* by Tiang-Hani.


LEFT FRONT

organ of the

john reed club of chicago vol. 1. no. 1, 1933

June

10c

• ralph munson
pretty bad in chicago

• carl haessler
munitions for the left

• j. a. balch
we is brothers

• john van sant
celebration

• edith margo
the south side sees red

First number of Left Front, *bi-monthly of the John Reed Club of Chicago*

All these successes, in the field of literature, the theater and the cinema have been achieved by the Chinese Left Writers League despite the fact that all the revolutionary publications are suppressed and the murder of prominent revolutionary writers continues.

Soviet Art Abroad

BELGIUM

In connection with the appearance of *Hydrocentral* by M. Shaginyan in a French edition issued by "Edition Socialiste Internationale," the literary newspaper *Rouge et Noir* writes:

"The novel *Hydrocentral* tells the story how, overcoming thousands of difficulties due to climatic conditions and technical problems, especially the shortage of qualified workers, there was built a hydro-electrical power station that is destined to transform into motive power the energy of the Mizinka river in Transcaucasia. Around this central theme lives a whole country a whole epoch now almost past and forgotten which has seen the birth of the new world. It would be wrong as well as untrue, however, to characterize *Hydrocentral* as a big fresco which reproduces the beginning of socialist construction in Armenia. Marietta Shaginyan in her book has gone far beyond this relatively simple theme. She gave in *Hydrocentral* a gallery of diverse types of people and of customs, and although her characters may not thrill the reader with the heroism of the characters portrayed, say, by Leonid Leonov, nevertheless they throb

with life and with direct and sober enthusiasm. And all this is impregnated with the stern poetry of simple and cruel dynamics."

ITALY

An anthology of *Mongolian Folk Songs* has been published in Italian translation by Giuseppe Ruggiero.

The following view of the book is given by *Italia Leteraria:* "The anthology is of great value if only by acquainting Italian readers with a people that is quite unknown in the West, with the Buriats living in a semi-savage state in Southeastern Siberia on the border of China.. In these songs is reflected the spirit of the Soviet Revolution. These songs vary in content, melody, and intonation. By their form they come close to the folk songs of other nationalities of Siberia and are reminiscent of the folk songs of the Southern Slavs and the Lithuanians."

FRANCE

Theater and Cinema

The theatrical group "Travail" (Labor), composed of professional actors who are members of the "French Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists," has produced *A Million Troubles,* the comedy by V. Katayev.

Vaillant-Couturier says the following in *L'Humanité* about this production:

"In choosing this play the "Travail" group was guided by the desire to give the French workers an idea of Soviet life and at the same time to amuse them. Katayev's play suits this double purpose, as it gives a contrast of two worlds, the old world of the bourgeoisie and the new world of labor; it represents a typical vaudeville of the revolutionary epoch... Katayev's comedy evokes wholesome mirth, containing none of the vulgarities of the bourgeois boulevard comedies, but merry ridicule of the decrepit bourgeois culture, seasoned with the robust joy of the new generation."

Vaillant-Couturier goes on to refer to bourgeois press reviews:

"The manner in which Katayev's play was received by the bourgeois press, the attempts to represent it either as revolutionary propaganda *(L'Homme Libre)* or as a quite harmless bit of nonsense *(Paris Soir* and *Lu),* are an indication of the perplexity of the bourgeois critics and of their anxiety to belittle the success of the play... The "Travail" group wanted to show how Moscow laughs, and in this it has succeeded. The bourgeoisie is boycotting *A Million Troubles.* The workers will applaud it."

HUNGARY

The New Theater of Budapest has produced Katayev's play *Squaring the Circle,* but the play can hardly be recognized. Through the efforts of the censor the play has been transformed into anti-Soviet propaganda, while many scenes have been completely mutilated. Naturally, in such shape the play has won praise from the bourgeois press.

LATVIA

The Soviet film *Okraina (Border Country)* is having a successful run in one of the best cinemas theaters of Riga, the "Forum". By unanimous opinion of the press, from the reactionary to the social-democratic papers, it is "one of the world's best pictures."

