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Prisoners

A Story from Life on the White Sea-Baltic Canal

It was a wild, dreary country through which the Murmansk railway ran. The train drew up at a lonely station built of wood and lighted by a kerosene lamp. A party of prisoners got out.

They were a cheerless collection of widely differing types, complete strangers to each other. In features and in dress they were a motley crowd, but they all tramped in silence along the planks laid down over the mud, scrambled over the great boulders that lay in their path and disappeared into the depths of the ancient forest.

At a little office they had to stop and register. They lined up outside the window.

Yuri Nikolaevitch Sadovsky, an engineer, was the first. He seemed a sullen fellow and replied in monosyllables. He was asked to go in and see the chief. He lit a cigarette nervously, then slipped his cigarette case into the pocket of his coat. The case, however, did not find its way into the pocket but into the hand of a pickpocket from Kiev, who was known to the trade as the "Lemon." A that moment a pleasant young man detached himself from the queue and addressed himself to the Lemon.

"Excuse me," he said, "but I think you've made a mistake. That happens to be my cigarette case, an heir-loom. Perhaps you didn't recongnize me?"

The pickpocket recognized him. It was a "universal," a prince of crooks—the great captain himself.

"I knew you alright. Pleased to meet you."

The captain offered the pickpocket a cigarette.

"You and me'll manage to get along alright here, I imagine."

Father Bartholomew, who was watching this scene with interest, cast his eyes heavenwards.

"Merciful God, where am I? Fallen among thieves, indeed!"

Sadovsky passed through to the inner office. The chief was a Chekist. There was a sort of military trimness about him. He was all attention.

"Sit down. You are going to work for us, you know."

"I didn't know," replied Sadovsky.

"By the way," the Chekist went on, "what were you sent up for?"

Sadovsky gazed at the ground, then at the portrait of Yagoda.

"I was not guilty of any crime at all," he burst out violently.

The Chekist said nothing. Should he believe him or not? Better not.

Then Sadovsky smiled.

"I had—companions in the institute. They were suspected, they owned up, and I was arrested along with them."

"What did you get—ten years?" asked the Chekist.

"Yes."

"You did not plead guilty?"

"No."

The Chekist rose and called out: "Commandant!" and when the latter appeared, "Show Engineer Sadovsky to his room—a single room."

As Sadovsky went out he was thinking:

"A single room? Solitary confinement?"

"So you got ten years?" said the commandant, who was dressed in uniform, but wore no marks indicating his rank. "I got ten too."

Sadovsky stood still.

"You? How's that?"

"I was a member of the Party, and the Chief of the Militia. I was sent up for corruption."

Sadovsky wanted a cigarette and dived into his pocket for the case.

"Why, my cigarette case has been stolen!" he exclaimed.

"When?"

"Don't know."

"Well, this isn't exactly a home for little children," remarked the commandant. "You've got to keep your eyes open."

Ah, the mournful, eerie cries of the winter birds over the dreary waste land covered with tree stumps. The wail of an accordian came from the barracks. Two guards tramped up leading two fellows of the type that peaceful citizens prefer to avoid, and a youth dressed in "cloche" trousers, a woman's velvet blouse and a beret. The youth performed a few fancy steps as he strolled up, and called out to Sadovsky:

"Off to No. 58, eh? Congratulations!"

The two grim bandits laughed insolently in Sadovsky's face.

Ah, how mournful the cries of the winter birds sounded over the disfigured wastes and ragged tree stumps, over the birches and the barracks.

"Yes, it's certainly no holiday resort!" said Sadovsky to himself.

They entered a restaurant. "Staff Dining Rooms" was written over the door.

"That's right," said the commandant. "You're on the staff now?"

"That's too bad, citizen engineer."

Everything was as it should be. There were the usual posters and portraits of leaders, a refreshment bar with plates of salt herring garnished with the usual accessories, and a stout bar-tender behind the counter. Sadovsky was invited to sit down. All round people were sitting eating, reading newspapers. They looked just the same as any other citizen to be seen in city restaurants.

A pleasant looking girl in a white overall handed Sadovsky the menu.

"Have you been working here long?" he asked her.

"I've been a prisoner here a pretty long time, if that's what you mean," says the girl with a smile.

"And the rest of these people?" Sadovsky glanced around the dining room.

The girl chuckled as she replied:

"We're all in the same boat here, so make yourself at home. Sit down and have your dinner."

Kostya, the captain, entered the barrack. He did not give himself any airs. He was obviously in the habit of entering prisons and banks and feeling thoroughly at home in them. His manner was even easier and pleasanter than usual.

"Hello, rookies!" he called out with cheerful condescension. A stumpy, little, wrinkled fellow answered angrily:

"Go to hell!"

Kostya raised an eyebrow.

"Who said that? Was it you?"

With a swift, "jiu-jitsu" movement the captain twisted the little fellow's neck with one hand and flung him off.

"You can apologize when you come round."

"Captain!" all the occupants of the beds greeted him at once. Kostya sat down on a bed and examined it carefully; the sheets were clean, there was a pillow and a towel.

"This is what you might call comfort. Any ladies here, by the way?" he asked, without looking at anyone in particular.

The fellow he had just punished stood before him once more, anxious to please.

"Ladies! As many as you like! Just a minute!"

The "ladies" made their appearance—lovely Sonya and her friends.

"Sonya!" exclaimed Kostya. "Is it you or your double? Since when did you begin to build Socialism?"

Sonya whispered something in his ear and he burst out laughing.

"May I request you to leave us a while, ladies?" said Kostya at last.

The girls went out. Everyone disappeared. Then the captain drew Sonya tenderly down beside him.

"Well, now tell us Sonya," he pressed her hand. "Where did they get you?"

"In the Crimea."

"What do you think of doing?"

"Clearing out."

"It's not so easy."

"I know."

They were silent, thinking; a couple of sad, weary people now. Lonely people.

"Are there many Chekists here?"

"Just one."

"What do they want to build?"

"A canal."

"What for?"

"I don't know."

The barracks suddenly came to life again. The doors were flung open and a fresh party of prisoners was brought in. They were all beggars. Cheerful, unprincipled, small fry. They were allotted a section of the barrack room and settled down in it in next to no time. One of them went to visit his neighbors and reconnoitre. With some elation he informed his tribe:

"There's a railway car on the other side of the rubbish heaps."

The little man who had been treated with such severity by the captain came over to them, sniffed them, took their measure and said sharply:

"Shut up there—and get back!" He jerked his thumb backwards.

"Keep your shirt on old boy," they called out good humoredly.

The captain and Sonya went on talking.

"Will they make us work?"

"Sure."

"What a joke! I've only to say the word and nobody will go to work."

"I've told them not to."

They laughed. Then all of a sudden the captain's face twisted; now he looked like the—ruthless recidivist that he was.

"The Chekist—those are the fellows I hate! them, with their marks on their collars."

He tore open the neck of his shirt.

"Damn them—suppose they make us work!"

He raised himself on the bed. Then getting control of himself once more, he said in what he imagined to be an aristocratic manner:

"I'd very much like to know, friends, who's going to work tomorrow?"

He waited a moment. He looked around.

"It would appear that all present are in complete agreement with me. Well—Sleep ye, then, sound, ye dogs of war! Farewell, Sonya, keep the honor of the gang unspotted!"

The woods. Impassable, trackless woods. Sadovsky arrived in a gig, Gromov on horseback. They stopped at a little clearing, where the trees had been cut down and a few mud huts erected. Smoke was coming from the chimneys. People were dressing a bear. Beyond the clearing lay a mountain. To get to it they had to clamber over boulders. Sadovsky cut a queer, ridiculous figure here in his city clothes, alongside the Chekist, a military man accustomed to difficult marches. Every step required an effort. Sadovsky was in despair. Desolation all around him. An accursed land. An accursed mountain. And the accursed back of a Chekist ahead of him.

They reached the summit at last. Sadovsky wiped his hands with a handkerchief; they were dirty.

"What exactly is it that you want me to do?" he asked soured. "I don't understand why you've brought me up here."

"This'll be your section," said Gromov, with a wave of his hand that took in a huge piece of Karelia—austere and beautiful, a waterfall and a mad, rushing river. Rocks and woods all around. Lakes and forests. If one looked through field glasses one could see the sort of rocks and woods they were and what a marvellous waterfull it was.

"There's an order out. You've been appointed director of this section of the works."

The word director struck Sadovsky dumb.

"Director! You mean I'm to be director?"

"Yes," replied Gromov with a sort of diabolic calm.

"But I'm a wrecker—everybody regards me as a wrecker," screamed Sadovsky, completely forgetting himself.

The Chekist went on quietly explaining: "That has nothing whatever to do with us. It all happened away back there—when you were at liberty. We're going to make a fresh start here. You're going to build a canal. You'll get used to things soon." Gromov smiled. "Let's get on with the business."

Sadovsky's hands trembled. He staggered and then sat down suddenly.

"Leave me alone for a bit, will you?"

The Chekist gave a little shrug, moved away and drew out his plans and specifications. As he unfolded a sketch of the projected dam, he thought to himself:

"Let him get over it first."

Sadovsky sat down on a tree stump and dropped his head on to his hands. Then he drew a photograph out of an envelop; it was his old mother.

"Mother!" he whispered; then broke down and wept like a child.

Complete confusion reigned in the barracks next morning. One of the inmates could not find his boots under his pillow, while the pair he had

stolen would not fit him. He was upset and uncomfortable, but he said nothing. His neighbor, a stout, elderly man, was sitting there without his trousers, holding a couple of jackets in his hands. He was silent. They both cast furtive glances about them. And the others were silent too.

To pass on to the new arrivals, the beggars. The youth who had stolen the boots was examining his prize with interest trying them on, scratching the bridge of his nose in silence. A lean old man with the face of a eunuch was holding two pairs of trousers. He sighed heavily. Silence reigned.

It looked as if they had all just returned from the rag market. They examined their new possessions against the light and felt them, and found that they had all got the wrong things.

Kostya, the captain, rose and stretched himself. He reached for his clothes, found nothing, looked round, and understood.

"So that's it!. . . . hello there! Did you hear me say that's it?"

The Lemon began in a complaining tone:

"Kostya, we've all had our clothes pinched."

"That doesn't interest me. What I want to know is, can you feel me?"

The bad tempered little fellow Kostya had punished the day before advanced on the new neighbors.

"Who's the low, filthy swine that pinched our clothes?" he shouted to them from the threshold.

He noticed his boots on the feet of the youth who came forward.

"Where are the cheap sneaks that took all our things?"

The two eyed each other grimly.

"Take off those boots in a minute!" snarled the little cross man, thrusting his head forward, ready to dive for the young fellow. There was a short struggle and the young fellow whipped out a knife. At the sight of the knife the cross little man suddenly melted into smiles.

"Oh, drop that. Let's talk business."

"What'll you give me for—?"

"I'll give you. . . ."

The thieves restored the stolen goods to each other.

"Listen, is this your jumper?"

"Why, you've got my boots and my pants and my cap—you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"Who did I swipe these underpants from? Speak up!" someone else called out.

Others were more intimate. "I only took a tiny looking-glass from you—and you took my suitcase!"

While the noise and laughter was going on Kostya, the captain was dressing himself.

"I'm fed up," he said. "Absolutely fed up to the eyes."

He glanced out of the window. Gromov was passing by with a young woman. Without addressing himself to anyone in particular Kostya remarked:

"I rather like that little lady. Who is she?"

The little angry man replied with eager servility:

"It's the boss' wife."

"I'll play for the boss' wife. Who wants to win this lady?"

The pickpocket known as the Lemon appeared before him instantly with the cards spread out like a fan. Several of the gang ran to guard the outer doors.

"We'll play for her overshoes first," the captain announced. "Then for her slippers, then her stockings, then the rest of her things and then herself. And if you win her, we guarantee to deliver her to wherever you want. Agreed?"

"Right!"

"And you'll play fair?"

"Absolutely."

The woman for whom they were gambling was passing by outside the barracks.

"Things look pretty bad here, Nikolai," she was saying to her husband, the Chekist Gromov.

Nikolai laughed and repeated an expression we have heard before:

"Yes, it isn't exactly a home for little children."

The thieves' game was growing more and more intense. These were professionals, experts, who were playing and they kept cool, but other thieves—neurasthenics—stood around, figeting, biting their lips, starting nervously as every new card was laid down.

"Now for her hat," said the captain.

He won her hat.

The pickpocket went on:

"Now for the lady."

The decisive moment came. The cross, wrinkled little man could not contain his wild enthusiasm:

"Playing with a real live woman for stakes! These are what I call men!"

A great many people turned out to do forest work under Sadovsky. Some of them carried a banner. He was completely at a loss.

Before him stood an extremely pretty woman, with small features, burning eyes and restless movements.

She spat suddenly and violently, sailor fashion, on Sadovsky's boot.

"Want to work, do you? Work's only for horses, it's not for us."

Laughter greeted this sally. The jeering crowd of men and women behind her looked Sadovsky over from head to foot with an elaborate show of interest.

The pretty woman continued to bait him.

"You don't know me, do you? My name is Sonya. I've had eight convictions for robbery and the like, and I've run away from jail five times. If you think I'm going to work—you must be just a baby, that's all."

She swept past Sadovsky with a show of disdainful elegance and the greater part of the crowd swept after her in the same manner.

One girl remained behind. She was about twenty. There was a strange look in her eyes. She stepped up to Sadovsky and staring straight into his face, said:

"You are the devil."

"And who are you?" asked Sadovsky.

"I—I'm Saint Theophila."

"Really? Pleased to meet you, I'm sure."

"It's a sin to work for devils!" screamed St. Theophila. "Anathema! Anathema! Anathema!"

A group of about twenty people remained behind.

"What about you?" asked Sadovsky. "Who are you?"

One of the men who had been in the queue when Sadovsky registered, now stepped forward.

"There's all sorts among us. I'm a kulak myself and he's a priest," he indicated Father Bartholomew. "We're quiet peaceable folks. We'll work alright."

"Fine. Tidy up this clearing a bit."

The people with the banner moved nearer to Sadovsky now.

"Who are you?"

"We're ex-thieves."

Sadovsky recoiled. Then the chairman of the collective drew him aside:

"I hope you won't offend my shock brigade workers in any way, if you please, citizen engineer."

"Your shock brigade workers?"

"Yes. And you needn't talk like that. Maybe you'd say a few encouraging words to them, would you?"

"I can't make speeches," Sadovsky said curtly.

"That's too bad, citizen engineer."

The kulaks, peasants and priests of yesterday appeared on the scene once more. They stood apart from the others. The chairman of the collective stepped between the ex-thieves and the peasants, and began a speech.

"Comrades, the Soviet Government has entrusted us with the construction of a great canal. And we are going to show the government that its trust in us is justifiable, aren't we? Aren't we going to show this crowd," he pointed to the group of peasants, "that we can work better than they can? Who's your head man?" he asked the peasants.

The kulak who had been speaking to Sadovsky a few minutes before, stepped forward timidly.

"Do you know what we're building here?"

"No."

"Then you'll find out soon. I'm challenging you to socialist competition. Do you understand?"

"No."

"You will, by and by. Our norm is two hundred percent. What's yours?"

"I don't know."

"You'll know soon. Let's get to work now."

The people set off into the woods. Soon the music of the saws on the trunks of the pines sounded through the wood. The pines were being felled. The sawyers worked in pairs. The first couple soon began to feel hot. Father Bartholomew was one of the second pair. His feet were very cold. The first pair soon threw off their jackets. Bartholomew was a huge, round faced man, but he had to blow on his hands to warm them. This continued right up to the time when the first pair were working in their vests while the second pair were sitting down to rest. Then the head man, the kulak, whose name was Karas, came up angrily and began sawing with the priest's partner.

Sadovsky was alone. He unfurled a banner on which was written "We'll build the great canal! We'll carry out Stalin's great work!" He flung it away. The banner lay in the mud. The chairman of the thieves' collective suddenly appeared before Sadovsky.

"You shouldn't have done that, citizen engineer. We've done some hard fighting for this banner. That's no way to behave!"

Gromov was in his office. The commandant ran in.

"Citizen commander, the thieves are gambling for your wife."

The Chekist laughed.

"They're a pretty hard-boiled set, aren't they? Who started it?"

"I can't say for certain."

"Try and find out," said Gromov. "And then report to me. And place a sentry outside my house."

Night was falling. Gromov's wife was standing by the window, looking out. She could see the silhouette of the sentry. It was half-past twelve. The telephone rang.

Gromov was speaking from his office. "Masha, it'll be late before I get back. Take the revolver out of the drawer in the writing table and go to sleep."

"Oh, and I've only just arrived today," came Masha's disappointed voice over the telephone. "I've hardly seen you yet."

"Go to bed and get a good sleep. And take the revolver out of the drawer in the desk and keep it by you."

"But when will you come home?"

"In about two or three hours."

The woman took the revolver out of the drawer in the writing table, undressed and got into bed. Suddenly a shot rang out, then a second, a third. She pulled the covers over her head.

Someone was running through the darkness outside the window. The commandant was speaking to the sentry.

"Did they come? How many of them were there?"

"Three."

The Lemon and three more thieves came into the barrack and went up to where the captain lay. The Lemon showed him the peak of his cap—with a bullet hole in it.

"Well, do you believe me?"

"Ugh, what are you after all? Kids!" said Kostya with a contemptuous grimace. "But I don't want to risk your lives any more."

The women's barracks looked a little better than the men's. There were touches of comfort. Someone was singing a song about love, and another was sitting sewing by the window. Sonya was lying on the bed. Her eyes were wide open, and she was saying:

"When I lived in Moscow I had a seal-skin coat. I say, Nyurka, sew me a few clasps on this blouse, will you?. . . . Yes, and I exchanged my fur coat for cocaine. . . . For God's sake, Nyurka, sew me a clasp or two on my blouse!" She flung the blouse to the girl in the window. "I've only a couple more years to live, anyway. And then I'll take a big, big dose of cocaine and finish myself off." She began to sing:

"Found on the boulevard
The morning papers said.
At five o'clock on a snowy bench,
And they carried her home for dead."

Steps were heard outside the door. "Who's that creeping in now? I'm sick to death of all these filthy swine."

A girl with a naive frightened expression ran in.

"It's the big boss."

Sonya sprawled on the bed in the most immodest position she could think of, exposing her legs, and began to bawl out a thieves' song.

The chief of the concentration camp appeared, followed by his assistants, the doctors and Gromov. He passed through the barrack without a glance at Sonya. She jumped up.

"I thought he'd try a bit of agitating, too. It wouldn't be any use, though."

Suddenly the chief himself was standing beside her.

"I've heard about you," he said with a laugh. "You're very young still, it seems."

"Very young for what?" retorted Sonya impudently.

"For living!" rejoined the chief sternly. "They say you've been refusing to work for three months now."

Her eyes blazed. She made a gesture of affected disdain. She was bold.

Suddenly the chief sat down beside her and took out a cigarette.

"Have a smoke, comrade."

Sonya turned away from him crossly.

"Now, then, don't you think you can—get off with me. I'm a thief, a bandit, and you're a Soviet general."

"That's true enough. You're a bandit alright. How long did you get?"

"Ten years."

"Have a smoke, go on. You know you want one."

"Alright, give us one."

"Was your father a peasant or a worker?"

"A worker."

"A metal worker?"

"No, he was on the railway. He was killed in a crash."

"I see," said the chief. "My father was a worker, too. He died of consumption. I understand everything now, Sonya. Well, goodby."

He got up and walked out.

What did he understand? Sonya started after him, then pulled herself up suddenly, sat down again. She threw herself down on the bed, then jumping up again, tore a leaf of her note book and scribbled:

"Kostya, get me a drop of vodka for Christ's sake, or I swear I'll throw myself under the train. *Sonya.*"

She called out to the young girl who was hovering near the door:

"Here you are, take this to the captain!"

Breakfast had been brought out to the woods. Father Bartholomew happened to be waiting his turn behind the two young fellows who had been working in their vests. The kulak Karas and the peasant group were standing behind him in the queue. The young fellows in front were given meat pies the size of their fists along with their other food, but the priest got none.

"Look here," he protested, "what about a pie for me?"

"Pies are only for shock brigade workers," replied the cook."

So the disappointed priest and the stolid kulak ate their pie-less breakfast together.

The staff appeared on the scene, and Sadovsky with them. They all climbed the mountain together.

"Have you any experience in the management of this sort of work?" the chief of the camp asked Sadovsky.

"No."

Sadovsky was very polite. He understood to whom he was speaking.

"I should think it would be interesting for you—as an engineer—to have to solve a tremendous problem like making a waterway here?"

"Yes, quite."

"Well, make up your mind about it quickly and take over command."

When the head of the camp remained alone with Gromov he asked, "How's he getting on?"

"He closes up as tight as an oyster when you speak to him."

"We'll have to open him up then, that's all," said the head angrily.

"I'll do my best."

"Not so much of the 'best' about it, either. You've got to do it."

These people were quite different when they were alone together.

"This engineer has got to work like hell, and every single man under you has got to be earning his bread in three days' time, see."

"Correct."

"And remember this—once and for all!—the canal is to be a means of reeducating, remaking these people. We must pay more attention to people, Gromov, more attention to people."

As they were going through the woods to work, the head caught up to Sadovsky.

"I can see we are not properly organized," he said. "You'd better look after that. The engineer must keep in closer touch with life, closer to people!"

"Alright," said Sadovsky.

When Sadovsky was alone again, the kulak, Karas rushed up to him, almost beside himself with excitement. He had evidently decided to say something unusual.

"You've got to separate us from these priests! I may be a kulak myself, but I'm not going to do the priest's work for him, I can tell you! You'll have to get rid of those guys."

"Get closer to life," murmured Sadovsky, half to himself.

Kostya, the captain, entered a quiet little house in the settlement around the railway station. An old man greeted him. Kostya handed him a ten ruble note.

"Half a litre of vodka."

The old man took the money, got out a bottle from somewhere under the floor and handed Kostya the change. The captain left. The old man took out the ten ruble note to look at it in the light and gave a gasp of horror. It was a piece of newspaper.

Outside the staff-office the captain caught sight of Sadovsky with a parcel under his arm.

"May I ask you for a lift?" asked the captain, getting into the gig.

"Excuse me, but who are you?"

"Lord man, don't you know, I'm the well known geologist, Berg."

"Get in," said Sadovsky.

"I see you've just got a parcel from home," remarked the captain, as they were driving off. "That's nice for you, isn't it?"

"Where are you working? You're a colleague of mine, it seems," said Sadovsky.

"I'm studying local minerals."

"Are you a prisoner, too?"

"Yes," said the captain settling himself in the gig so that Sadovsky's parcel stood between them.

"And hydraulics are your line, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"I always envy these hydraulic engineers," remarked the captain, tucking the parcel snugly under his arm.

"Get up there!" Sadovsky was shouting to the horse.

The captain jumped down from the gig and vanished into the gathering darkness. The parcel vanished with him.

"This is certainly going to be a famous canal," Sadovsky was saying. "If they can make a lot of kulaks and murderers build it. . . . What do you think, is it possible to teach crooks to build a canal?"

There was no answer. He glanced round. The engineer and the parcel had vanished.

"The scoundrel!" he shouted, standing up in the gig and shaking his fist. "People like you should be in chains. You ought to be sent to hard labor for life!"

The captain was standing before Sonya.

"Here you are," he handed her the parcel and the vodka. "I'd do anything for a friend. You can wash these home made dainties down with the vodka."

The parcel was opened. It contained sausage, cigarettes and something wrapped in paper. The captain unwrapped it. It was a photograph of an old woman. There was also an envelop addressed: "To my own Yuri, from Mother."

Kostya hastily thrust the things back into the box, packed it up and nailed down the lid. Sonya was dumbfounded.

"What's the matter with you, Kostya? Do you feel bad?"

The captain turned to her with a serious face and said simply:

"Sonya, I'm an honest thief. I've got a mother, too."

A nervous spasm passed over his face and he said fiercely:

"Supposing my old woman was to send me a present—and someone took it—! Sonya, it's a rule of mine—You understand me, don't you?"

"Of course I do, Kostya."

The captain went out. There was still the vodka left. Sonya forced out the cork with a slap on the end of the bottle. Someone nodded to her at that moment and she hastily hid the vodka. The commandant entered the barrack at that moment and came over to her.

"The chief wants to see you."

"What chief?"

"The one who was talking to you awhile ago."

"Have I to go now?"

"Yes, you're to come along with me."

She was thrown into a flurry. She wanted to powder herself and broke her looking glass in her haste. She swore under her breath, and then went out together with the commandant.

The captain was looking for Sadovsky's room. An old man in glasses pointed it out. "Over there!"

"Over there? Why, that's Finland!" shouted the captain crossly. "Are you a defective or something?"

He came across the commandant and Sonya. A look of comprehension passed between the two thieves. Sonya pretended not to know him.

"Can you tell me where engineer Sadovsky lives?"

"What do you want him for?"

"He's my cousin."

"What's that you've got under your arm?" asked the commandant, catching sight of the parcel.

"It's a parcel that was sent to me by mistake, because our names are the same."

"Are you an engineer, too?"

"No, I'm an aviator—the conqueror of the Arctic, a personal friend of Chukhnovsky. You never heard of me?"

This was said with the utmost seriousness. Not a muscle twitched on Sonya's face.

"It's the first building on the right, by the wood." said the commandant.

The captain saluted military fashion and went on his way.

"Let's talk straight like one man to another, Sonya, the chief of the concentration camp was saying.

"What about?" Sonya laughed. "Why should you want to talk to me like that?"

"You called me a Soviet general. Well, would you like me to tell you my story?"

Sonya twisted and plucked at the corner of the handkerchief she held in her hand.

"You and I come from the same sort of folks. Whose fault is it that you became . . ."

"A thief, oh yes, I know, I'm what they call a pest of society and you. . ."

"Don't get upset. I know you were a thief, there's no need to tell me."

"We hate you. We're wolves—and we're not going to be stroked like pet dogs," screamed Sonya, in tears now. "We're done for and we know it and we hate you! And I don't want your tea," she wound up hysterically.

She sat biting her lips and staring obstinately with inflamed eyes somewhere beyond him.

"Never mind. That'll all pass soon," remarked the chief, but whether it was to her or to someone else was not clear.

The captain entered Sadovsky's room. "I hope you'll forgive me, but I've made a very annoying mistake. Don't be angry, please. Sit down and open the parcel and see if everything's in order."

Sadovsky, dumbfounded, began to open the parcel mechanically.

"Be good enough to check everything according to the list enclosed," said Kostya.

"Oh, everything is alright," Sadovsky hastily assured him.

"Then excuse me for troubling you," said the captain, preparing to go.

"But I don't understand," Sadovsky protested. "Who are you, then?"

"I'm a man of too many professions."

"What does that mean?"

"My actions never require any explanations. Goodby."

The captain went out, leaving a puzzled Sadovsky standing with a smoked sausage in his hand.

The commandant went into the chief's room and waited for orders.

"Tell them to send us up some more tea."

"And make it a bit stronger this time, please," put in Sonya.

"Yes give us strong tea this time," the chief said. "And tell them to send us six glasses at once."

The commandant left them alone again.

"Shall I go on?" asked Sonya. She raised her handkerchief to her brow. The handkerchief had been plucked to ribbons in her nervousness. She looked at it, gave a little laugh and hid it.

The captain wanted to go into the women's barrack, but he was stopped at the door.

"Men aren't allowed in here."

"Who're you talking to? Me? Why, I'm the electrician. Your light burns pretty badly at night, I was told."

"Yes, it isn't very good."

"And there you go shouting at me. Show me the plugs, will you?"

He examined the plugs awhile, humming to himself carelessly like a worker, then disappeared into the depths of the barracks. There he tied a woman's shawl round his head and lay down under the blanket on Sonya's bed.

The instructress came in for a last look around.

"Where's the electrician?"

"He went back to fetch his tools," someone told her.

"Oh, I see. Well goodnight."

The conversation between the chief and Sonya was not over yet. The commandant came in once more. More tea was sent for.

"I'll think about it," said Sonya.

"No, give me your word."

"Now listen to me. . ."

More tea was sent for.

An hour passed. Another. The conversation between the important Chekist and the thief, on the subject of the great strength and justice of toil, lasted four hours.

Sonya stood up at last, but without striking any of her usual poses.

"I give you my word."

She was taking her oath. It was a very important step for her.

"I give you my word that I won't drink any more vodka here. That's all. I won't say any more."

"And will you work?"

"I won't promise anything else."

She went out quickly.

The commandant was asleep by the telephone. It was three o'clock in the morning. The chief of the camp roused the commandant.

"Tell them to saddle me a horse. I've got to go somewhere else now."

The chief disappeared into the darkness.

Sonya went back to the barrack, where the captain was waiting for her. They whispered together for some time.

"And I've been waiting faithfully for you to come, so we could have a drink together."

He got out the bottle.

"Kostya, I'm not going to drink."

"Aren't you feeling like it, Sonya?"

"Kostya, I'm an honest thief. I've given my word."

"All the best people are going to the dogs before my very eyes. The salt of the earth is being wiped out."

He seized the bottle, raised it to his lips and emptied it at one go. Then he took a sniff of his palm, and roared at the top of his voice:

"I'd like to see them reform me!"

It was morning in the women's barracks. The inhabitants of the barrack washed hastily, made their beds and dressed. They paid no attention whatever to Sonya, and went past her bed without a glance at her on their way out.

Sonya was left alone. No, not quite alone, though. By the cot in the corner the girl, Theophila, knelt. She was dressed in a long chemise and her long hair hung loose down her back. She was singing some psalm or other. Sonya watched her as she dressed herself. Theophila rose from her knees at last and, placing her hands together in an attitude like those of the saints in the ikons, went towards Sonya. Then, striking the pose of the angel in the "Annunciation," she said:

"I am a pure maiden."

"Stop your silly nonsense!" said Sonya seriously.

'Sister!" exclaimed the girl solemnly. "Do not raise a finger to help the work of Anti-Christ."

Sonya rose and stood with her arms folded, looking at Theophila.

"Who the devil are you?" she asked.

"Saint Theophila," declared the girl and began to sing her psalms again.

Sonya finished dressing in a couple of seconds and rushed out of the barrack.

"Who of you is the brigadier?" Gromov was asking the group of women waiting to start work.

"I am!" cried Sonya, coming up at that moment.

The educational department—books, papers and posters. The instructor and the little man from Kostya's barrack faced each other.

"Nobody's going to dictate to us," the latter was saying angrily. "If we don't want to work we won't work."

"Why does your neck look so blue? Just here," the instructor pointed to the marks of fingers on the little man's neck. "Has someone been beating you?"

"No, I hurt myself—fell out of a tree."

He was lying. The other did not believe him, but pretended to take it all in.

"What can you do?"

"Nothing."

"Can you steal?"

"No, I'm not a thief. I'm a forger!" declared the little man proudly. "I can imitate stamps and seals."

"Let's see you do it."

"Watch me!"

The forger took a sheet of paper and a pencil, moistened the pencil and drew a stamp rapidly. Just at that moment the chairman of the thieves' collective, now engaged on felling timber, appeared on the scene. He gave a sharp glance at the little man and recognized him.

"Here you are!" the forger was saying as he twisted the paper a little for the instructor to see an excellent reproduction of the stamp placed by the militia on passports.

Then he glanced round and saw the chairman of the collective. Warmest greetings were exchanged.

"Mitya—old boy!"

"Sasha!"

The instructor interrupted them.

"Sasha is from the crooks' barrack. They have a leader who keeps them all in hand. He's a recidivist, and they don't know it."

The chairman of the collective wore the badge of a shock brigade worker. He was the first and foremost on the canal, a real proletarian. Just now, however, he tilted his cap a little to the side of his head and fixing a professional eye on Sasha spoke as one thief to another.

"Is Kostya, the captain, in your barrack?"

"Yes," replied the man, then started violently and clapped his hand over his mouth.

The chairman of the collective turned to the instructor:

"The seance is over. It's all clear now."

Sasha sat crumpled up, dismayed, beaten. "I've given him away. To think of that!"

"Shut up, Sasha, don't talk rot!" said the chairman and, addressing the instructor once more, he said:

"If you want a first rate artist I can recommend this chap. I'll go bail for his honesty. And I'll have a talk to the captain myself. Don't worry."

"You can work on our newspaper," said the instructor to Sasha. "Do us a caricature of one of the directors, and one of the captain while you're at it."

Sasha smiled. "I haven't done a caricature for ten years," he whispered to himself. "I'm a caricature myself now."

"Look here, Mitya, how did you come to be such a Marxist?"

Kostya was lying on his bed, gazing attentively at Mitya, the chairman of the ex-thieves' collective.

"You were a famous bandit once," he continued, "and now you're done for."

"Kostya, come on and have a talk to our lads."

"Well, I don't mind going for a stroll."

The rocks had been cleared away and a vast level pathway made. Gromov went up to Sadovsky and shook hands with him.

"Good morning, Yuri Nikolaevitch."

A pleasant fellow, Gromov. He had a cheerful smile for everyone. And there was something to be cheerful about. Work was going ahead at a mad rate. Still smiling, Gromov took Sadovsky aside. Then, when they were alone, the smile vanished.

"Why the devil don't you demand assistance?"

"How can I demand assistance? As a prisoner I've no right to."

"That makes no difference. You should demand first and then see. Be a real director. It's a shame for me to have to teach you."

Sadovsky's face fell at this reproach. He was offended and followed Gromov moodily. Suddenly Gromov's way was blocked by a man on his knees. It was the kulak, Karas.

"Separate us from the clergy. We can't work alongside priests."

"Get up this minute!" shouted Gromov.

The shout startled the peasant so much that he seized his hat and scampered away. Gromov gave a bitter little laugh and beckoned the man back.

"Come here, don't be frightened!"

The man approached him timidly.

"What do you want?"

"Divide us from the priests."

"Alright, we will."

Karas bowed from the waist in the old style and went away.

Kostya and Mitya had started work.

Among these weary, anxious, hurrying folk Kostya bore himself independently and with a show of superiority. His movements were dainty, he picked his way carefully in his fashionable boots, watched the scene through half-closed eyes and took short puffs at a cigarette. He was acting the aristocrat again.

"Mitya, surely you don't think I'm going to mess about in this dirt, do you?"

"Of course you are, Kostya, don't talk rot."

The captain tapped Mitya on the forehead.

"There's a slate loose up here, surely."

They passed by the place where caricatures of those who refused to work were exposed on the boards. Mitya pointed to one of the caricatures—an extraordinarily good one of Kostya—and said:

"That's you."

The captain glanced at it out of the corner of his eye and spat violently.

"I'm not interested in pictures."

Then they came to a big poster that announced:

"Freedom, honor and glory await the foremost shock brigade workers of the White Sea Canal!"

The captain read it and turned away.

"What's that medal you're wearing, Mitya?"

"It's a shock brigade badge."

"What does that mean?"

"I was sent up for ten years. Now it's been remitted to six."

Mitya showed him a little book.

"You see—I've just got six. When the canal's finished I can go."

"And I'll spit on them all and clear out," cut in Kostya.

"You'll be caught and brought back again, and I'll leave here a free man."

"Mitya, clear out—leave me alone!" Kostya screamed all of a sudden. "I'm sick of this talk. Go away, Mitya,—I'm asking you."

He was in dead earnest. He frowned and clenched his fists. Mitya thought it wisest to leave him alone.

"It all sounds so convincing in his mouth, damn him," Kostya said to himself.

He was subject to rapid changes of mood, however, like a child. Suddenly his eyebrows went up and he began to laugh.

"Sonya!" he cried. "What do I see? The world is tumbling about my ears!"

Sonya let go of her wheelbarrow. She suddenly felt ashamed. She could not bear to look at him.

"Sonya—have you gone crazy?"

He felt her pulse and passed his fingers under her eyes.

"Wake up Sonya. You've got blisters on your hands. Chuck it."

Sonya kicked the empty wheelbarrow aside and called out to the other workers who were running at top speed:

"To hell with all of you."

The Lemon and the captain were amusing themselves and keeping their hand in, so to speak, by showing each other various methods of picking pockets. They used Sadovsky's cigarette case for practice.

"Pure art—that's what I like," said the captain. "High class stuff."

At that moment he saw Mitya coming towards the barrack, and dived under the bed.

"Tell him I'm not in," he whispered.

Mitya came in and looked around. The captain's cap was lying on the pillow.

"The boss is not at home I'm afraid," said the Lemon with a grin.

"Oh what a pity," said Mitya. There was surprise and sincere regret in his tone.

They understood each other perfectly. Mitya sat on the bed swinging his legs. His heel struck the captain smartly in the back. It made the captain furious but he bore it patiently. Mitya went on swinging his legs ruthlessly. At last the captain could bear it no longer.

"Go easy, there, God damn you!" he shouted furiously from under the bed.

Mitya jumped up in a fright. "Who's under the bed?"

He raised the edge of the blanket.

"Kostya! What do I see! Hello, old timer!" said Mitya stretching out his hand. "So it's as bad as that now. Hiding from your friends—you ought to be ashamed of yourself, Kostya."