SPAIN

The cinema censorship has banned the Soviet films *Dead House* and *Golden Mountains.* By the way, the same has been the fate of nearly all Soviet films recently, including *Mother, End of St. Petersburg,* and *October.*

It should be said, however, that the censor proved more lenient occasionally. Thus, *Cruiser Potemkin* and *Turksib* were forbidden only for display in proletarian cinema clubs, while allowed in the bourgeois cinema theaters of Madrid and Barcelona.

FRANCE

Pictorial Arts

During the summer two exhibitions of Soviet painting were held in Paris: at the Billis-Worms gallery, 23 Soviet painters; and at the "Nouvelle Revue Française" gallery, paintings showing the fulfillment of the Pyatiletka.

The second exhibition received numerous appraisals in the press. Here are a few excerpts:

"...We anticipated to find here a gloomy reflection of the mysticism of discipline and toil. Yet we have found something entirely different: life, elegance, brightness, and a sense of humor." (Paul Ference in *Les Nouvelles Litteraires).*

"One goes to see this exhibition with curiousity and some misgivings; one expects to see something in the nature of abstract drawings born of cubism. Nothing of the kind. We have before us simple and straightforward art in which, naturally, are reflected the themes of the world of toil which is the USSR: new ports, new buildings, new factories. This art does not try to dazzle, nor to deceive, nor even to convince. It is concrete in its quests, this powerful art which charms by its youth and fragrance. Of course, various influences may be detected in it, for instance those of Dufi, or Mattisse. Nevertheless, one gains the impression that the Soviet painters are not much concerned about esthetics; they are rather anxious to show in a friendly way to their comrades the vivid pictures of the new world which Russia represents." (Eugene Dabit in the journal *Europe)*

"One carries away from both exhibitions the same impression of very bright tones, of a young, fragrant art which stands far nearer to an Asiatic perception of nature than to the old Russian folk images." (N. Landowska in *Notre Temps)*

Anti-Fascism

FRANCE

The Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists (AEAR) organized an anti-fascist exhibition displaying the fascist means of fighting. We see here the policeman's cudgel, the counter-revolutionary fascist placard and picture, the sculptures reflecting the designs of fascism, reaction, repression of the proletariat, of colored races, and of national minorities.

The Association has issued the fourth number of *Feuille Rouge (Red Leaflet)* dedicated to the defense of Dimitrov, Tanev, Popov, Torgler ,and Thaelmann, and of the Indo-Chinese revolutionaries. The number contains articles by A. Gide, A. Malraux, V. Marguerite, P. Vaillant-Couturier, verses by L. Aragon, etc. It is significant that Victor Marguerite, who but recently favored the creation of an international police, has for the first time taken part in the anti-fascist campaign organized by the Association.

At the end of July a great anti-fascist literary evening was organized by the Association, at which the chairman was the eminent German revolutionary writer, Theodore Plivier, (author of *The Kaiser's Coolies).*

Among the speakers were the Soviet writers L. Nikulin and I. Babel, the German writer E. I. Kisch, and the French writers L. Aragon, and P. Vaillant-Couturier. The theme of the addresses was, "China, Persia, Germany, and the USSR, through the eyes of revolutionary writers."

In connection with the world congress of youth against war and fascism (August) the following appeal to the youth was made by Romain Rolland:

"Fascism wears a multitude of masks. It adapts itself to the physiognomy of every people. Yet, whatever mask it may wear, its substance is invariably the same, nationalistic imperialism. Nationalism is the enemy, say we.

"We hear the call for war; we see how the general staffs and their press are fussing about and rattling their armaments, we see our old acquaintances who were for a war-to-the-finish in the last war. We shall not follow these people. We have not forgotten that they are responsible more than any one else for the Hitlerite fascism which is due directly to the despair of a people driven to extremes by the cruel victors. And we, who deny the existence of frontiers among nations, retain our hatred for those who profit from sowing discord among nations. We do not struggle for one particular nation, not even for our own nation. If we do defend the USSR and fight for it, it is because the USSR is not a nation, and not Russia, but the Union of the Socialist Soviet Republics of the world, both of today and of the future.