Kostya crept out. His face was grimy. He was humiliated and angry. What could he say? He was silent.

"Kostya, you've got to give it up."

The captain climbed on a stool, and, with the flourish of a great leader, appealed to the gang.

"Listen to me, crooks! Who's for me? Raise your right hand!"

A number of hands were raised.

"Who's against me?"

There were no hands raised this time.

The captain turned to Mitya.

"You've lost."

But his usual nonchalance had left him. He turned away sharply from Mitya and began to examine the posters on the wall with a show of interest. Suddenly he went close up to the wall, stared at it attentively, stepped back, went up to it once more and shouted:

"Give me a knife!"

The little servile man pulled out a knife and rushed up to the captain. Then he understood what was the matter and recoiled throwing down the knife. The captain had recognized the caricature of himself.

"Who did this?" he shouted. "Ah! I know."

His face was distorted. He picked up the knife and rushed at the little man. Someone seized his hands and held him back.

"Heave 'im out!" said the captain. "He's squealed on us."

In a couple of minutes the others had collected the little man's belongings and thrown them out together with him.

Mitya went up to the captain.

"Why are you at me again?" shrieked the captain. "Trying to work on my feelings!"

Mitya sat down. "Look here, old man, after all I've been a criminal, too."

"I've been one and am one and always will be a criminal!" shouted Kostya. "I don't want to be an honest man. I'm a murderer!"

He seized his knife.

"What are you going to do?" asked Mitya.

Kostya ripped his shirt open and slashed himself in the stomach, the arms and the shoulder. He laughed hysterically. Then tears came.

"I won't work, I won't, I won't," he shrieked.

He was covered with blood. The doctor was called but Kostya would not allow anyone to come near him. He kept his knife gripped firmly in his hand.

"Listen, doctor, I won't answer for what happens if you come near me."

"You're losing a lot of blood, you fool!" said the doctor.

"Clear out, doctor, I'm telling you!"

The doctor recoiled.

"Tie his hands, someone!"

"You're pretty green, aren't you?" said the Lemon coolly. He whistled to himself thoughtfully for a few minutes, then he called to another of the gang, whispered something to him, and the boy ran out of the barrack. In a minute or two he reappeared with Sonya. She passed her fingers under the captain's eyes, just as he had done to her earlier in the day when he encountered her at work.

"Kostya, what's all this?"

"They won't leave me alone until they see my blood," he said. He was breathing with difficulty now. "I protest against this constant annoyance. If it goes on any longer, I'll cut my hand off, I swear it."

Sonya pulled herself together and looked at him sternly.

"Kostya, you know me, don't you?"

"Yes, I know you alright"

"You believe me, don't you?"

"I believe you."

"Well, I can tell you this, you're making a fool of yourself just now."

"Am I really?" asked the captain in astonishment.

"Don't be afraid," she called out to the doctor, who was standing a good way off. "Come and bandage him."

The doctor came nearer and pointed to the knife.

"Never mind that," she said, and then turning to the gang: "Clear out, all of you!"

The doctor began to bind up the captain's wounds.

"What do they want of me?" Kostya asked Sonya.

"Why do they want to build this canal?"

Meanwhile, with one hand he was drawing out the doctor's cigarettes and matches and lighting a cigarette for himself.

"Why should they want to make us crooks work?"

All his wounds were bound up at last and his bed-linen changed.

"Have you any medicine with you, doctor?"

The doctor drew out a little bottle of laudanum.

"Wait a minute, I'll measure you out a few drops."

"Why should you measure them? Give it here."

The captain poured the drug into a glass and tossed it off. Then he spat out violently.

"Why should they want us crooks to work?" he asked again, wearily.

Gromov was reading the camp newspaper *Reforging,* on his way to work. Sadovsky caught up with him.

"Do you ever read our paper?" asked Gromov.

"Yes, I do," said Sadovsky. He lied.

"That's right," Gromov remarked. "Well, let's go now."

Dinner was in progress. The prisoners were eating out of doors.

"Who's responsible for this?" asked Gromov in a sharp tone.

Sadovsky did not reply.

"Why didn't you build them a dining room?"

Sadovsky remained silent.

"Don't you know how to look after people?" A pause. "Have you any idea of how the masses live?" Then in a hard, incisive tone: "Engineer Sadovsky, I absolutely insist on you reading the paper from this day on."

With that Gromov turned on his heel and went away.

"What do they want of me?" Sadovsky asked himself when he was alone.

Mitya, the shock brigade worker was talking to Gromov in the latter's office.

"Don't waste any more time trying to persuade the captain to work," said Gromov. "Send him to me now."

Mitya went out. The commandant came in and set three rifles against the table, right between the chairs.

"If you'll allow me to say so—this is a dangerous business you're going in for," said the commandant, saluting.

"You think so?" said Gromov, screwing up his eyes a little.

"Damned dangerous," repeated the commandant.

"If I'm not mistaken, you were sentenced to death once weren't you?"

The commandant saluted and left the rooms.

"The idiots," said Gromov, as he laid a card on the table.

Kostya, the captain, hollow-eyed and nervous, appeared at last. He took off his cap, put it on again, and glanced at the rifles.

"So it was you who gambled for my wife at cards?" said Gromov.

The captain made no reply.

"Tell us straight, did anything like it happen or not?"

"Yes, it did," replied the captain gloomily.

"Sit down."

The captain sat down.

"I'm going to set you the task of floating timber down the river—and it's got to be done in three days' time. Look here!" Gromov showed the captain a map. "The timber is held up just here. If you can't float it down, it'll mean a big delay. I've no men to send."

Kostya attempted to speak.

"Oh, there's no time for talking. Take these rifles, ammunition and equipment and sign for them."

Kostya was completely defeated. He could not collect his wits sufficiently to object. He signed the receipt without a word. Gromov rang for the commandant.

"These arms are placed at the disposal of the leader of the expedition."

The doctor entered.

"You are to be at the disposal of the leader of the expedition."

The doctor recognized Kostya and Kostya recognized the doctor.

"Don't waste a minute," said Gromov. "Commandant, you're to give out the provisions to the leader. Konstantin Dorokhov," he went on, addressing Kostya by his real name, "you must come and see me before you start."

Kostya stood up like the other military men and answered smartly:

"Right you are."

Kostya stood in the store room with an order for provisions in his hand, amid mountains of food that was being set aside for him. There was bread and meat and sacks of meal—Kostya watched the scales carefully as these were being weighed out, and crossed them off his list.

"Tobacco," called out the store-keeper.

"Here's some vodka for you," the store-keeper went on. "Vodka's allowed on timber floating expeditions."

A row of bottles of vodka was set before Kostya.

"Sign here."

Kostya signed—"Konstantin Dorokhov"—and added, "Head of the Timber Floating Expedition."

There was a kind of feverish concentration about him now. He neither smiled nor showed any surprise. But his movements were energetic and he spoke quickly whenever necessary. The rifles stood by the table. He sat down and seemed thoughtful.

"There are two of the gang I could trust with rifles," he said at last. "But what about the third . . ."

"There's you!" suggested the commandant.

"I?"

"Yes, of course, you're the head, you're in charge of the expedition.

"Yes, of course," Kostya jumped up. "Send for Smelyakov and Vassya Petin from our barrack. They've been in the Red Army."

"That's right," said the commandant, and went out immediately.

Kostya hovered around the provisions, settling the sacks, tying them up tightly, rearranging the bottles of vodka. He could not sit down. He could not believe that he had been entrusted with all this. He was terrified lest a single grain of it should be lost.

Smelyakov and Petin were two young fellows, who, judging by their clothes, had at one time served in the Red Army. They could not imagine what was wanted of them.

"You've got to guard these provisions, they're public property!" said Kostya. "And if anyone dares to so much as—you understand me?"

"How shall we guard them?" asked Smelyakov.

"With rifles."

Smelyakov noticed the rifles then. He took one lovingly in his hand and opened the lock carefully.

"I'll do it, I swear," he said.

The captain left Smelyakov and Petin in charge of the provisions. Petin took up his place by the box of tobacco and the vodka.

The captain entered the familiar barrack once more and looked around at the familiar faces, the familiar poses. He was their leader, he had authority and power.

"My dear children, I want a word with you."

They rose and collected around him.

"The chief has just asked me to do him a small favor—and I've promised to do it."

"What, work?" shouted the Lemon.

Kostya gave him one look.

"Want to argue with me about it?" he asked coldly.

"I'm not going to work," the Lemon screamed at him again.

The captain appealed to the barrack.

"I've given a promise for three days. Why shouldn't I treat my own gang to a bit of tobacco and a glass of vodka."

They all stood there as if hypnotized.

"Why shouldn't a perfectly healthy gang go out and play for three days? It's all clear and above board. They're not putting anything over on us. I'm going to be head. Who trusts me? Come on, speak up."

They all voted. Kostya turned to the Lemon.

"And what about you?"

"I trust you alright," replied the Lemon.

"Well, then," said the captain, "I want you to line up in an hour's time. You won't need anything with you."

They shouted.

"Peter denied Jesus."

Father Bartholomew embraced the kulak, Karas, and kissed him.

"Farewell!"

"Farewell, father," said Karas, hastily wiping away the moisture left by the priest's lips.

"So you're denying me, as Peter denied his Lord?" said the priest.

"Can't be helped, father."

"You're a filthy hog," said the priest, thinking aloud.

"And you're a lousy good-for-nothing."

They swore at each other and then took to Christianity again.

"God bless you," and the priest made the sign of the cross over the peasant.

"Thanks," said Karas, with a low bow.

After that they both turned round and spat after each other and went their different ways. The strong hearty village lads followed Karas, who went off to dig. The rabble that remained behind with the priest were of the type prevalent in the days of Peter the First, religious fanatics, and monks. Their efforts at digging and wheeling away the earth, all their movements, in fact, were ridiculous and ineffective. Gromov observed them mournfully from a little distance.

"What have you been doing all your lives?" he asked. "What can you do?"

They said nothing. They could do nothing, it appeared.

"Go and water the horses, then," Gromov ordered. He pointed out the place to them and left.

The band was playing. There was a big meeting. The captain appeared before Gromov on the platform and saluted smartly.

"You sent for me."

"Yes. Is everything in order?" asked Gromov.

"Yes."

"Take this newspaper then and read what it says here. You realize the responsibility that's being laid upon you?"

"Yes."

"You promise me you'll do this job?"

"Yes." Kostya took the newspaper that was held out to him.

"Shake hands!"

The Chekist held out his hand to Kostya, the captain. Two grownups, hardened men faced each other. To both of them sentimentality was unknown. They shook hands. Kostya hurried off to the ship. As he went he whispered to himself:

"It's the first time in my life, the very first time."

He stood in the bow of the ship. He was dressed in a long, military overcoat and a cap without a badge. He leaned against the rail reading an article in the paper on the problems of building the canal. From time to time he glanced towards the shore, as if comparing what he read with reality. Explosions could be heard occasionally from behind the rocks. Kostya turned to his reading once more, then folded the paper, and mounted to the skipper's bridge.

"What I'd like to know is," he said, "why don't you go full steam ahead?"

"There's no particular hurry," replied the supernumerary skipper of a supernumerary boat.

"How long is it since you had a bath?" Kostya inquired. "My young fellows here could easily give you one."

"Full steam ahead!" ordered the skipper.

Below decks the gang was singing a song. The boat was going at full speed.

"Skipper," said Kostya, "I've got to do a big job in a very little time. Could you see your way to speeding up a bit more, else my lads'll have to duck you, I'm afraid."

The skipper refused indignantly.

"Don't you try to scare me."

"I've nothing to lose, skipper."

"Top speed," ordered the skipper.

"Now we won't touch a hair of your head!" Kostya vowed.

The skipper sighed: "Oh, these bandits!"

At last they came to a Karelian village in the woods. There were about fifteen houses in all. The appearance of the gang was the signal for confusion in the streets.

"There's a gang of thieves sent into our woods!" screamed a woman.

Fowls and goats were all driven into the yards and the gates closed. Ancient, unwieldy padlocks were brought out and all the doors fastened. A peasant armed with an old fowling piece took up his post as sentry at the bell-tower on the fringe of the village.

The steamer put off from the dreary, mournful shore, and the relieved skipper waved a delighted farewell to the gang he had landed.

"Goodby, good luck!"

Then puffing and blowing, he wiped his brow with his handkerchief.

The boat steamed away. The forlorn crowd remained on the deserted swampy shore. Smelyakov stood guard over the stores. No one knew what to do next. All looked gloomy. Along the shore lay the timber waiting to be floated away.

"Look here, doctor," said Kostya, "none of our folk are sick, are they?"

"No," said the doctor.

"Then what's up?" asked Kostya point-blank. "My orders to you all are that you stop moping and get shaved as quick as you can. I'll be glad to give out the necessary instruments to the professional barbers among us."

Five men stepped forward.

"Now the cooks, please."

Five more men stepped out. They did not bear the faintest resemblance to the usual run of cooks.

The cooks set up the iron cauldrons. The tents were fixed up. Over the entrance of one of them appeared the legend "Monsieur Dan, Parisian Hairdresser." The barbers plied their trade with a will. Well groomed people with carefully clipped moustaches were turned out in no time.

Kostya picked his men from among these.

"Vassya, how many visits have you paid to the Far North?"

"Three," replied a pock-marked fellow.

"Vassya, you must be en expert on this job by now. I'll give you fifty strong fellows. Now there's no time for talking."

Vassya led his men to where the logs lay and showed them what to do.

"Anyone who doesn't understand can ask me," he announced. But no one bothered to ask questions. They started in to work. Vassya was certainly an expert at the job. He was as strong as a bullock and dexterous, too. None of his men escaped his eye. He noticed a couple fooling about and went over to them.

"Do you understand what you've got to do?" he demanded, standing before them with his legs wide apart.

"Yes, we understand alright," one of them muttered, and then Vassya left them alone.

Kostya kept glancing at the newspaper as if it contained his instructions. He was evidently searching for someone. He seemed vexed and restless.

"I need one ex-Party member," he said to the Lemon.

"There aren't any here."

"That's an awful pity."

He was doing some real thinking now, but with a careless contempuous air, as if it was a joke.

"What society I've got into!" he sighed. "And these crooks don't want to work," he added as he watched them.

He went inside the tent, sat down and started to compose an appeal. How should he begin? "Brother crooks." He crossed that out. "Dear ex-thieves," no that would hardly do. "Comrades and ex-blackguards." They wouldn't do either. He crossed it out, tore up the sheet of paper and started afresh.

"All for one and one for all! Let's finish the job in two days and clear out covered with honor and glory! Long live the White Sea Canal. Hurrah!"

He read it through and then remarked: "It's too short." He added: "Those who don't work don't get any vodka!"

"Will that strike home?" he asked himself, and replied, "you bet!"

Just at that moment two men approached him. One was the watchman who had been standing guard over the village with a fowling piece and the other was a peasant. The watchman was not overbold.

"Would you be the head?" he asked timidly. Kostya frowned.

"Have pity on us," the peasant went on, "one of your chaps has stolen a goat, a live goat."

"Just a minute," said Kostya, and went out quickly. He went straight to the cooks, got hold of one of them and whispered something in his ear. The man nodded. Kostya returned to the tent.

"Are you the watchman?" he inquired of the peasant with the gun.

"Yes, indeed," the man answered in a complaining tone.

"You're very lax in the execution of your duties!"

One of the five cooks carried back the goat with its legs tied together. He set it down in silent fury, and turned to go, but Kostya called him back and said with a gentle smile:

"Carry that pretty creature home, if you please. And you are to guard the peaceful citizens for today. Get on with you now, and in the evening someone will come to relieve you."

"Kostya!" the cook pleaded.

"You've disgraced my name," replied Kostya, ruthlessly. "I made myself answerable for you."

A procession started out, headed by the now contented peasant; after him came the thief with the goat in his arms and then the watchman with the fowling piece. Laughter and loud applause followed them.

Kostya hung up on a tree his poster with its carefully prepared appeal and everyone read it and grasped its purport. "All for one and one for all." Then the two fellows on whom Vassya had had to keep an eye began to bawl at each other.

"Come on now, step on it, can't you!"

"What about you?"

"And what about you?"

"And you?"

"And you!"

They let fly at each other and fought.

Kostya was watching the progress of the work.

"That struck home, didn't it?" he said to himself and again replied, "you bet!"

The weary, sweating crowd lined up for dinner. The timber was floating down stream. That was the fruit of their labors, and their reward was coming. Wreaths of steam from the cauldrons floated above the white caps of the cooks. There was a cheerful clatter of plates. The Lemon carried out the table and laid it. Then he set two bottles of vodka—each about half a gallon—on it. Petin, who had been transformed into a Red Army soldier, stern and unbending in the performance of his duties, stood guard by the table, with his rifle in his hand. He never took his eyes from the bottles. Kostya sat down by them; the doctor handed him a medicine glass, and he measured out exactly a hundred grams of vodka. Before him lay a list of names, against which he placed crosses as he dealt out the vodka. Everything went on in an ordinary, business like way. Petin allowed no one to approach the table out of their turn and watched the second bottle steadily. Suddenly he began to grow restive. He breathed in short, rapid gasps and his eyes grew rounder. The first bottle was finished. Just at that moment Petin got his rifle ready to shoot and clicked the lock.

"What's up?" asked Kostya.

"They've swiped the vodka!" Petin yelled frantically. Kostya looked at the second bottle. The cork and the sealing wax over the top was untouched, yet about a third of the vodka had disappeared.

"A bit of good work, that!" remarked Kostya, but it was clear that he was completely at a loss. The men watched him with unpleasant smiles. It was a critical moment. Kostya watched the bottle a moment longer. Yes, the vodka was slowly,, almost unnoticeably sinking. The captain turned to

look at the Lemon, who was sitting quietly, chewing a crust of bread. The captain beckoned to him. The Lemon came up. His expression registered surprise and innocence. Then the captain lifted the bottle and pointed to a little hole in the table.

"Good work!"

He turned the bottle over. There was a tiny hole in the bottom.

"Pretty high class!" said the captain.

Then he dragged out a soldier's billy-can from under the table and said:

"Boycott him!"

There was an angry roar in reply.

"Boycott him! Kick him out, the thief!"

The captain raised his hand and, trying to swallow his rage, said:

"Lemon, you've stolen the vodka that your own comrades earned by honest sweat. You're just a filthy little crook that's all."

The Lemon was exploring the village. He got into a backyard quite easily and smelt around. He was hungry and bored. A dog barked, and the Lemon decided to clear out. He turned up in another part of the village. Down the dark street came the old watchman and pock-marked Vassya, the expert on timber floating. Vassya listened to the barking of the dog, and made a sign to the watchman. The latter handed over his weapon to Vassya, who took it carelessly and walked along leaning on it like a staff.

"Now, don't you get in my way, grandad." He vanished into the darkness and returned almost immediately leading the Lemon by the arm. Vassya was never one for talking much, or getting excited, and all he said now was:

"You're not to creep about disturbing people here, d'you understand?"

He turned the Lemon round and gave him a kick in the pants.

"Are you a real crook or what?" the watchman asked Vassya.

"I don't answer silly questions," Vassya said loftily.

The captain was sitting in his tent writing: "1,200 kilograms of bread. Remainder, 800 kilograms."

The Lemon came in. The captain turned but did not rise. There was a moment's pause, then the captain unexpectedly stretched himself somehow like a snake and deprived the Lemon of the knife he carried in the belt of his trousers, under his jacket.

"Well, what have you got to say for yourself?" asked the captain.

"We'll meet again yet," said the Lemon. "Don't you forget me!"

"Any time you like," replied the captain.

Gromov was reading Sadovsky's report on the construction of the dam. His wife was in bed. The clock hands showed three in the morning.

"Kolya, are you asleep?" asked his wife.

"No," said Gromov.

He went on with his reading. It was an effort now to concentrate. He pressed his hands to his temples. It was already half past three.

"Kolya, you're not asleep yet?"

"No, not yet."

He went on reading. He felt hot, so he took off his jersey and boots and splashed his head with cold water under the tap. Then he went back to his reading. A quarter past four.

"Kolya, aren't you asleep yet?"

"No, not yet."

He turned over the pages to see how much remained. Oh, oh what a lot. He was tired of sitting. It was five o'clock already. He undressed and, going over to the bed, took up a pillow. Instead of lying down, however, he put the pillow on the seat of the chair, sat down and went on reading. His eyelashes kept sticking together, his head would roll about, his resistance was broken down at last. He drooped forward on to the table and began to snore.

"Kolya, are you asleep?" asked his wife once. She could not see him. "Well, good night."

It was six o'clock.

Sadovsky came in to see Gromov, with a brief smile and a brief bow.

"Did you read my report?"

"Yes, I did," replied Gromov sharply. "Sit down, my lad. What are you trying to fool me for, eh?"

Gromov was blunt, but simple and straightforward.

"Why are you trying to muddle me up?" Gromov repeated, waving the report before Sadovsky's nose.

"Don't think I can't see through you. What are you trying to do? What are you aiming at? Chuck it. Nothing will come of it."

Sadovsky laughed in an equally simple and straightforward way.

"I knew nothing will come of it."

Then Sadovsky suddenly diminished until turned into a doll, ran across the table and over his own report. Gromov tried to catch him as if he was a fly, laughing all the time.

"Stop playing the fool, engineer Sadovsky, stop it, I say!"

His wife jumped up in bed, astonished.

"Kolya, who are you arguing with?"

Gromov awoke.

"I've nothing to argue about."

"Kolya, you're tired out. You ought to have a rest."

Gromov looked about for his clothes. It was half past seven.

"What are you talking about? I've had a good sleep."

Gromov was in his office by eight o'clock. Sadovsky came in followed by an engineer called Maxim Ivanovitch and some others. Gromov was standing at the table with the report in his hand.

"The conference will not be held."

Gromov was quiet, collected and to the point.

"Engineer Sadovsky wrote out a report for me."

A smile crept around.

"Here it is."

He weighed it in his hand.

The people sitting there knew perfectly well what Gromov was talking about. Some lowered their eyes. Maxim Ivanovitch grunted.

"One man could not master this report single handed," said Gromov seriously.

They laughed.

"So I'm going to ask the whole five of you to read it and report to me. Here you are, Maxim Ivanovitch."

The man addressed took it and stuffed it into his portfolio.

"The conference won't be held."

They all went out, Sadovsky first. He got into his gig and drove the horse mercilessly. The road was bad. The horse seemed surprised. What could be wrong with her driver? Sadovsky suddenly jerked at the reins.

"To the left, you stupid devil."

Sadovsky drove back the way he had come and drew up at the Camp Office. He got down out of the gig and walked straight into Gromov's room.

"May I come in?"

"Yes."

Who was that with Gromov? Why, it was that same thief who had first stolen and then returned Sadovsky's parcel. It was Kostya, the captain.

"Thanks very much," Gromov was saying. Sadovsky stood watching them.

"How many years did you get?"

"Ten."

"It'll be nine now. Write me a report. But don't put in any thieves' jargon."

"Right you are!"

Kostya sat down at the table in the corner to write. He began as follows: "Report—We, the gang of ex-crooks . . ."

He crossed that out.

"We, the thieves of . . ." That was not satisfactory either.

"We, the former society of blackguards." That did not suit the case somehow. He crossed it out.

"What is it?" said Gromov turning to Sadovsky. Sadovsky sat down and said very softly:

"Why did you put me in such an idiotic position?"

"Why did you do that to me?" asked Gromov just as softly.

"I'm not a wrecker!" whispered Sadovsky. "I swear I'm not."

Gromov's face expressed utter indifference.

"Take back my report," whispered Sadovsky.

"What for?" asked Gromov, astonished.

"I'll put it all into a few words for you now."

Gromov's indifference dropped from him like a burden.

"Alright then, do it."

Gromov rose.

"Only—you can leave out all those foreign words. Keep to plain Russian."

"Right you are."

Gromov left the room. Kostya, the captain, and Sadovsky went on with their writing, glancing at each other furtively from time to time.

"Exactly a hundred thousand cubic metres of land are needed," wrote Sadovsky.

"A gallon and a quarter of vodka remains," wrote Kostya.

"I believe I've had the pleasure of meeting you somewhere before?" said Kostya.

"I believe we have," replied Sadovsky.

They went on with their writing, pretending that they had not the slighest interest in each other.

Suddenly Sadovsky rose and went across to Kostya.

"Why have they remitted a year of your sentence?"

Kostya smiled. "Because I managed to organize a little picnic on the shore where the timber lay."

"Oh, so it was you who floated the timber down stream?" Sadovsky was astounded.

"Yes, I was even careless enough to do a thing like that."

"Let's be frank. Don't be offended with me, but you are a thief, aren't you?"

"I've followed the profession for eighteen years, I'm proud to say."

Sadovsky took Kostya by the arm and asked him excitedly:

"But, how did you come to work, tell me? How did you do it?"

"What are you asking me things like that for? I don't know, I'm not a Dostoyevsky, am I?"

"You don't understand a damned thing," said Sadovsky with an impatient gesture.

"No, of course not, I'm only an ignorant sort of chap," replied Kostya.

After that they both went back to their writing. Kostya completed his report, dated it and then said to himself:

"That's a nice fountain pen this engineer fellow's got. A Parker. Pity. Oh, well, it'll be mine someday."

"What did you say?" Sadovsky raised his head.

"Nothing—I'm just expressing my emotions," replied the captain with a wink.

Models of various structures were being examined in the laboratory of the White Sea Canal. Maxim Ivanovitch and the people from the laboratory were busy over the clay and cement, when Sadovsky brought in Gromov. Sadovsky behaved a little differently here in the laboratory; he felt more in his element.

"My calculations will have to be verified," he said. "I don't want to make any mistakes."

Gromov said nothing. Perhaps he was too tired to talk. He had three sheets of paper in his hand. He was reading—and listening to what they were saying.

"Yes—yes—" he would reply.

Maxim Ivanovitch came up to them.

"Here you, Maxim Ivanovitch," said Gromov, "this report is a bit shorter than the other."

Sadovsky was embarrassed. The devil only knew what that Maxim Ivanovitch was up to. He had a sharp eye. He took the three sheets of paper now and said.

"Yes, that's so."

"Hurry up, comrades," said Gromov, and went out. Maxim Ivanowitch handed Sadovsky his report, weighing it in his hand. He said:

"You know, I don't want to poke my nose into your private feelings, of course, but really, you can't do this sort of thing!"

Sadovsky snatched his report out of Maxim's hand.

"Have you been long in this concentration camp?" he asked suddenly.

"Three years now, my friend."

"How much time have you still got to serve?"

"None at all."

"How's that?"

"I'm staying on of my own free will to work now, my friend," he said very clearly and sternly.

Gromov was sitting on the edge of the table in the captain's barrack. The tenants crowded around him.

"We're going to let you all off three months, for that bit of work you did on the timber."

Loud applause greeted this.

"Let's toss the chief!"

"Stop! Wait a minute!"

They were quiet again.

"Who's going to build the embankment for the dams?"

"We are!"

"Alright, now you can toss me!"

They tossed Gromov into the air. The captain was asleep on his bed. Suddenly he awoke and jumped up.

"What about me?" he said.

But no one heard him through the noise.

"No use expecting gratitude from these people," he muttered as he lay down and pulled the blanket over his head.

In a few minutes, however, he jumped up again and caught Gromov as the latter was leaving the barrack.

"It's awfully dull in this house, chief."

"Is it really?" laughed Gromov.

"I used to be a splendid accordian player once," the captain said dreamily. "I'd give half my life for an accordian this minute."

"I'll think it over," replied Gromov.

Suddenly he caught sight of someone and beckoned. A dirty, hairy fellow with tangled hair and a filthy shirt, stepped up to him.

"Why don't you go to the baths? Where's the Sanitary Commission of this barrack?"

Three fellows ran up.

"Here we are!"

"So you're breeding lice here, are you? Want to pay a fine perhaps?"

This was a new side to the Chekist. He was the stern military man now.

"Right you are, chief! We'll see to that," replied the Sanitary Commission.

The three proceeded to raise hell in the barrack. The dirty unshaven fellow was the first to catch it.

"Where did you come from, anyhow. Creeping out when the chief was here!"

He got several hard kicks. The code of morals was rough and ready and this was proved at once. The unshaven fellow calmly turned to the Sanitary Commission and said to one of its members:

"Come on—you—let's see your neck." He unfastened the collar of the boy's shirt. Certainly his neck was nothing to boast of. But crooks do not care to be put into awkward situations.

"Culture and hygiene before all, that's what I say!"

Kostya, the captain, was asleep. There was not a soul in the barrack. Kostya awoke at last. Whatever had happened?

"They must have all gone out to work without me. How do you like that?"

A Napoleon deserted of his army might have said the same. He drooped as he uttered the words.

"I'm being robbed of my authority. Now, then, quit that . . ."

Who was that coming in? Sonya. The captain threw himself down on his bed again and pulled the bed clothes and a pillow over his head. It was impossible to see from a distance whether there was anyone under the

blanket or not. Sonya had sharp eyes, however. She sat down on his bed. The captain pretended to be asleep and snored loudly. It was no use.

"Who d'you think you're fooling, I wonder?"

"Ah, that's you, Sonya! I didn't recognize you." Kostya yawned, turned over and pretended to search for something.

"Kostya, there's a piece in the paper about you."

She handed him a copy of *Reforging*.

"You're a 'Hero of Toil,' it seems."

Kostya looked at the paper. Yes, there was a very interesting bit about his work, but—Sonya was sitting there looking at him, and after all, she was an old friend and he had his honor as a thief to uphold.

"It's a misprint," he said at last. What was one to do with that woman when she sat there staring, making fun of him.

"It's a very annoying misprint in my life," he admitted. "Sonya, I give you my word of honor as a thief that even if the rest of the gang goes to work, I never will."

"Then there's nothing more to be said, is there?" asked Sonya.

"Nothing whatever."

"Well, goodby."

"Why are you going?"

Sonya rose lanquidly, and a little regretfully.

"And I came to ask you to compete with me."

Kostya was dumfounded.

"What did you say? I can't see you properly there. You're such an anaemic, indefinite sort of woman."

Sonya tossed her head scornfully. "Imagine them writing in the paper about rubbish like you!"

"Ah, you're jealous, that's what it is!"

"Now, I know that the others did all the work for you. You just want to make a career—on the quiet."

"Sonya, you know I never beat women. I always choke them," the captain was getting up. His dull eyes had a dangerous look in them.

"I'm not afraid of you. Will you compete with me or not?"

"By God I will!" shouted the captain.

"We're going to do a hundred and fifty percent," whispered Sonya.

"Two hundred" shouted the captain. Sonya handed him a paper.

"Sign this."

A working day on the White Sea Canal. Work on a huge scale was in progress. Hundreds of people in continuous motion. Strings of carts, passing trucks rattling by and hundreds of people racing along with wheelbarrows. The embankment of the dam was being filled up.

Ahead of the people went Kostya, the captain, and Sonya, who were the heroes of the day, the usual working day, on the White Sea Canal.

The captain was perfectly sure of himself. He was the leader, the aristocrat. All he had to do was to give orders and no one escaped his eye. A fellow sat down for a moment to shake the grit out of his boots, and Kostya was on him in a moment.

"What are you, a ballet dancer?" he asked. "I'm interested, you know. So you're a ballet dancer changing your shoes?"

The youth pulled on his boot again quickly and disappeared from Kostya's sight.

Two friends happened to stop and speak to each other for a moment.

"Talking politics?" cried Kostya. "I'm just interested to know—do you go in for politics?"

He went over to the wooden structure labelled "For Men" and led out the burly lad known to us as Mitya. Mitya looked angry and upset. He was holding a newspaper in his two hands, as if he had been reading it.

"Mitya, you're a bit of a dreamer, aren't you? It isn't a reading room, old boy!"

Sonya was working. The people with her sang as they worked. It was an interesting sight. The boards along which the wheelbarrows ran were set in the form of a huge trident along the embankment. The women mounted with their wheelbarrows along the central line. The first would turn to the right, the second to the left, alternately, then run along the embankment, tip up their barrows and without returning, descend by the outer planks.

Songs, jokes and laughter to the rhythm of swift harmonious movement. Sonya watched her brigade from above.

There was no talk of competition. It was going on now. There was nothing to talk about.

But Kostya was whispering to himself: "Surely Sonya won't beat us—?" And turned his eyes away with a little laugh. "No, no, she can't possibly do it."

The sun dazzled Sonya's eyes. "Supposing Kostya should beat us?" She gave a snuffle like a small child. "No, no, it can't be."

Engineer Sadovsky was tasting the dinner prepared in the kitchen. He masticated the food in a business like way and smacked his lips critically. The stout cook was waiting for the result like a nervous schoolboy, watching Sadovsky's mouth in suspense. The first taste appeared to be satisfactry. Sadovsky said nothing; but the second called out a swift reaction.

Sadovsky went for the cook with a huge wooden spoon in his hand. The cook retreated out of the kitchen before Sadovsky. They found themselves in the empty dining room. Waving his weapon furiously, engineer Sadovsky shouted:

"You're not a cook, you're a damned wrecker!"

Gromov was watching this scene with interest from the other side of the door. When he heard the word "wrecker" he banged the door again, peeped into the dining room and burst out laughing once more. It was hard to see what was happening in there.

Sadovsky came out at last. Gromov, without the trace of a smile, asked:

"Anything happened?"

But Sadovsky was clever.

"Oh, nothing," he said shortly. "Everything will be alright."

"Very good."

Sadovsky could not let Gromov go.

"I've got a favor to ask of you. Would you allow me to send for my mother? I have no one else belonging to me."

"We'll give you a reply in a few days," said Gromov.

They watched the work on Sonya's section for a while.

"Isn't that fine?" Gromov asked Sadovsky, pointing to the section.

Sadovsky did not answer.

They were standing by the road along which the trucks, people with wheelbarrows, and horses were all moving together.

"Don't you think it's fine?" Gromov asked sharply.

Sadovsky spread out his hands:

"Well," he said, "it seems that I don't know how to work properly."

" You must try," said Gromov, smiling. "Try getting into closer contact with life, engineer, with live people, and live work. It's good I think."

The women's brigade and Kostya's brigade drew up opposite each other. Neither was particularly well disposed to the other. Sonya and Kostya, the captain, came out to the middle. They did not look at each other as they shook hands. They waited in silence. The head foreman and the other foremen appeared with papers in their hands. The head foreman put on his spectacles and took the papers from them. Oh, how slow he was, the old crook.

"Look here, you, Julius Caesar or whatever you're called, couldn't you be a bit quicker?"

Julius Caesar glanced over his spectacles at the captain, moved away a little and read out:

"We've calculated that—er—"

He cleared his throat.

"We've calculated that the womens's brigade has fulfilled a hundred and fifty percent of the norm. And yours," he turned to Kostya, "a hundred and twenty."

And went on his way.

The captain went off by himself; he wanted to get away from the women's laughter and the shouts of his own gang—arguing, quarrelling, raising hell. He covered his ears and went straight on without noticing where he was going. That evening when the barrack was getting ready for bed, Mitya suddenly asked:

"Where's Kostya, the captain, boys?"

They shrugged their shoulders. No one knew.

Kostya was sitting on a rock up on the mountain, a romantic figure with a wandering eye. He glanced round about him and said suddenly:

"What am I sitting here for like Stenka Razin the Robber Chief?"

With that he rose, spat contemptuously and made his way home.

Next morning Kostya led his brigade out once more. The brigade was anxious to hear what he had to say. A fine cart horse appeared, dragging a load of soil after it. Kostya went up to the horse and announced:

"We're going to compete with this horse today!"

He did not look at anyone, but took off his jacket, threw it aside, rolled up his sleeves and said:

"Gee up, horsey! Let's start!"

The horse glanced at Kostya, turned away, and then dashed wildly after him. Kostya got up to the peasants digging in the quarry. Karas had to fill his wheelbarrow for him.

"You're a kulak, aren't you, old man?"

"And you're a thief, aren't you, sir?"

"I'll thank you, old boy, not to make any unpleasant insinuations. I'm a shock brigade worker."

Kostya ran with his wheelbarrow. He danced and twisted and bowled along light heartedly. He met Sadovsky, who was saying to the head foreman in spectacles:

"You should keep closer to actual production. What's all this?"

He indicated the confusion of wheelbarrows, trucks and horses. The head foreman turned, the trucks and the road became clearer. Hardly pausing for a moment, Kostya whispered to Sadovsky:

"Didn't you know me again?"

Sadovsky looked him over and said with a friendly smile:

" I wouldn't recognize you now!"

"I wouldn't recognize you, either!" and Kostya laughed as he ran off with his wheelbarrow.

Something caught Sadovsky's eye then and he made for it.

Work was going on at a tremendous rate, and on the hill the band was playing the marches composed by its conductor, Nikolaevsky.

Kostya bumped into Karas once more. Karas loaded the wheelbarrow and said quietly:

"And you needn't run so fast, either."

"No wrecking, I beg you, old man." Kostya ran off with his barrow and caught up to his rival, the horse.

"Whoa!" shouted Kostya and the horse stood still.