"Let us therefore unite the nations against national-fascism which is anxious to destroy this Union and set the nations against each other. Nationalism may be of different kinds. A section of the French youth makes a good deal of noise about its "realism," which is manifested chiefly in vainglorious opportunism; it tells us that we should not be interested in the internal politics of our neighbors, but should concern ourselves exclusively with our own affairs.

"We categorically denounce such crude egoism, such alleged 'realism'. There are no racial, national, or other differences that might hinder us from acting as a united front. Woe to those who would obstruct our path. They will be swept away...."

SPAIN

Early in July there were anti-fascist days organized in Madrid by the Workers Aid. Foreign delegates came to Madrid, H. Barbusse from France, Lord Marley and Miss Wilkinson from England. We give here excerpts from an interview with Barbusse that was published in the Madrid radical newspaper *La Libertad* July, 9th, 1933:

"Last year there was held in Amsterdam an international antiwar Congress in which I took an active part. It was attended by representatives from all countries, and we received thousands of telegrams of greetings which came in an unbroken stream. From that Congress we have carried the conviction that the best weapon for our aims would be to create in all countries national, regional, and even municipal committees, and also a committee that might be described as a 'flying' one. I belong to the latter. It has for its purpose to foster and strengthen anti-war moods among workers, peasants, and intellectuals... Our aim is to set up such a strong opposition to war that in the event of an outbreak of war the masses would refuse to go, would refuse to take part in this heinous crime."

One of the first results of the anti-fascist days was the formation of a Spanish committee of aid to the victims of fascism. This committee was formed at a conference held in Madrid on July 10th. It comprises the scientists L. G. Asua (chairman) and A. Castro, the publicist C. Barga, the communist writer J. A. Balbontin, F. S. Roman, D. M. Barrios, and others. After the formation of the committee, an anti-fascist and anti-war mass meeting was held which was addressed by L. G. Asua, Lord Marley, Miss Wilkinson, and H. Barbusse. All of them spoke of the horrors of Hitlerism and of the necessity of combating it with every possible means.

The most interesting anti-fascist meeting organized by the Spanish Workers Aid was held in the "Theater Espagnol", July 12th, with the revolutionary writer Maria Teresa Leon as chairman. The speakers included Barbusse, Louis Salinas (from Paris) and Francisco Galan (from the American group).

FOUR CARICATURES

(Three Soviet Artists: Kuprianov,

Lydia Seifulina, Soviet novelist

A. Lunacharsky, academician, now ambassador to Spain

Barbusse referred in his speech to the Amsterdam anti-war Congress and analysed the causes which prompt bourgeois governments throughout the world to defend fascism. Barbusse sees the main cause in the fear of the world bourgeoisie at the growing success of the working class and the growing class-consciousness of the toilers.

Continuing, Barbusse pointed out that fascism does not always appear in its crude form, and that many of those who in words oppose fascism are really its supporters. In France, for instance, there appear symptons of fascism.

Noting the development of anti-fascist activity in Spain, Barbusse urged the further strengthening of this activity and continuous improvement of organization.

Barbusse concluded his speech with an appeal to the "heroic Spanish youth" that is waging the struggle in the fields, factories, and schools, to the intellectuals, and to all the toilers. He would like to carry back with him the greetings from this youth to the workers of France, and he would like to see this youth broadly represented in the forthcoming Congress in Paris.

As there was an overflow meeting outside, Barbusse had to go out on the balcony and address the crowd assembled in the public square. He was greeted by a storm of applause, and after a brief speech, the crowd marched past the balcony, singing the *International.*

The other speakers, L. Salinas and F. Galan, spoke about the imminence of a new war in which Spain would act as the vassal of France. They also drew a parallel between the Spanish and the German events, urging vigilance in view of the growing menace of Fascism in Spain.

Galan was particularly outspoken in his denunciation of the doings of the present Spanish government. The meeting concluded with a speech by Maria Teresa Leon who spoke on behalf of the women and children who are the constant victims of fascism.

After the close of the meeting, the participants, singing the *International,* marched through the streets in a procession towards the Canalajas Square. They were met by mounted police and machine-guns. The demonstrators were ordered to disperse by the police.