"Gee up!" the carter shouted and touched up the horse.

As Kostya was tipping his load out, he met Sonya.

"Kostya, are you drunk?"

"Yes, with love of you," he retorted gallantly as he was running off.

But when he got up to Karas again, he said:

"You're right, after all, Dad."

And he did not run any more, but went at an even pace with the barrow. Still he would not give up. The orchestra appeared on the scene. Just as the conductor was raising his baton, Kostya caught him by the arm. The orchestra struck up the first note and instantly ceased. Said Kostya in a confidential tone to the conductor:

"We're interested in fox-trots."

The conductor was furious.

"We don't play fox-trots."

"Then they were right to send you to prison," remarked Kostya as he went away.

It was evening. Kostya was still running with the barrow. He had changed his shirt but his hair was still beautifully smooth and he wore his usual superior smile on his moist face.

"I'm beginning to depend on you, old chap. Listen—" Just then the head foreman came up with Sonya.

"Stop!" ordered the foreman, putting on his spectacles.

"Oh, is that you, Julius Caesar?" said Kostya lightly, but his hands trembled as he let go of the barrow. Still, he tried to keep up his air of independence and spat out nonchalantly.

"According to our calculations—" The foreman cleared his throat leisurely. "According to our calculations, the horse has done a hundred and eight per cent of the norm. You—" he turned to Kostya indifferently, "have done a hundred and thirty percent."

Kostya fell face downwards on the ground and sobbed. Sonya rushed over and knelt down by him.

"Go away," she said to the others.

They were alone. She raised Kostya.

"What is it, Kostya?" she asked.

A boundless stretch of water. The great dam. Sadovsky and Maxim Ivanovitch were standing gazing at it.

"We've raised a lake—it's no joke." He turned and went along the dam and soon dissappeared from sight. Then Sadovsky who had been standing with a face as expressionless as stone shouted after him:

"You think I'm a wrecker . . . . but who raised the lake? I did?"

He descended from the dam and went about his work as if it was really a matter of importance to him, as if he cared about it. (We cannot record all his conversations with the assistants, technicians, and foremen, but we can see him making notes. looking at plans, signing papers, trying to be everywhere and oversee everything at once.)

Sadovsky went off to the barrack where Kostya lived. He did not go in, however, but asked someone to call Kostya. The latter came out with his usual derisive expressiion. He looked at Sadovsky with attention.

"Are you interested in our place?"

"Yes, how are you getting on here? No bed-bugs to worry you?" asked Sadovsky.

"No," replied Kostya. "We don't see anything of those animals. But come into our drawing room, won't you?"

"Are you dissatisfied with anything?" asked Sadovsky.

"Only with the single life," said Kostya.

Sadovsky began jotting down something in a business like way. . Kostya was bored.

"Now, drop that, engineer. You can come in of an evening and give us lectures or talks if you like. After all we're building the canal, together, aren't we?"

Sadovsky brightened up.

"I'll come, but—would you mind giving me a little document I need?"

Kostya's eyes gleamed.

"You've come to the wrong address. Forging's not my specialty."

"I'm serious," begged Sadovsky. "I only want a paper saying that I visit your barrack, that I'm in close touch with the masses and that I'm going to give lectures at your place."

Kostya turned his barrow upside down, sat down on it and idly picked up a bit of a stick from the ground. Sadovsky handed him his fountain pen and writing pad. Kostya wrote out the note required of him, signed it, and returned the writing pad and pen carefully and politely to Sadovsky's pocket.

"Thanks."

"Don't mention it," murmured the captain. Then they parted.

Kostya gave his sleeve an expert little shake and Sadovsky's fountain pen slipped down into his fingers. Kostya examined it.

"I said it would be mine some day."

Sadovsky was reading over the paper handed him by Kostya.

"That's a document, anyway," he said to himself, "that'll prove I'm in close touch with the masses."

Kostya caught sight of Gromov at work, and went up to him. He led him aside and handed him the fountain pen.

"This pen belongs to a wrecker. I stole it for fun." Then he told Gromov, almost in a whisper about Sadovsky's request.

Gromov took the pen without a smile, but as soon as Kostya had disappeared he laughed heartily. Sadovsky was approaching. Gromov glanced at

his pocket and saw a bit of a stick protruding. Gromov took Sadovsky by the arm, saying:

"I'd like a word with you."

"Well?"

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

Sadovsky recoiled, withdrawing his arm from the other's grasp.

"To think that you would actually go to a thief," Gromov went on, "and ask him for a paper to say you're in close touch with the masses."

How did Gromov know this? What could Sadovsky say? He coughed and pulled his handkerchief out of his pocket. That accursed bit of paper fell out with it. Sadovsky stepped on it quickly.

"This is your pen, isn't it?"

Sadovsky glanced at his pocket; there was a bit of stick in it. Gromov was laughing at him. Sadovsky covered his face with his hands. What had come over him? Terror? Shame? Perhaps he was crying.

He uncovered his face at last and said very simply and frankly:

"Shall I tell you the truth?"

"Yes, do."

"I've been collecting documents like these for fifteen years."

"And it didn't help?" asked Gromov.

"It didn't help," replied Sadovsky with a bitter little laugh. As he was moving away Gromov said:

"You asked permission for your mother to visit you?"

Sadovsky stood turned to stone.

"The permission has been granted."

An old woman was sitting in the train with bundles of various sizes around her. It was Sadovsky's mother. Opposite to her sat a woman. Both were sad and gloomy.

"It's your son you're going to see, I suppose?" asked the younger woman.

"Yes," replied the old woman tearfully. "To see my only son."

"What is he?"

"An engineer."

"Did they send him far away?"

"To the end of the world, you might call it."

Then the old woman wiped her eyes. She had grown accustomed to crying. She took out a book, put on her spectacles and, holding the book a long way off, began to read Chekov's *Sakhalin.*

Turning to the other woman suddenly, she remarked:

"Hard labor and exile, no matter what you say."

The other woman agreed: "Of course."

The old woman arrived at last at the little station. She stood there alone, for some time keeping an eye on her bundles and crying a little. The people on the station were complete strangers who went hurrying about their own business, the train was leaving, the station was empty now. A motion picture machine and some rolls of film were being loaded on to a cart. The driver approached the old woman and asked her in Ukrainian:

"Are you looking for someone, Mother?"

"For my son," she said.

"Ah, there's many a mother's son in these parts. Whereabouts would yours be, do you think?"

"In the concentration camp."

"It's a big camp, Mother. What barrack would he be in now?"

"I don't know, I'm sure."

"What's his name?"

"Sadovsky."

"Ah. I know him."

The driver picked up the old woman's bundles, piled them on the cart and helped her into the hay in the bottom.

"Sit down, Mother," he said heartily, and away they went. The road ran through the woods; it was muddy and full of pits. At last they came to a sentry box. Some frontier guards rode past. The old woman grumbled. "It was a poor kind of country," she said.

"What have you got in the cart?" she asked the driver of the cart.

"A motion picture machine," he replied.

"Do they show pictures in the prison as well?"

"Sometimes," the Ukrainian replied in his sad, monotonous voice.

The old woman brightened a little.

"And who might you be, my lad?" she asked kindly.

"I'm a bandit," he answered gloomily.

"God bless my soul!" the old woman's eyebrows went up in horror. "What's that you're saying?"

"Why should I hide it, Mother? If I'm a bandit, I'm a bandit, and that's all there is about it."

"Did you ever kill anyone?"

"Sometimes," was the laconic reply.

Forests all around. Not a soul in sight and a murderer sitting beside her; the old woman crossed herself furtively somewhere under her nose with trembling hands.

"Mother!" said the man suddenly. "I know where I'll take you—to the club!"

She could hardly hear what he said with fright.

"Wherever you like," she muttered.

He drove the old woman right through the camp to the club.

"You find out here, Mother, where your son, Sadovsky, is, and I'll wait for you," he said and began to unload the cinema apparatus. The old woman went into the club. There was so much light and so many people that she could distinguish nothing at first. Oh, yes—there were some posters on the walls and portraits and drawings—now she could see. She stood in the doorway. Suddenly she heard the name "Sadovsky!" and started.

Who was speaking? Where was he? The voice belonged to a young man on the platform—a good looking young man. What was he saying?

"This very night we'll shut off the water-fall! Today we're going to take the elements by the horns and knock hell out of them!" The old woman was horrified. What was he talking about.

"Not a single shock brigade worker is going to sleep tonight. We've got to go out and fight the last decisive battle with the forces of nature. Sadovsky asks for five hundred men. We'll give him a thousand of the best."

Suddenly this passionate young man stepped quietly up to the footlights and asked gently:

"Is the resolution passed unanimously, I'd be interested to know?"

A forest of hands shot up.

"Line up for action in half an hour's time." He jumped over the footlights and came straight towards where the old woman was standing.

"Well, I'm glad to see you, Mother," he said with the welcoming smile of an old friend.

"I've known you for a long time now."

"I must say I don't remember ever meeting you."

"Ah, Mother, life is a very touching combination of events."

The captain gave her his arm and led her out into the street, where he caught sight of her bundles and the driver.

"Keep to the left and then turn that corner. You needn't be anxious, Mother, your son is now busy carrying out one of the tasks set by Comrade Stalin."

"What?"

"We're going to beat the Panama Canal hollow."

"Excuse me, but I'm afraid I don't understand anything. I've forgotten my geography."

"Geography's out of date here."

"What are you telling me?"

"Your own son's words," replied the captain as he led the old woman into Sadovsky's quarters.

She caught sight of Sadovsky's shirt hanging on the wall, seized it, kissed it and stroked the tie. The captain turned away sharply and went to fetch her bundles.

"Excuse me, but why did you bring him dry bread? You should have brought a bottle of brandy instead."

"I did," she rummaged about in her bundles, but the captain held up a protesting hand.

"I must beg you not to show me the brandy."

In his agitation he drew out his cigarette case and lit a cigarette.

"Why, where did you get that cigarette case?" asked the old woman with a touch of suspicion.

"I bought it in the Torgsin in Moscow.

"Excuse me, but that's my husband's case," said the old woman, starting at him.

"I'm extremely sorry," said the captain with his customary assurance, "that your husband sold it to the Torgsin."

"My husband died ten years ago."

"All the worse for him," replied the captain jauntily and went out.

The old woman started to examine her bundles feverishly.

"Everything seems to be alright," she whispered to herself. Then she turned the key in the lock of the door and stuck a chair under the handle.

She sat down by the table. She felt very tired. She picked up an envelop addressed to "Y. N. Sadovsky, Director of Hydraulic Construction Works on the White Sea Canal." It was marked "Strictly Private," and "Urgent."

She read the address and stood up, trembling a little.

"Director—Director of Works—So my prayers were answered after all. Yuri's been pardoned. He always said he wasn't guilty. Director of Hydraulic Construction Works!"

She began to look at some plans on the table, when suddenly the telephone rang. She took up the receiver.

"Yes. . . . this is his mother speaking. Whose mother? Why, the director's, of course!" she replied with some severity and hung up the receiver.

"And I went and brought him dry bread! Dry bread? I thought he'd be hungry!" she said, dismayed at her own stupidity.

Sadovsky was sitting eating at the table at home. He wore high boots; the collar of his shirt was open like a workman's, his hair was untidy and

matted. His mother sat opposite to him. She could not take her eyes from her son's face.

"Yuri—then you're still a prisoner?"

He shook his head in reply; his mouth was full.

"Then you're free?"

He shook his head again.

"I can't understand it at all," sighed the old woman.

Sadovsky took a mouthful of brandy.

"Mother, just think—the waterfall has been shut off—it was my idea, they did it because I advised them! Mother, you're an educated woman, aren't you?—Just imagine, I came here and I'm altering geography."

"You did't come here, you were sent. And I came to visit you, thinking you were in prison and here you are remaking geography."

"Thousands of people turn out to work if I order them. We're doing the most unheard of things in engineering," Sadovsky went on excitedly.

"They arrested him, tried him, exiled him," the old woman said slowly and dreamily to herself. "And now he's doing wonders of engineering. Tell me honestly, Yuri, were you mixed up in any of that wrecking or not?"

"No," replied Sadovsky. "And I don't want to talk about it, either."

"Well, now I'm beginning to understand you a little," said the old woman. "You're a good, honest son after all."

Summer. Work was going on at full speed. The dam was being built. The structural part of the canal was something entirely new to the ancient rocks. Gromov rode up to Sadovsky and shook hands with him.

"In a mess, are you, Yuri Nikolaevitch?" asked Gromov.

"Yes," Sadovsky admitted.

"I'm going down to the slucies for three days, Yuri Nikolaevitch. The whole responsibility will rest upon your shoulders, now."

"I see."

"The dam must be finished in three days' time." and Gromov spurred his horse.

But this was not the same Sadovsky who formerly listened to orders, barely acknowledged them with a nod and walked away without speaking. He caught at the horse's bridle.

"I can't do it in three days!"

Gromov dug his spurs into the horse's side but Sadovsky clung obstinately to the bridle.

"Give me five days!"

"Three!" replied Gromov.

"Five—four, then," shouted Sadovsky.

"Three and a half," he was deperate now.

Gromov laughed.

"You're like a gypsy, bargaining," he cried and rode off.

Sadovsky remained alone. He looked around at a great poster with the words: "The canal will be opened in ? days." Sadovsky went over to where the drilling was going on, and met Kostya, the captain.

"Kostya!" he said with a deep sigh.

"Well?"

"Are you a friend of mine?" asked Sadovsky. Kostya was astonished. He lowered his eyes and said seriously:

"That's rather a deep question, isn't it?"

"Kostya," said Sadovsky, "think of some miracle, will you?"

"I'll try."

"We've only got three days. We're all behind with the drilling. Start a socialist competition."

"I might."

"Is that settled, then?"

"No."

Karas, a tidy, business like Karas, ran up to them.

"Clear out, we're going to start blasting!"

Kostya suddenly clutched Sadovsky by the arm.

"Wait a minute. I'd like to have friends, too. Honest friends—that's what I want," he said slowly and heavily.

The blasting began and Karas ran away wringing his hands. But the captain still held Sadovsky's hand in his grip. Kostya was strangely intense. He suddenly slipped his hand into his pocket as if he was about to pull out a revolver and drew out—Sadovsky's cigarette case.

"Take this back, and we won't say any more about it."

Sadovsky took the case and suddenly shrieked:

"The explosion!"

The captain caught Sadovsky deftly round the waist, laid him on the ground and threw himself on top of him.

Then came the explosion. A great stone struck Kostya in the leg. He got up, limping a little. Then he straightened himself and said with a laugh:

"Excuse me for troubling you, won't you?"

"Something hit you, Kostya? You're hurt?"

"Don't be sloppy. I was beaten once in Orlov Jail—and I can tell you this is just the tender kiss of a child compared with what that was. Well, we've settled all our affairs, haven't we?" and the captain went off.

"That fellow's going up in the world," Sadovsky remarked to himself.

It was evening on the bank by the dams. The captain was playing his new accordion. He was obviously a real virtuoso. He made the most wonderful improvisations. He was the happiest man in the world that evening.

"Look here," he said, turning to the gang. "Let's work a miracle, let's finish this famous dam in three days." He hummed a song, with variations and then began once more:

"This time Sonya is going to try and get our Red Banner from us. That woman has the heart of a tiger. My dear children, we've got to do a bit of real work, I can tell you. Our boarding-house will, I suppose, get up three hours earlier tomorrow or did you want to dance tonight?"

"Give us a good tune before we go to bed, then. Play the Ukrainian dance. No, No. Shamil, play Shamil's dance!"

The captain struck up a Caucasian melody and a couple of fine, well-built boys began the dance of the mountaineers. The dance was fast and furious, when quite unexpectedly the sound of the accordion ceased and the dancers dashed into each other with the suddenness.

The valve of the accordion had come loose. It fell. Kostya stooped and picked it up sadly. He tried to fix it in place, but it fell again.

"Whoever made this instrument had neither a heart nor a conscience," the captain whispered. He put away the accordion in its case and gave it to someone with strict instructions not to touch it. But what a blow to his happiness! He was ready to cry with vexation.

"Let's go to bed, boys," said Kostya. "We've got to do some real work tomorrow on that dam."

But he himself did not turn in. He disappeared somewhere.

He turned up in Sadovsky's office, where the draughtsmen worked. He had a little bottle with him.

"Lend me a few drops of gum arabic, will you, mademoiselle?" he said, addressing the prettiest and most refined looking of the girls.

"What for?" she demanded in a rude tone.

"I've had a great misfortune, mademoiselle. The valve of my accordion has come loose."

"How do you like that!" said the girl with a giggle. "If we were to start giving out glue to everyone!"

As Kostya turned away from her, he whispered:

"You're a vile little beast, mademoiselle."

He went up to Sadovsky who was at the telephone. The engineer was evidently in a hurry, he seized his cap and was just going out when the captain stopped him.

"Comrade Sadovsky—you said you would be my friend—"

"Yes, what is it? Hurry up, Kostya!"

"I've had a misfortune—the valve of my accordion has come loose. Could you lend me some glue to stick it on with?"

"What nonsense—really, you behave like a child—why don't you go to the secretary for the glue," Sadovsky said, hurrying away.

He was gone in a moment. The secretary turned out to be the same mademoiselle who had already refused him.

"Mademoiselle," Kostya went up to the table once more. "Just two drops of glue, please. All my happiness depends on it. You're a prisoner, too, aren't you? Can't you sympathize with a comrade?"

"A comrade, indeed! You? Clear out!"

The captain went out. Suddenly he shook off his doleful mood and disappeared into the darkness, whistling.

It was night. There was no one left in the office now. The captain, with an anxious expression on his face descended by way of the chimney. By the light of a match he found the table where the girl had sat.

"You're a vile little beast, mademoiselle," he whispered as he poured himself out exactly half a bottle of gum. Then he returned by the way he had come, in darkness. He stumbled over something and fell. He lit a match and saw a samovar on the floor.

"Ah, that's a useful article," said the captain. "And no one would suspect that I. . . ." In a few minutes he had robbed the desks, drawers and cupboards of everything portable. The last thing he took was the little mirror that mademoiselle had kept in her desk. Then he went off with his sack.

Next day Kostya's brigade and Sonya's turned out to work, but no Kostya.

"Where's Kostya?" Sonya asked.

"We haven't seen him," they said.

Just then Sadovsky appeared with the head foreman and the workers. He was in sore need of Kostya just now. One of Kostya's friends whispered something in Sadovsky's ear.

"No? What do you mean! Imagine a fellow like that! Go and look for him at once!"

Sonya knew what was the matter.

"The captain's played us dirt?"

"Looks like it."

It was depressing. Sonya clutched her head, snatched off the handkerchief she wore instead of a hat and tore it to pieces convulsively.

"I swear that if Kostya, the captain. . . ."

She was standing before people who had been sworn friends for years—in the underworld. Their faces fell. They knew that this woman meant what she said. "I swear that if Kostya, the captain has disgraced us, I'll kill him!"

Then the strongest of them, the man whom Kostya had hunted out of the lavatory when competition was at its height, the man who was possessed of almost unlimited physical strength, who had shown the gang how to float timber and who had always been a rather retiring fellow, agreed gloomily:

"That's right."

He shook hands with her and, smiling grimly:

"Don't worry, we'll squash him like a worm."

And gave her an illustration of how worms should be crushed.

Kostya awoke at last. What had happened? What was all this? Bottles? Cards? Beside him lay a girl, half undressed and smiling in her sleep. In the corner sat a suspicious looking character with a bruise under his eye. Kostya rubbed his knuckles. That was his work—the bruise under the eyes. What had happened? He began to collect himself. Now his head was fresh. He tapped his temple with his forefinger and pulled the bottle of glue out of his pocket. The tears rose to his eyes as he whispered:

"Ah, mademoiselle, if only you hadn't been such a vile, mean little beast."

He jumped up and went out.

A village by the station. A quiet little house kept by an old man. The captain appeared before him and stood with his hands folded together in an attitude of dumb supplication.

"What do you want?" shouted the old man. "Saint Nicholas," said the captain, "you received certain goods from me—camp property. That was a great sin."

The old man waved his hands over his grey head, as if he was trying to ward off the punishment to come, and disappeared behind the scenes. The samovar and the sack with the office property appeared once more. The captain took them and said as he was going out:

"You'd better close down your den, Saint, else you'll have to have a talk with God about my sins. Do you trust me?"

"Yes, I trust you. . . . I trust you."

Sadovsky was on the dam when the people he had sent to search for Kostya returned.

"No, there's no sign of him."

"What do you think about it?"

One of them gave a feeble grin. He was a sly fellow. With a wave of his hand towards the woods and the shore, he said:

"It's spring. The roads have dried up. The spring's got into his blood—and he's run away."

Sadovsky felt depressed. The boys went off, silent and thoughtful. It was all different without the captain; the work did not go as well. People whispered together. Suddenly the strong man of the gang struck the ground so hard with his crowbar that it went in halfway.

"It's a lie," he said. "It's all a damned lie! I won't go on with it.

And cleared out.

Then Sonya, a passionate, domineering, self-forgetting Sonya, appeared on the scene. She dragged the strong man back by the arm to the dam and turned on the bewildered, mournful gang:

"Are we to let ourselves go down again because of one low-down skunk? We, the shock brigade workers, we, the best folk on the whole canal, we, the folk who are doing such great things—are we to slip back again to the dens we used to live in, to the jails and everlasting disgrace?"

"Why did Kostya desert us? We trusted him. We looked up to him—we were fond of Kostya," the strong man complained. Then addressing no one in particular, he shouted at the top of his voice:

"Give us back our Kostya, you swine?"

Sonya waited a minute till the wave of excitement had passed.

"Kostya is dead as far as we're concerned," she said very quietly. "But *we* are going to live. Whoever's in favor of this, raise your hand."

And with a seriousness so terrible that they glanced at each other in fear, they voted for this strange but very real resolution.

"Any more resolutions?" asked Sonya.

"To work on the canal day and night," someone shouted from the crowd.

"She's a good brigadier, is Sonya," said the strong man quietly.

The captain turned up at last in the office with his sack of stolen goods. Mademoiselle espied him on the threshold.

"There he is! Catch him!"

"Why should you catch me?" said the captain. "Here, take these toys."

"This is all an unfortunate mistake," he said, trying to joke, but his tone was bitter.

He handed the girl her mirror, and laid out all the things he had taken away.

"You see, comrades, it was like this," he pulled out the bottle of gum arabic from his pocket. "I came back for the gum arabic last night because mademoiselle wouldn't give me any."

But they had already rung for the commandant and the latter hurried in with two soldiers.

"That's enough from you," he said to the captain, and they led him away.

He was kept strictly guarded now in a log hut with one window, benches, and a sentry. The Lemon came forward to meet him with:

"Did you forget what we said at our last meeting?" and laughed.

"Kostya, we'll all come to this. Chuck it all. You and me—we were the same as brothers. Shake!—Let's clear out for good."

Kostya sat down. Then he shook hands with the Lemon.

"Yes, let's clear out together."

Gromov, the reserved, self controlled Gromov struck the table with such violence that the glass cracked and a vase full of pens and pencils clattered on to the floor.

"I can't believe it!" shouted Gromov. "You're a fool, commandant! A martinet! You don't understand our policy in the least and don't you dare to criticize it. Bring the man to me!"

The commandant went out. Gromov was extremely upset. He tried to put the table in order. Then he paced up and down the room.

"What is there to talk about? Everything's clear enough. Sadovsky was a wrecker, wasn't he? Yes. And he works, now, doesn't he?—And how?" he concluded with a chuckle.

Then, like a weary soldier at the front, or a weary rider in the saddle, Gromov dozed off just as he was; it was the sleep of a worn out man. And in his sleep he murmured:

"Three days—the engineer—I've been reading all night, too—cement. I'll start working myself on the cement—The White Sea to the Baltic," his voice trailed away into silence. He was fast asleep.

Sadovsky entered the room. He was just about to start speaking, but stopped himself in time.

"The poor chap's worn out."

He was stealing quietly away again, when the commandant returned triumphant.

"Citizen commander!"

"Sh-sh!" Sadovsky signed to him to be silent. But Gromov awoke and sat up.

"Citizen commander, the prisoner, while satisfying his natural needs, escaped with the help of the recidivist known as the Lemon!"

Gromov did not rise. He only said shortly: "Order the divisional commander to start in pursuit."

The commandant went out again.

"Who's escaped?" asked Sadovsky.

"Kostya, the captain," replied Gromov. "Well, give us your report, engineer. I'd like a smoke but I've no tobacco."

Sadovsky handed him his cigarette case, and as he was doing so, suddenly, naturally and quite confidentially, said:

"Perhaps you'll think me sentimental, but you know, I feel sorry for that fellow. I've got used to him now. I understand something about him."

"And do you think we're not sorry for him?" Gromov asked sternly.

And then, unexpectedly and very simply: "And do you think we are not sorry for you, Sadovsky?"

Sadovsky was taken by surprise. Gromov rose and went over to the table.

"But when it's necessary, we make no bones about certain things. Kostya, the captain may have to be shot. And we shall shoot him."

"There was a difficult moment at the dam today. A woman saved the situation."

"Who was it?"

"Sonya—that lovely girl, you know." Gromov's face brightened. He smiled. "Between you and me, engineer, I think she'll earn a decoration yet."

Then Sadovsky spread out his hands.

"Well, comrade, all my philosophy regarding people has gone to pieces!"

Gromov sat down.

"Sit down and let's get to work, Yuri Nikolaevitch."

Sadovsky got out his papers and handed them to Gromov. The door opened and Kostya, the captain, ran in.

Gromov gave him a suspicious glance.

"You ran away?"

"Yes."

"Where to?"

"To you."

"And what about the Lemon?"

"He ran in one direction and I ran in another."

Kostya came closer to Gromov.

"Put yourself in my shoes, citizen commander—You remember you gave me a wonderful accordion. Well, the valve came unstuck. It was a question of my personal happiness; I went to ask for a drop of glue and they turned me away," he turned to Sadovsky, "your clever folks refused me."

"Why couldn't you have given him a little glue?" Gromov demanded.

Sadovsky spread out his hands. "If I'd only known."

"Well, I know all the rest," said Gromov to Kostya.

"Citizen commander—think of my life—tell me, am I ruined, am I crippled forever—a thief for always?"

Gromov interrupted him sharply: "Don't whine! This isn't a boarding school for young ladies."

Kostya dropped his eyes in embarrassment.

"Well, what do you say?" Gromov asked Sadovsky.

"I really don't know what to think," replied Sadovsky.

Then Gromov took a piece of paper and wrote on it:

"No punishment is to be administered, and his accordion is to be restored to the bearer, who is also to be provided with glue."

Next morning the gang turned out to work as usual. Kostya the captain, came along the ridge. Sonya, the strong man and a good many of the others retired before him as before a ghost. Kostya did not show the least sign of embarrassment or alarm. He looked around at them all and said coolly:

"You seem very interested in me?"

Then they fell on him, seized him and tossed him up in their fists.

"Give him a good thrashing! Knock hell out of him!" they shouted. They flung him down on the ground and then stepped back. The strong man picked him up.

"Come on, what have you to say for yourself?"

Kostya smiled.

"I didn't think you liked me so much, friends."

He stood scratching himself. But Sonya strode up to him full of passion and hate.

"To desert us at a time like this. You ran away and had to be brought back, you lump of carrion!"

"Clear out—thief—Out with him!" they all shouted.

The strong man stopped them.

"What excuse can you give?" he said to Kostya.

Kostya straightened himself and answered in a serious tone, turning to Sonya:

"I've been rather sick as a matter of fact. But now I'm cured for good."

He pulled out Gromov's note.

"Here's the prescription."

He handed it to Sonya. She read it.

"Will you trust me again?"

Sonya turned to the gang.

"The old brigadier has come back in first class condition. Competition will go on as usual. I suggest we should all have a good laugh."

She burst out laughing herself.

"Give me back my prescription. It'll hold good for my whole life, said Kostya.

The lock chambers were not yet flooded with water. The finishing touches were being put to them and a general clearing up was going on. Karas was walking along the dam, looking things over with the eye of an owner. A north country hound was following on his tracks. Karas looked around and down into the water. Then he descended to the water's edge. He looked at it attentively a moment and said to himself:

"There's a leakage here."

He climbed up again quickly and hurried off to Sadovsky's office.

"Could you step into the corridor for a moment?"

Sadovsky came out.

"The dam's leaking."

"Thanks very much for telling me," said Sadovsky. "You're a foreman here, aren't you? What were you before?"

"They called me a kulak."

"I'll mention your name to the chief."

"I'll take it kindly if you did."

They went down to the dam together.

"Why have you got a dog with you?" asked Sadovsky.

Karas smiled slyly.

"When they let me out, I'm going to start hunting in these parts. See?"

"I see."

"There's grand hunting about here. I've got a dog—to start with—I'll be a free man again someday."

Sadovsky glanced at Karas.

"That's a good idea—the hunting."

"Oh, I'll get on alright, you'll see. I'll be my own master once more."

"And will you go into the collective farm?"

"Oh, no. I'm not as young as I was, it's too late for me to begin a new life all over again. Here, Neptune! That's a splendid dog of mine. He'll go after a bear or an elk or anything. We'll make a living, me and you, Neptune, won't we?"

The dog leaped at him and barked joyously. Karas smiled. When they got to the dam, Sadovsky looked down. Gromov was coming towards them.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"The dam's leaking," said Sadovsky, in dismay. "It's letting the water through!"

"Don't get excited."

"How can I call it complete—a dam like that?"

He turned to go.

"I'll report to you in an hour's time," he said.

Gromov went over to the telephone and took up the receiver.

"Send a party of divers up here on the next train," Gromov ordered.

Sadovsky went home to his room, and without taking off his coat, sat down at his plans. Then he pushed his papers aside.

"Mother," he said, "you believe me, don't you? Here I've worked honestly and now the dam is leaking. Leaking, Mother."

"It isn't your fault, is it?"

"Yes, it must be my fault," declared Sadovsky. "I'm the engineer, ain't I? Or am I a useless puppet and have they the right to throw we out?"

He went back to the dam. There was nobody about. His mother followed him. She stood at the entrance and watched her son. Sadovsky went along the bank and picked up a big stone. He came out in the middle of the dam and threw himself into the water just as he was, with the stone in his hand.

His mother stood motionless. A second passed, another—half a minute. The old woman started forward. Sadovsky came up to the surface again.

"I failed that time," he said. He scrambled out, picked up another large stone and dived again. Up he came once more, puffing and spitting; he swam to the shore. Then he turned homewards, and his mother followed him. When he got home he threw off his clothes, whistling.

As he was going out again he said to his mother:

"I'm an engineer and I can answer for my own work."

"You needn't worry," he told Gromov, looking in at the office.

"What about?"

"The dam. I found out what was the matter. We need a diver. It's only about half an hour's work."

Gromov answered smilingly:

"I've sent for divers already. I wasn't a bit worried either; on the contrary, I was quite certain your dam would be alright."

The first steamer laden with the shock brigade workers of the White Sea Canal was steaming up the canal from Soroka to Lake Onega. It was a triumphal journey, accompanied by music, singing, greetings and dancing.

Kostya Dorokhov stood among the rest, staring at the banks as they floated by. He was silent. Sonya noticed this. Restless and beautiful as ever in her simple holiday clothes, she went up to the captain from behind and put her hands over his eyes. Then she took them away quickly and found that her fingers were wet. She went along the deck looking at her fingers.

The steamer entered the lock chamber. Sonya went over to the side. The steamer lay still. And still the woman stood looking at her hands. She noticed absently that a young fellow standing beside her flung the stub of his cigarette into the water, spat after it and blew his nose over the side.

She glanced at the tears, Kostya's tears, on her fingers, then at the filth and the cigarette stub in the water and suddenly flew at the fellow who had soiled the canal. She slapped him with all her might—right and left across the face.

"Where d'you think you're spitting?" she shouted. "Where d'you think you're spitting, eh?"

The people on the bank observed the scene critically. "Chuck him overboard!" someone shouted.

Sonya attacked the fellow like a wild thing. She was almost beside herself with fury.

"Where are you spitting, do you hear?"

Kostya stepped between them.

"Excuse me this time, comrades. I forgot myself," mumbled the boy.

Kostya went up to Sonya and put his hands over her eyes as she had done. He took them away again quickly, saying:

"Crying, Sonya? You're a weak woman, after all!"

Conclusion

Everything was cosy and simple. Sadovsky was having his tea. His mother was sewing his papers together into a book. Suddenly there came a knock at the door and Gromov entered.

"I'd like a word with you, Yuri Nikolaeivitch."

"Will I be in the way?" asked his mother.

"No, not at all."

Gromov sat down.

"There's going to be a big meeting today. You'll have to speak at it and I warn you we're pretty advanced people. We've worked a great deal, and lived through a great deal."

There was something strange about the tone in which he spoke. He had never spoken quite like that before.

"You're going to be set free, Yuri Nikolaeivitch."

"I! Set free!" Sadovsky jumped up. "And I was waiting for this moment to tell you that—"

"Just a minute," Gromov interrupted him. "You have been awarded a decoration by the government as well."

Sadovsky turned away to the window. His mother picked up the broom and began to sweep the floor in her agitation. Then she laughed, threw it aside, and going up to Gromov, asked simply:

"Do Chekists ever kiss?"

"Yes."

But Sadovsky pushed her gently aside and sat down opposite Gromov. He pushed his glass of tea away, put his elbows on the table and leaned towards Gromov.

"I've been waiting for this moment. I wrote it all out, as a matter of fact, but it wouldn't come right and it wasn't what I meant to say. I fooled you and I fooled myself. I was a wrecker and I did commit a crime. I admit it now."

"Yes," said Gromov seriously.

The old woman retreated.

"And you kept it from me, from your own mother? You'll never be let out of here now."

"And so they've given me a decoration?" Sadovsky asked.

"Yes," Gromov repeated.

"Well, but what will you do now that I've admitted my guilt?"

Gromov laughed. "We knew it all along." He stood up. "Now we've turned over a new leaf and both you and we will start afresh. Allow me to congratulate you, Comrade Sadovsky."

"Then I'll stay on and work with you. I'll build a water power station at my dam. I planned to do it."

"Come round tomorrow to talk things over," said Gromov and left.

Sadovsky's mother sat limp in the chair.

"So you deceived me? Your own mother?" She jumped up all of a sudden and seized the broom. "Ask my forgiveness! Ask your mother's forgiveness," she waved the broom over him violently. "Kneel down and beg my pardon else I'll give you a right down good thrashing, you blackguard!"

It was late in the evening in a railway carriage. A man was asleep on one of the lower bunks. On the other lay Kostya. Up above Sonya slept covered with a shawl. Kostya got up, went out for a few moments, returned and turned to stone. He had caught sight of a notecase ready to fall out of the pocket of the sleeping man. The sleeper was very well dressed. He had a briefcase and suitcase in a holland cover under his head. The notecase slipping out from under his open jacket was well filled.

Kostya turned away and sat down on his bunk. The notecase still drew his eye. He pulled a newspaper out of his pocket tried to read, sighed, and after a while put it away again. He glanced once more at the notecase and, rising a little, gave a loud cough. The sleeper stirred and turned over so that the notecase slid on to his stomach. All that remained was to take it and go.

Kostya lay down on his back, watched the notecase out of the corner of his eye for a minute. Then he turned his face to the wall, curled up and closed his eyes. He jumped up suddenly, took his suitcase in his hand, picked up the notecase as lightly as if he was picking a flower, gripped it tightly in his hand, and shouted at the top of his voice:

"Citizens, keep an eye on your money, there are thieves on the train!"

The sleeper started and awoke. Kostya handed him his notecase and left the carriage.

He went into the restaurant car, threw down some money on the table and said:

"A glass of vodka, quick!"

He tossed it off at a gulp. "Your health!" he said. Then he went back to his bunk, lay down and fell asleep.

Sonya and Kostya made their appearance at the gates of the Svirstroy.

"We'd like to know if we could get work here," said Kostya to a man who was just alighting from a car. "We're shock brigade workers from the White Sea Canal."

The man looked Kostya up and down.

"I'm a specialist on drilling. Beat all world records," Kostya handed the man a paper. He read, looked at Kostya as if he was a curiosity and then at Sonya.

"And you?"

"Haven't you read about me in the paper? I'm Sonya Potapova. I was sent to the concentration camp for ten years, but I've been let out already and given the Order of the Toilers' Banner."

The man noticed that she was wearing the order.

"Are you husband and wife?" he asked slyly.

"No," replied Kostya. "I'm only trying to catch up to her."

The man waved his hand in the direction of the great River Svir.

"There's plenty of work and glory for you there," he said.

Translated from the Russian by Anthony Wixley

Boris Pilnyak

A Story Without a Title

. . . It is hard to kill. It is harder still—much harder—to pass over death: so human nature shows us.