NEW BOOKS

FRANCE

Leon Moussinac, La Tête la Première (Head Foremost), *a novel.*

This novel has evoked a series of comments in the bourgeois press:

"Moussinac approaches the problem of revolution as a novelist. He endeavors to picture it through the image of his friend Elios Jean Kuderka. The author simultaneously depicts the life of his hero and his own life through the prism of their attitude towards the revolution. The similarity between these two people is but a superficial one, and their roads will part as soon as they will have to choose their position. Moussinac himself embodies the force of reason; Kuderka, the force of sentiment... The former sees a way out only in the class

BY THE KUKRINIKSI

Krilov and Nikolai Sokolov

struggle, in the awakening of the class consciousness of the proletariat; the latter is an individualist, who awaits the invasion of barbarians, who repudiates their leaders... It is interesting to watch the life of these two characters. Moussinac has splendidly conceived the problems of revolutionary literature." *(Cahiers du Sud,* a popular literary and art magazine in the South of France).

"The novel *Head Foremost* is a vivacious story, sparkling as though hewed from flint, attacking the man who cannot strongly assert his desire. It is the story of a man who passes through a series of trials, through school, war, and love.

"The description of the election in Bretagne in 1914 is really splendid. (Included in this issue of *International Literature* under the title of "Vive la République!—Editor.) The concluding dialogue in the novel has been done with exceptional polemical force." *(Mercure de France.)*

Paul Nizan, Les Chiens de Garde (Watchdogs).

"Nizan gives in his book a critique of the official university philosophy which has for its true purpose to stultify the spirit of revolt, to subdue reason, to compel it to accept the existing order of things.... A fight is waged, as properly observed by Nizan, against those who, whether from fear, lack of wisdom, or spiritual depravity, pretend to persist in their belief in absolute bourgeois idealism.

"On the other hand, those who do not agree to die and do not accept voidness are ranged by Nizan on the side of the proletariat and the revolution. Not of the revolution in words, not of the revolution of little journals or of witty young people, but on the side of the real revolution that leads to action, to the bringing about of the new order, to the creation of the new culture...

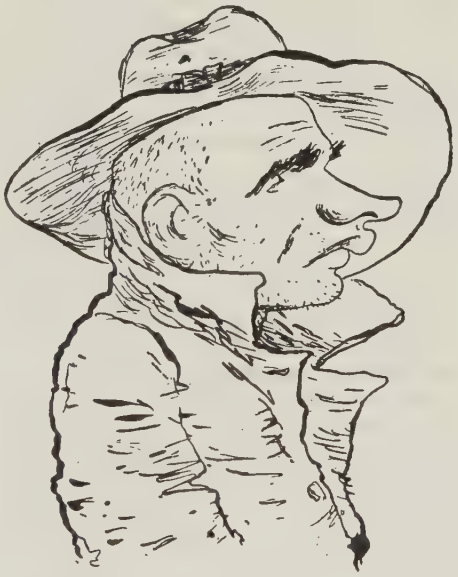
"The book of P. Nizan belongs therefore to works of significance." (Georges Dupeiron in *Europe.)*

André Malraux, Condition Humain, *a novel.*

This novel has evoked lively comments of bourgeois critics. While admitting the high artistic merits of the novel, they are anxious to keep its revolutionary content in the background.

"The ostensible theme of Malraux's novel is the revolution in Shanghai, its success, and its suppression. But already the very title indicates a deeper and more pathetic theme. Revolutionary activity serves merely as the background for showing the personality at a moment when the hidden substance of man comes to the surface. The whole of the great art of the writer is revealed in his handling of the problem of fate in the life of man. Herein is the significance of the novel." *(Vue.)*

Vsevolod Ivanov, novelist, playwright



F. Panferov, novelist

"...It is first of all a novel about solitude, the same as Stendhal's *La Chartreuse de Parme* is first of all a novel about heroism, and *Anna Karenina* is one about adultery..." (The liberal critic Ramon Fernandez in *Marianne.)*

"...It is a significant, very thrilling work. Of all modern writers, Malraux possesses the greatest gift of dramatic portrayal. Malraux's characters are reminiscent of the heroes of Dostoyevsky." (Jean Prevost in *Notre Temps).*

Louis Aragon, Les communistes ont raison (Communists Are Right), *a book of poems, published in Spain.*

"This is real art by a poet who has quit the "ivory tower" and has definitely thrown in his lot which the toilers. His art, far from losing thereby, acquires on the contrary new, original elements that imbue his creative work with the vitality of struggle and the force of victory." *(La Libertad* June 18th, 1933).