. . . An aspen coppice in the rainy twilight. Grey, chilly rain—fine as a mist-falling steadily. The yellowing leaves rustling from the gully, a dilapidated bridge in the gully. The field lying close up to the wood, the dugup potatoes. Through the aspen coppice runs the road, its cart ruts swollen with mud, and comes out in the field again. The bell tower of a church sticks up above the horizon. The coppice—that triangular clump of Judas-gallows—crouches back against the big wood. Dusk is falling, and a fine, misty rain. The clouds cling to the tops of the aspens. The bridge and the road leading through the aspens and the potato field are well nigh impassable; one sinks to the knees in mud at every step. Now the dusk is flooded with the sepia of night, a thick opaque gloom—and there is nothing more to be seen. . .

And even after a space of ten years, after many years, traversed by divers roads—the coppice in the dusk and the rain disappearing into a thick gloom where nothing could be seen—a memory of the utterly invisible. In the evenings, after the day-time streets, the teeming streets of Moscow, one had to take the lift to the third floor of the First House of the Soviets, the house that stands at the corner of Tverskaya and Mokhovaya streets. And if one did not turn on the electric lights, the blue light from the streets streamed into the room. In the blue gloom over the Kremlin, over the buildings of the Central Executive Committee, a red banner fluttered. The banner itself could not be made out, only a crimson splash against the dark sky. And the roar of the city of millions came splintering up through the floors of the First House of the Soviets.

II

It had all happened twenty years before.

The persons in this story are three: he, she and that third whom they killed and who came between them.

This third was a traitor. This third sold people to the gallows, sold the revolution, its ideas and its honor—for money. He and she offered to kill this person, who deserved no better name than scoundrel. It was during the debacle of the Revolution of 1905. The judgment on a rascal like this was bound to be severe. The beaten revolutionaries were in no mood for talking when their own comrade was delivering them to the gallows and bullets and years of human suffering, to the prisons and exile. And no talking was done.

She had never seen this traitor face to face. She went straight from her work in the revolutionary secret society to the country, where her father, a country deacon, lived. It was in June. He—his name was Andrei—came to visit her as her fiance. The traitor did not know anything about this, nor did he know Andrei's real name. The third was supposed to travel to the little railway station that lay about five miles from the village where the deacon lived. He was to meet Andrei in the little wood that lay to the right of the railway line beyond the gully.

It was the month of June. What words are adequate to describe first love?—love as white as lily-of-the-valley, heavy with spring-tide like buckwheat in flower, weighty enough to remove mountains—love that as yet consists of nothing more than a pressure of hands, and the same way of looking out on the world, of looking ahead. It was a love that comes once in a lifetime (both he and she knew this, believed it with all the strength of their twenty years) and remains the only one. It was the month of haymaking; the voice of the corncrake stirred the scented dusk; the breeze from the rye fields played with her hair—the color of rye—and billowed her white dress, a little heavy with the evening dew. The collar of his embroidered shirt was open, his crumpled cap on the back of his neck; it was a matter for conjecture how he contrived to balance it there.

After a long day haymaking, the deacon sat reading them the most stupid moral lectures on family life and singing his daughter's praises with naive cunning. They played at lovers in the deacon's presence. Then the deacon went off to sleep in the barn, and they strolled out into the field. And although she had touched his shoulder tenderly when the deacon was there, now they walked a yard apart. In their love they remained like March icicles underfoot, and in their conversation they touched on no theme lower than Thomas Henry Buckle—although Buckle was a little old fashioned even for those days.

But never once did they speak of whom they were to kill.

The time came when they said to each other in the dusk, that tonight *they must go.* That evening they lay down to sleep when the fowls went to roost, and met an hour later behind the barn that stood in the pine wood. His cap was on the back of his neck as before. Her white dress glimmered blue in the darkness as she came up to him; a white kerchief was bound nunnishly round her head. She had a bundle in her hand.

"What's that you're carrying?"

"Some bread for us to eat on the way."

He made no comment, only straightened his cap. She glanced at him, her face bent towards his. Then she drew herself up a little, undid the bundle slowly and flung the pieces of bread away under the bushes. He passed no remark.

"Let's go," she said.

They went along the woodland path in silence. The honeyed breath of June was in the woods, a distant owl hooted, the trees stood all round them like a dense dark wall. They walked side by side, shoulder to shoulder, silent. Sometimes he gave her his hand to help her and she took it, trustfully. They had to meet the night train. As they hurried along it never once entered his head that, with the revolver he carried in his pocket, he was to *kill a man* in an hour's time. He only knew that *he must shoot a loathsome reptile* that had ceased to be human to him. What she thought of, he did not know then; nor did he ever know. She walked beside him, his only love, the one love like the burden of the young buckwheat. Her head in the white kerchief was bent a little, obstinately, just as it had been when she came forward and offered to kill the traitor. They came out of the woods into the open field. The lights of the railway station appeared far across the fields and they quickened their steps. He went ahead and she kept in step with him. They came to the clump of aspens. The Judas trees rustled treacherously behind them, the pine wood reared itself like a black wall, the smell of potatoes in flower came from the field. High up in the ashy June sky of the Russian summer night pale stars burned.

Here they came to a halt. Here she was to wait while he went towards the pines. The train could be heard in the distance. It was steaming out of the station. There were still ten minutes to spare. He sat down on the grass near the aspens. She sat down meekly beside him.

"Yes, it wouldn't have been a bad idea to eat a bit of bread now," he said.

She did not reply.

"Is your revolver in order?" he asked

She stretched out her hand with a revolver tightly grasped in it.

"You're to shoot him if I don't kill him. And if I should happen to be badly wounded, you're to shoot me dead," he said.

She bowed her head in token of her assent, but said nothing.

They did not speak again. He smoked a cigarette behind the cover of his hand, spat vigorously, straightened his cap and stood up. She stood up too.

He stretched out his hand to her. She shook it feebly, drew it to her and, for the first and last time in their lives, kissed him—a calm, virgin kiss upon the lips. He straightened his cap once more, turned abruptly and passed into the gloom of the aspen coppice. After he had gone a good way, he glanced back. He saw a white dress: he saw her, running with long, determined strides down to the gully, the bridge, the alder grove. He went on towards the pines. In the fields the harsh note of the corncrake sounded and the night went by in profound peace.

A man in a straw hat and a summer coat came up the railway embankment into the fog of the gully and advanced towards the pines. It was the third. He came towards the pines where Andrei met him.

"Is that you, Kondrati?" the third asked Andrei.

"Yes," Andrei answered. "Come along."

They went along side by side. It seemed to Andrei that the third was trying to lag behind a little all the time. When Andrei thrust his hand into his pocket, the third came close up to him.

"What's wrong with you, Kondrati?" asked the third.

Andrei made no reply. Stepping back a pace, he whipped out his revolver and shot straight at the traitor's chest. The third smiled and dropped to the ground, raising his hands helplessly. There was a revolver in his right hand. Andrei shot for the second time, into that smiling face. The third flopped down on his back like a sack of flour. Andrei walked quickly away, taking long strides. He went about a hundred paces. Then he returned to the body, bent over it, touched it with his foot. The body moved its leg, which was bent unnaturally. The face wore the smile of the dead. Andrei gave it another little push and then, with the cautiousness of people who are afraid of infection, began to search his pockets. At that moment she came towards the pines, looked attentively at the murdered man and Andrei and moved away to the coppice with her back to the pines.

Andrei went up to her, she walked on ahead in silence. Thus they went: she in front, he behind. They tramped the long miles without a moment's rest. Day was breaking over the earth. The east was flooded with crimson. The moon rising to meet the dawn shed fresh dew on the earth. A solemn silence heralded the sunrise. Never a word did they say to each other the whole way. They entered the house noiselessly.

III

Never another word did they speak to each other when they were alone. She roused him in the morning with a gay laugh. The deacon talked the most good natured nonsense over his breakfast of potatoes and she behaved like a tender bride-to-be. When the deacon had gone out and they remained alone—they kept silence. Three days passed like this. They were waiting to cover up their traces. But the news did not even reach their village in those three days. On the fourth, the deacon drove them to the station, kissed them both heartily, blessed them, and made the sign of the cross over them as they stood on the platform. When they arrived in Moscow they parted and went in different directions from the station without saying a word to each other.

. . . The memory remained forever—of the path, and the autumn coppice, the bridge over the gully, the potato field. The aspens have yellowed, they rustle treacherously, and shed their wet leaves. The cart ruts are swollen with autumn slush, and the mud comes up to the knees. . . . And now the dusk is flooded with the sepia of night, and everything disappears into a gloom, where nothing can be seen. . . The memory of this traitorous autumnal aspen coppice remains. But not from the night when he killed the man here—that was in hay-making, honey-breathed June—but from that night when, according to the strange law of nature that compels the murderer to return to the scene of the murder—he returned in the dark autumn twilight to spend the night at the place where he had—*murdered love.*

. . . The autumnal coppice, the dusk, the rain and then gloom, in which nothing could be seen. . . . In the evenings, after the daytime streets, the teeming streets of Moscow, one had to mount in the lift to the third floor of the First House of the Soviets. And if one did not turn on the electric light, the blue light of the streets streamed into the room. In the blue gloom over the Kremlin, over the buildings of the Central Executive Committee, a red banner flutters—the banner for the sake of which the aspen-coppice is buried in the memory.

Robert S. Carr

Last Crossing

From a Forthcoming American Novel

Wednesday, 1930

Martin Meredith leaned over the low partition into the show-window of his father's grocery store and adjusted the price card on the oranges. With satisfaction he surveyed the neat display: squat pyramids of golden globes stacked like little cannon balls, the better ones toward the front, the blemished turned carefully to show their fairer cheek.

It was a nifty display, Martin thought; good as many a city store, and a lot better than either of the other two groceries in Westfield, Ohio. A guy had to be careful, he knew, to dress a window like that. One careless move would send a whole pile tumbling, the rolling oranges bumping against the bases of other pyramids, knocking them down too, and so on until none were left standing. It vaguely annoyed Martin to realize that his display, which represented an hour of patient teetering in the window in his stocking feet, could be reduced to a ruined jumble by some slight shock. He hoped no one would slam the door.

The faint shadow of annoyance drifted out of mind. He yawned. His regular breakfast of bacon, fried eggs, toast, coffee and apple pie lay solidly in his stomach, an accustomed weight in its accustomed place. Folding his thick, strong arms across his broad, white-aproned chest, he gazed through the window at the dusty red bricks of Main Street. Out there the sun glared in a sweltering corn-belt summer, but here inside the store the spice-scented air was dim and cool.

To Martin's ears, from behind, store sounds floated—the pad-padding feet of Bertha, their clerk, waiting on a customer . . . reluctant clink of small coins, angry jaw-snap of a shutting purse, triumphant whirring clang of the cash register. And from the rear of the store came the bass voice of John Meredith, Martin's father, rumbling as he bickered with the baking power salesman.

The screen door scraped open and a second customer entered. "G'morning, Miz Beasely," said Martin with a business-like smile. Out of the corner of his eyes he watched the woman crane right and left at the crowded, colorful shelves, visibly sniffing the store-odors, wrinkling her dark nose. He made no move to wait on her. He knew Bertha would. She must be about finished with the other customer.

He heard Mrs. Beasely ask for a box of Creamy Dream Pudding Powder, a can of peas, two loaves of raisin-nut bread. After she had taken her purchases and gone out, gossipping with the first customer, Martin strolled back to Bertha. "Since when is Wednesday Beasely's maid's day off?" he demanded. "Always used to be Thursday."

The stubby, red-haired Irish girl did not reply immediately. Leaning back against the counter, she mopped her freckled face with her apron—a habit Martin detested.

"Every day's her day off, now," Bertha said, when she had finished with her face. "Old man Beasely cut her pay down and down till it got to be a dollar a week, so she up and left, last Saturday." Looking defiantly at her employer's son, she added, "She's my cousin, she is."

Martin frowned, and had half-opened his mouth to reply, when the screen door up front scraped open, slammed shut. He winced—the oranges.

Two young men in overalls entered and stood silently by the cigar counter, not looking at the cigars. Bertha stared, did not move. Martin nudged her. "Go up and wait on them," he ordered. She bit her lip and plodded forward.

Turning his broad back, Martin lifted the glass cover of a fragrant bin, selected a plump cup-cake, slowly sank his teeth through its thick chocolate icing. The voluptuous sensation of sweet stuff melting stickily on his tongue was interrupted by Bertha, at his elbow. "They want to speak to you," she said.

He glanced over his shoulder. Seen from the depths of the store's dimness against the glare of the sun outside, the two figures near the door were little more than silhouettes. Slowly Martin ambled toward them, squinting, swallowing cake. He could tell by the stiff way they stood that they were not going to buy anything. At the interstice between the pie rack and the coffee grinder, Martin slipped in behind the counter, to have it between himself and them. Not until he was within five paces did he recognize the taller of the two as Jake Worley, son of Hiram Worley, who had the place at Last Crossing. The other was Lem Mullet, one of the two hired mechanics in Frank's Golden Rule Garage.

"Hello, Meredith," said Jake, putting his long arms on the counter and leaning forward.

"Hello," Martin said uneasily.

"We wanted to talk to you about something," Jake continued. He paused, glanced cautiously at John Meredith in the rear of the store, lowered his husky voice. "You know, Martin, day after tomorrow, on Friday, the Hunger March is going to pass through here. Some of the farmers have already given us roastin' ears and apples for them, and promised plenty of fresh milk for that morning, but we haven't got any bread. We came to ask if you'd donate some." He looked steadily at Martin, his small eyes palely blue between high cheek bones that hinted at a strain of Indian blood.

Martin wrinkled his forehead uncomprehendingly. "Bread?" he echoed blankly. "What for?"

"To feed the Hunger Marchers," Lem Mullet said sharply. He was skinny and small and slightly lop-sided, his chest pinched forward with that slight deformity the corn-belt calls "pigeon-breast." His face had the grease-grimed pallor of one who for long hours every day breathes sunless air tainted with the carbon monoxide of automobile exhaust fumes.

Martin felt his thumb sinking into something soft, and discovered that he still held half the chocolate cup-cake in his right hand. He raised it to his mouth and took a large bite. As he chewed, his ruddy cheeks bulging, he said thickly, "Oh yeah, that Hunger March. Them Bull-sheviks." Dark memories of syndicated editorials he had read in the *Tri-County Star* rose crookedly to the surface of his sluggish consciousness like noxious bubbles wavering up from the bottom of a stagnant pool. "Why, they're Reds," he said munching cake seriously, "a bunch of trouble-makers from the city—ain't they?"

Jake Worley smiled good-naturedly. "They make mighty useful trouble," he said. "Most of them's from the city, that's so, but after they pass through Westfield, I guarantee there's going to be at least one farmer in the crowd."

"And one hick mechanic," Lem added unsmilingly.

Martin swallowed, stared at Jake, at Lem. "You're going down to Columbus with that bunch?"

"We sure are!"

Shifting the remaining piece of cake to his other hand, Martin reflectively licked the smeared, sweet chocolate off his blunt thumb. "You guys have gone nuts," he said.

Lem Mullet swung impatiently away from the counter, but Jake laid a restraining hand on his arm. To Martin he said, "This Hunger March is as much for farmers as it is for city folks. If you help it, you're helping the farmers around here—and everywhere."

Martin's round young face squared, hardened. "The farmers around here could help me and my dad a lot by paying their bills"—then added hastily, stung by the steely glint that flashed into Jake's eyes—"anyhow, Jake, I couldn't give bread out of the store, myself. You'd have to ask my dad."

"We ain't going to ask your dad," Jake said. "My old man has dealings with him, and we know how he feels about helping people. But we thought maybe you, a feller our own age, went to high-school together not so long ago, played on the football team together—"

Brakes squealed in the street outside as a flashy sport roadster skidded up and parked head-in at the curb in front of the store. Martin took one look at the car and stood up straight. Laying aside the last fragment of chocolate cup-cake, he made a nervous gesture toward the door. "G'wan," he said, "beat it."

The two overalled figures turned and left. On the sidewalk, in the square of shadow cast by the store's striped awning, they passed a yellow-frocked girl who had gotten out of the roadster. Martin hastened to open the screen door for her. " 'Lo, Mary," he said.

"Hello, Marty." She stood smiling at him, tucking back under her blue beret the strands of corn-colored hair that had fallen across her chubby, dimpled face. She was as solidly well-fed as Martin himself; under the frothy organdie of her urban frock her breasts bulged buxom, her high hips flared round. She drew Martin into the nook at the end of the candy shelves and cuddled close to him. At the same time, with her free hand, she reached over the low partition into the show-window and grasped the top orange on the nearest pyramid. The stack trembled, but did not fall.

Her long fingernails cut through the peel like knives. In quick succession she pulled loose the inner segments and thrust them into her small, pursey mouth. Her dimples came and went. "Um-um," she said.

Martin grinned, stroking her. "Uh-huh. Good." He waited until she had finished the orange before he asked, "How about our date tonight?"

"I've got to go to choir practice first. Wait for me about nine—only don't park right in front of the church, like you did last time, silly." She began to mop the orange juice and shreds of pith off her lips with her handkerchief. Her gaze wandered out the window, across Main Street. "Oh, there's daddy," she exclaimed. "I've got to get some money from him." She gave Martin's red cheek a farewell pat, and ran out across the street toward her father, old Henry Strickler, who was rheumatically ascending the worn stone steps of the small frame building that was Westfield's one and only bank—The Bank of Westfield, founded fifty years before, by Strickler's father in the year the railroad was built.

Martin watched Mary overtake her father on the top step and disappear into the bank. Absent-mindedly he acknowledged the baking powder salesman's goodbye. After a while he heard his father call Bertha to the rear

of the store. Mechanically he reached for and consumed the final mouthful of cup-cake. He yawned, blinked, wondered torpidly why trade was so darned dull.

A wail aroused him. He turned and saw Bertha facing his father, wringing her hands and crying. "You might at least have given me a week's notice," she sobbed, "you might at least—"

Martin approached and watched stolidly, from time to time glancing with admiration at his father. He calmly towered over the distraught girl, his thick thumbs hooked in the arm-pits of his vest, grey eyes, sharp jaw firm. Portly, mighty-shouldered, hair silvery around the temples, he seemed to Martin the sum total of solidity, self-possession, business acumen.

When Bertha had gone, flinging her apron behind the counter and snatching her shabby wrap from its hook, Martin said to his father, "Yep, she was no damn good. Now who'll we get—the girl who was at Keeler's?"

John Meredith, grocer, picked up his half-chewed stogie from the edge of the cracker barrel, lighted it, sat down heavily in the squeaky swivel chair behind his roll-top desk, and looked soberly at his son. "We're not going to get anybody," he said, between puffs of rank blue smoke. "We're going to run the store ourselves, you and me."