SPAIN

Rafael Alberti, Slogans, *a book of poems, published by* Octubre.

The collection comprises the verses written by the poet during his stay abroad, and partly during his two months in Moscow.

The little book has met with success among the Spanish working masses and, of course, with great resentment in official quarters .

"... The poet Alberti speaks now in a firm voice that is full of the enthusiasm of construction. Not a single empty cry, not a single phrase without purpose. Greater conciseness, simplicity, and expressiveness of language cannot be attained than is to be found in the poem "Romance about the Peasants of Sorita."

"... Such rapid transformation of a rebel poet into a revolutionary poet can be explained only by the lightning-like effect of a new ideological orientation ...

(Rosario del Olmo in *La Libertad* June 18th, 1933.)

Quite a different view of the poems, bitter and biased, is given by the official critic of the governmental paper *El Sol,* Juan Jose Domencio:

"Deep misgivings, grief, indignation, and regret, are aroused in us by the fact that a poet like Rafael Alberti deliberately bestrews his creative path with the random rubbish of pseudo-political infatuation ..."

"And so," pursues Domencio in a tone of irony, *Don* Rafael Alberti has turned Communist ..."

This critic is particularly displeased by the poem "A Meeting," saying "it is quite ludicrous, absurd, and comical to improvize odes in honor of the non-existent Union of Soviet Iberian Republics."

"I should also like to forget even the title of the book," he declares, "for it seriously endangers the popularity of the genius whom I admire ..."

Such is the despair of the bourgeois critic. But the success and political significance of Alberti's *slogans* is stressed by the great discussion which has developed around this little book that raises before Spanish poets for the first time the problem of revolutionary proletarian poetry.

USA

The Conveyor a new novel on the auto workers of Detroit by Robert Cruden, American worker writer has been published in Moscow in English by the Co-operative Publishing Society for Foreign Workers in the U.S.S.R.. It will be published later in Russian by the State Publishers. Sections of *The Conveyor,* a first novel, appeared originally in the *New Masses.* The author is now at work on a second novel.

Myra Page, author of *Gathering Storm* has completed a second novel, *So This is Moscow,* to appear soon.

Mellon's Millions: The Biography of a Fortune by Harvey O'Connor, journalist, former head of the Eastern Bureau of the Federated Press, has just been issued by the John Day Co.

Reviewing it in the American *Daily Worker* Harry Gannes writes: "O'Connor's book is a thorough piece of work on the Mellon family which is a good slice of present day capitalism. It is excellently written, easy to read.

"While effectively presenting all the available facts of the Mellon millions, O'Connor draws no theoretical conclusions about the development of American imperialism. We just learn that capitalism is bad but get no historical reasons, and no way out is indicated.

"The mere presentation of facts in this manner—without drawing the inevitable conclusions —limits the value of this otherwise excellent book."

International Publishers are also bringing out a popular pamphlet by the same author on *How the Mellons Got Rich.*

Granville Hicks, young American critic (whose article on American Fellow Travelers appeared in No. 3 *International Literature)* is author of *The Great Tradition,* an interpretation of American literature since the Civil War, just published.

The Pioneer Song Book with 24 songs written and edited by the late Harry Alan Potamkin, came off the press on the day of his funeral in New York. It was the last work of this revolutionary young writer, critic and editor. The music is by Gertrude Rady and the illustrations by Marya Morrow.

Scottsboro, a new song by L. E. Swift of the Composers Collective of the Pierre Degeyter Club has been issued recently. The young composer became active in the revolutionary movement last year. One of his recent compositions *United Front, May Day, 1933* was inspired by the first May Day demonstration in which he took part.

The Strange Case of Tom Mooney, a new film has been shown in New York. Theodore Dreiser, noted writer made a short introduction for it on the direct request of Tom Mooney. Writing about this film, Rober Minor, noted revolutionary artist says:

"Tom Mooney telegraphed from San Quentin Prison, asking me to see it. It had already

been described by people who had seen it as extraordinarily good.

"But the picture is far better than it had been described. As one who had lived through all of the important events of this greatest of all American labor cases during the past 17 years, I can say that it is a true picture, aside from two or three unimportant inaccuracies, and aside from a few scars of censorship, inevitable as long as the framers of Tom Mooney are the rulers of the country.

"Mooney himself appears on the screen and makes a speech that is an epic of the class struggle."

They Shall Not Die! a new play based on the Scottsboro case, written by John Wexley, member of the New York John Reed Club, has been accepted for early production by the Theater Guild.

Wexley who recently returned from the Soviet Union where he made an extended study of the Soviet Theater is the author of *The Last Mile,* which was presented in 1930, and *Steel,* presented in the fall of 1931.

They Shall Not Die! is also being considered for production in Moscow.

Contempo, Publishers of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, have issued Louis Aragon's poem *The Red Front* in the translation by E. E. Cummings.

S. S. Utah, by Michael Pell, a first novel by an American seaman has been published serially in the *Daily Worker* of New York. The story deals with a voyage from New York to the Soviet Union and return, and the organization of the crew with a following revolt of seamen against conditions on board ship. The novel is soon to appear in book form.

The Theater Collective, revolutionary theater of New York, will produce three plays during the coming season: *Dirt Farmer* by Paul Peters, a play on the agricultural workers of the middle west; *1931,* a play on the unemployed by Paul and Claire Sifton; and a satirical musical review as yet unnamed.

The Theater Collective is also establishing a school of the theatre including courses in Acting, Playwriting, Scenic Design, Social Basis of the Theater, Historical Materialism, etc.

Their plans also include a conference of mass organizations and a membership subscription drive.

IN THIS ISSUE

Helios Gomez — Spanish revolutionary artist (biographical sketch in this issue) was formerly on the staff of *Mundo Obrero (Workers World),* Communist daily of Madrid. He is a contributor to *Octubre,* new revolutionary bi-monthly.

L. Kassil — (autobiographical sketch in this issue) is a Soviet writer, author of *Conduit* and *Shvambrania.* He is now at work on a sports novel.

Leon Moussinac — French cinema critic, theatrical director and novelist, contributes to this issue from his new novel *La Tête la Première.*

A. Fadeyev — author of *The Nineteen,* contributes to this issue from his new book *The Last of the Udegei.*

Marvin Klein — young American worker-writer was one of the editors of *Left.*

John Dos Passos — American author of *The 42nd Parallel, 1919* and other volumes, contributes to this issue from *Fortune Heights,* a new play which is accepted for production this winter in both New York and Moscow.

N. Aseyev — is one of the best known present day Soviet poets, author of a number of volumes of verse.

B. Agapov — is a Soviet engineer and journalist. The sketch in this issue is from his book *One Hundredth of a Millimeter.*

Langston Hughes — American poet and novelist has completed *Good Morning Revolution!* a new book of verse, and is now at work on a book of his travels through Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan where he spent some months during this year.

Louis Aragon — French writer, author of a number of volumes of prose and verse, is a prominent member of the Association of Revolutionary Artists and Writers of France.

S. Ludkiewicz — Polish writer, is assistant editor-in-chief of *International Literature.*

Sergei Dinamov — author of a number of books on Soviet and foreign literature is editor-in-chief of *International Literature.*

Walt Carmon — now on the editorial staff of *International Literature* was for three years managing editor of the *New Masses* of New York.

Vladimir Sobolev — Soviet journalist, literary critic and theoretician is author of a book on Chekhov. The sketch in this issue is one of a series he is now doing of various writers at work.

Nathanial Buchwald — formerly dramatic critic of the New York Jewish *Daily Freiheit,* has recently served as Moscow correspondent of the American *Daily Worker.*

Bela Uitz — Hungarian painter, is secretary of the IURA (International Union of Revolutionary Artists).

Editor-in-chief SERGEI DINAMOV

INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

C O N T E N T S

N. 5 ISSUED JANUARY 1933—1934

Editorial Assistant WALT CARMON