Martin's eyebrows lifted. He whistled soundlessly with astonishment and dismay. "Gosh, dad," he protested, "how can we? Since Keeler went bust most of his trade comes here—and the Saturday night crowd—"

His father tilted back in his swivel chair, slowly shaking his head. "Keeler's been closed for two months, but our receipts fall off every day. If he had any trade it's gone somewhere else. We simply can't afford a clerk any longer. Couldn't for the past year, to tell the truth, but I kept thinking this damn slump wasn't going to last." His hard, shrewd face sagged and looked curiously aged. "Anyhow, no use talking about it. There's no other way out."

Up front, the screen door scraped, slammed. "There's a customer. Go up and wait on them," he ordered.

"Jesus Christ," Martin murmured plaintively, dragging his feet around behind the counter. His lower lip protruded in dull anger and his mind began to churn inarticulately.

By two o'clock he was sweating, his white apron was rumpled and soiled. Trade was certainly not brisk—but those gay-wrapped boxes of breakfast food up on the eighth shelf were so surprisingly hard to reach, the potato bin so unexpectedly deep. And the distance from the cigar counter, where a raw-boned farm woman bought a package of chewing tobacco, out to the concrete floored shed behind the store to draw a can of coal oil for her, was fifty long steps—half the length of a football field. Martin counted them in the angry way he counted the pennies he took in. Nine cents for the chewing tobacco, eleven for the coal oil. One hundred steps for twenty cents. Martin smiled bitterly. And profit, maybe three cents on the coal oil, a raw-boned farm woman bought a package of chewing tobacco, out to the then start figuring in your overhead and taxes and see where you get off. Martin paused, leaned back against the counter, mopped his streaming face with his apron.

At two-thirty John Meredith emptied the cash register and totalled the receipts. Father and son gazed ruefully at the few handfuls of small coins, the lean roll of paper money, that went into the cloth cash bag.

"Damned if that's not the hungriest looking cash bag I ever sent across the street," growled Meredith the elder. "Almost rather not let Strickler see

it . . . could hold it over till tomorrow—but then the old skinflint would ask why I missed depositing today and Lord knows I don't want to start any argument with him! Great God but business is getting rotten. It's that blasted E & W Store over at Hainesville that's cutting into our trade. The prices those chain-store crooks advertize!"

E & W . . . the great East and West Stores, a nationwide chain-store corporation. Mortal enemy of the small grocer, their garish gold and scarlet signs spelling his extinction. For three years they had been closing in on Westfield, like an army, it seemed to John Meredith. Buying up the stores they bankrupted, entrenching themselves more and more strongly in a hopelessly one-sided war of attrition. One store in Hainesville, two in Maumee, three in Johnstown, all selling staples and nationally advertized brands for less than it cost John Meredith to carry them on his shelf.

To fight the E & W, he knew, was impossible—suicide. You dare to cut prices a cent and they cut two cents, the same hour you do, and as often as you do, until you're both running at a loss. But a little grocer can run just so long in the red, while the E & W stores, John Meredith believed, "can stay open as long as there's a crooked dollar in Wall Street."

Only thing to do, he figured, was sit tight, keep smiling, go oftener to lodge meetings and church, and pray to God that your friends and customers of twenty years would not forsake you. . . . And then to see them forsaking you, driving their eight miles to Hainesville every Saturday to save fifty cents on a week's groceries. . . . But if these bastard farmers would only pay their bills. . . . "By the way," he burst out, "was young Worley asking for more credit for his old man when he was in here this morning?"

Martin hesitated a moment. "No. He was asking bread for the Hunger March that's coming through day after tomorrow. Scared to ask you."

John Meredith's stogie-stained teeth came together with an audible snap. Purple anger stained his face like a swift-spreading dye. His cold grey eyes narrowed viciously as he penetratingly scrutinized his son. Very quietly he asked, "And what did you tell him?"

Wincing under the flinty eyes, Martin blustered, "I told him to get the —— out of our store and never to come back."

Acid-etched lines around the eyes relaxed. "Right, son! Only I wish you'd called me—I'd like to ask that young hellion some questions. There's talk of queer goings-on down there at Last Crossing—lights burning late in Hi Worley's house, strangers from the city traipsing around, gabbing with the farmers. No good can come of that. I've a mind to call the sheriff—he'd make 'em hunger march for certain!"

He had begun to shake with fury, so that the small coins jingled faintly in the cash bag he held. "It beats me why in hell any man except a lunatic would pick out a godawful place like Last Crossing for a farm. Nobody but a shiftless, good-for-nothing tramp like Hiram Worley could even find such soil, all clay and rocks, with not enough grass to hide a snake. And then run up a big grocery bill and not pay a nickle of it, but all the time feeding a bunch of Bull-sheviks from the city, and setting up all hours of the night hatching plots—" He raised both arms above his head, as if calling upon his god. "Oh, the sons of bitches!" he raged, shaking the flabby cash bag fiercely.

Choked to speechlessness by his cholar, he began to pace like a caged bear to and fro between the swollen overloaded shelves of his empty, echoing store.

The screen door scraped, slammed, admitting a young man, instantly identified as a salesman by his sample case and citified clothes . . . one of the locust swarm of salesmen who came these days, each smiling more desperately than the one before, each talking louder and faster, endlessly offering a newer and trickier window display or "sales plans," ever-departing with fewer, smaller orders, and of late with none at all.

This one was pathetically young, and patently a recent college graduate. Beneath a jaunty straw hat with a rainbow band he wore the tin smile coined by courses in Modern Salesmanship, but his eyes were boy's eyes, mortally afraid. His counterfeit cheer curdled to grotesque grimace at the sight of John Meredith's flushed, distorted mask of hate.

At a brusque gesture from his father, Martin stepped forward, took the cash bag and the bank book. At the door he removed his apron and flung it behind the cigar counter. Slowly he ambled across Main Street, panting with the heat. In the middle of the street he stiffened, stared.

On the corner by the post office he saw a group of five people—unusual, for a summer week-day afternoon in Westfield. They stood about an old Ford touring car, which was parked in such a position that Martin could not get even a glimpse of its occupants, if there were any. In the group he recognized Jake Worley and Lem Mullet; Bertha, arm in arm with Beaselys' discharged maid, and Fred Warner, the shell-shocked ex-soldier to whom the gallant ROTC blades of Westfield High School had given an indescribably filthy name, not infrequently repeated by their parents, because of the peculiar way in which his shattered body twitched and quivered as he dragged himself along.

Martin kept his eyes fixed upon the group, experiencing a strange tingle that was partly uneasiness and partly something wilder, deeper, and distinctly disturbing. Blindly his foot found the curb-stone: so familiar were the forty paces from the door of the grocery to the door of the bank that he could have walked them blindfolded. "Wonder what they're talking about," he thought, reaching behind him for the knob of the bank door, "and I sure would like to know who's in that Ford!" He rubbered excitedly as he saw a bit of white paper, something like a little pamphlet, pass from hand to hand.

And not until Martin Meredith had been standing on the top step of The Bank of Westfield for fully half a minute, futily turning the door knob and pushing, did it finally penetrate to his consciousness, fascinated by the group around the Ford, that the door of the bank would not open, and that the reason it would not open was that it was bolted from the inside.

For a moment he thought he might be late. Quickly he glanced at his wristwatch. Quarter to three, it said; couldn't be late. Impatiently he rattled the doorknob, leaning forward and peering through the glass upper half of the door into the shadowy interior.

As he peered and rattled, the door of the rear office opened and Henry Strickler hobbled out. He drew back the old-fashioned bolt, let Martin in, scuttled around into the cashier's cage. Through the open door of the brightly lighted rear office, Martin saw strangers. They sat in a fog of cigar smoke, and they were obviously from the city. Especially one slim man, whom Martin thought looked like a gangster king in the movies, the way he wore a derby on the back of his head.

The old banker was visibly nervous as he counted the Meredith money. His parchment-skinned hands, on which the crooked veins stood out like strings of blue spaghetti, trembled so that he missed count twice on the

pennies. The third time he did not count, merely swept the pennies into the till, mumbling to himself. He made a shaky entry in the Meredith bank book. As he shoved it back across the marble slab to Martin, he croaked, "Tell your father to come over here right away—was just going to send for him when you came in." He followed Martin to the door and bolted it after him.

As Martin went back across the street, he looked for the group on the corner by the post office; but neither they nor the mysterious Ford were there. Main Street, Westfield, Ohio, was quite empty in the dogday sun except for the college boy salesman in the jaunty straw hat, who was already a block away, headed for the depot.

"Old man Strickler said for you to come over right away," Martin said, tossing the bank book and the empty cash bag on his father's desk.

John Meredith started, as if prodded. "Did he?"

"Why, yes. . . . Say, dad, what's the matter?" Martin stood in amazement as his father strode heavily out of the store and straight across the street into the bank, where Strickler waited at the door and motioned him into the rear office.

With a bewildered half-intention of following him, Martin started toward the front of the store; but before he had gotten half way, a small boy customer trotted in, clutching a shiny penny between thumb and forefinger.

During the balance of the afternoon, Martin stared out under the awning across the street at the bank whenever he was not weighing out a half pound of this, slicing off a quarter of a pound of that. He did not see anyone go in or come out. Toward twilight, three local businessmen—Beasely the hardware merchant, Claypool the restaurant keeper, and Frank of Frank's Golden Rule Garage—sidled up to the bank door. With nervous jerks of their thumbs they called one another's attention to the lights in the rear office, and walked away with their heads together.

At eight o'clock John Meredith had not returned. The lights in the back of the bank still burned, and a bulky shadow moved fitfully back and forth, as though a man was pacing the floor, faster and faster. Martin fidgeted, scratched his head, decided to lock up. He emptied the cash register, put the four dollars and sixty-one cents into the safe, started slightly at the loud clank as he shot the bolt.

The heavy front door, which had stood open all day, seemed to be stuck. He tugged at it in annoyance. Suddenly it sprang loose and slammed shut with a bang that set the plate glass windows to grumbling hollowly. Simultaneously, from the corner of his eye, Martin saw a ripple of movement in the show window. He turned and stared in chagrin.

All the piles of oranges had collapsed. A row of them rolled to the front of the window and pressed against the glass as if they wanted to escape.

Martin knew that by all the mores of storekeeperdom he should go back inside and pile the oranges up again. Instead, he shrugged, twisted the key in the lock, turned his back on the disarray. "To hell with them," he thought; he was sore.

He was more tired than he had been in a long time as he clumped the three blocks out Main Street to the solid old frame house in which he had been born twenty-one years before. He found his mother waiting supper, querelously. She served her son a mighty platter of half cold pork chops and faintly steaming fried potatoes, then sat down at the kitchen table op-

posite him and drummed her fingers on the oil cloth as he shoveled in the food. She was a large, sallow, limp woman, idle and fluttering. Tonight her usually slack face was tense with worry.

"Is John with Strickler?" she demanded suddenly.

Martin stopped his third pork chop half-way to his mouth. "I guess so. The old buzzard called him over to the bank about three o'clock, and the lights are still on."

Abruptly his mother arose and waddled out of the kitchen, through the dining room, through the parlor, out onto the front porch, from where the squeak of her rocking chair presently began. Puzzled, Martin frowned after her. Slowly he replaced the pork chop on his plate, untouched. He discovered that his stomach had begun unaccountably to ache. Pushing the platter aside, he went and washed, changed his shirt, put on his new straw hat.

At nine o'clock he was driving out Main Street in the Meredith family's large, lumbering sedan—the car his father had traded the immemorial Ford in on three years earlier, when times had been fairly good, when they had had to hire an extra clerk on Saturdays.

In the darkness beneath a row of elms, across the street from the red-brick Methodist church, Martin coasted to a halt. He saw the red and green stained glass windows suffused with light, heard mingled voices in a dirge-like hymn. He could distinguish Mary's shrill soprano as the chanting died in a long-drawn-out "Aaaahhhmennn."

The red glow on the end of his cigarette attracted his attention. It appeared to vibrate. He raised his cigarette to his lips. As his hand rested lightly against his cheek he felt it tremble. "Jesus, I must be plenty tired," he thought. He took an extra deep puff, drew it down into the very bottom of his lungs, steamed it out slowly. "Everybody's getting the heeby-jeebies—dad, mom, old man Strickler. And then those fellows asking for bread. Gee, Jake was sore. . . I sure feel funny—got the belly ache. Wish I'd phoned Mary I couldn't come."

The car door opened and Mary slipped in stealthily. Over her yellow frock she wore a black wrap, making her almost invisible in the darkness. "Step on it," she whispered, "I sneaked out ahead of the others, and they mustn't catch us here together."

As Martin shifted into second, she laughed shrilly, "The new minister kept asking me to stay behind and pray with him, alone. Gee, wouldn't that have been hot stuff—that old goat!" She curled up on the seat and draped a heavy arm around Martin's shoulders.

In a few moments they were out of town, jolting off Main Street's bricks onto the gravel pike. They passed three crossings, a mile apart. Beyond the third crossing, the graded county pike degenerated into a rutty dirt road, pitted with chuck holes through which the big car lurched and lumbered. At the fourth mile they crossed a covered wooden bridge that rumbled sepulchrally beneath them. Beyond the bridge, Martin eased the car off the road down a narrow, grass-choked lane and came to a stop on the grassy bank under a giant silver birch. Its bone-white bark flashed as the headlights swept across it. Martin clicked off the motor and the lights, yanked on the handbrake. The darkness closed in, sickly sweet with the breath of hot black mud-banks steaming.

Mary was leaning over into the back seat, groping. "Can't find the blanket," she complained.

"Guess I forgot it," said Martin. He lit another cigarette, studied the spectral gleaming of the silver birch against the velvet blackness of the silent river.

Mary wriggled out of her wrap. "Throw the old cigarette away," she said.

Martin took a lingering long puff and reluctantly flicked the cigarette out of the open window. He watched its spark describe a spinning arc into the dark water. It was on the tip of his tongue to tell Mary about his having to do Bertha's work at the store, but quickly bit back the words. Inarticulately he realized that Mary would treat him differently, might ditch him entirely, once she knew that he had to do all the dirty work at the grocery—the sweeping and window-washing and garbage-hauling which until now he had but supervised with the lordly leisureliness befitting the proprietor's only son and heir. With this realization came stinging resentment.

He sensed Mary's smouldering impatience, but he could think of nothing but the happenings of the day. He saw the oranges scattered all over the show window, and they wheeled before his eyes. He remembered now that he had wiped his face with his apron, like Bertha used to do. And as Mary put her other arm around him, through his mind flashed crazily the memory of Jake Worley's hard pale blue eyes glinting, scorning him. He had an uncomfortable feeling of having been a heel, and involuntarily he winced.

Mary took her hands away, cocked her head at him. "Say, what's the matter with you?" she demanded.

"Aw, I'm just tired tonight," he said, "and I don't feel any too good."

She opened the door and stood on the running board tugging at his sleeve. "Come on, get out," she said. "You'll feel better."

He faced her through the murk. "Now listen, Mary—" He stopped abruptly, stared past her into the night, and whispered, "My God, look at that!"

Mary whirled in fright, peered for a moment, then relaxed and turned back to him. "It's just somebody with a lantern, over on the other side," she said. "They can't possibly see us from there."

"Yes, but . . . " Wide-eyed, Martin followed the flickering small circle of reddish light that bobbed along the opposite bank of the river. "You know whose farm that is up at the crossing?"

"No," Mary said coldly.

"It's Hi Worley's."

"Well, what of it? He's just a trash farmer who can't pay his mortgage."

The tingling, unnamed excitement which Martin had felt so distinctly that afternoon while rubbering at the strange Ford before the post office, now returned to him in full force. He recalled all that his father had raged at: the goings-on at the Worley place, late lights, mysterious strangers from the city. A curious, topsy-turvey feeling that it was all part of an important secret restrained him from telling Mary the real cause of his agitation. "Bet we could see the house from the other side of the bridge," he said.

She got in and sat down, banging the car door angrily. Gears growling in reverse, Martin backed the car up the lane and onto the road above. Across the bridge, he stopped and craned out of the window. On a low knoll, set back from the crossing, stood a rambling, one-story farmhouse. Its windows glowed with the light of coal oil lamps. "House all lit up," Martin whispered excitedly, "at this hour of night!"

"Seems to me you're acting mighty queer!" Mary burst out. "Why are you all of a sudden so interested in the Worleys?"

"Oh, nothing," he said evasively. Carefully shifting the gears, keeping the motor throttled down to a muffled muttering, he threaded his way through the gaping ruts and chuck-holes back to the pike. There, on the hard white gravel, he pushed the car to reckless speed. A slice of moon came out from behind piled masses of thunder clouds, coldly lighting Mary's set, bitter face. Above the roar of the motor she shouted, "But I guess you would be interested in those good-for-nothings—saw you talking with one of them in the store this morning!"

"He was doing the talking, not me," Martin shouted back. "He wanted free bread."

"And I'll bet you gave it to him!"

"I did not!"

"Giving those tramps bread, with all the money they owe you—"

"—did not—"

"—and you owe us!" she screeched, flying into the air as the front wheels rebounded from the sharp shoulder of bricks where Main Street began.

Martin threw the gears into neutral and coasted, glancing at her uneasily. "What do you mean by that?" he asked, loud in the sudden silence.

"You'll quick enough find out what I mean, Martin Meredith!"

The heavy car was losing momentum rapidly, and Martin scarcely needed the brakes to bring it to a standstill in front of Mary's house. "What do you mean?" he repeated, a little hoarsely, for his throat was strangely dry.

She sniffed, bundled herself out of the car and flounced up the walk to her house.

Martin sat staring after her for some time. When, finally, he drove away, his hand was shaky on the wheel. He dented a fender on the door of the garage as he swung the car in. He ran toward the house, across the damp grass of the back yard. He wanted to see his father, to stand close to his solid strength, to be reassured by his rugged independence.

He burst into the lighted parlor. Through blue-grey strata of cigar smoke he saw three men hunched over the center table—a common enough sight, but where were the poker chips, the playing cards, the whisky bottle? As his night-dilated eyes adjusted themselves to the glare, he recognized the men, one by one. . . . John Meredith, his cold stogie drooping—and Banker Henry Strickler—and the slim man who looked like a gangster king in the movies, the way he wore a derby on the back of his head.

John Meredith was visibly disturbed by his son's entrance, but seemed constrained to introduce the man with the derby. "Mr. Krieger, this is my son Martin," he said, forcing each word unwillingly through his lips. There was a painful pause. "Mr. Krieger will be at the store with us from tomorrow on. Now go to your room, Martin."

"Oh, I say," said Mr. Krieger pleasantly, "sit down, won't you, Martin?" His small, sharp face twinkled in a smile and he pointed to the empty chair next to him.

Martin looked to his father, whose face grew mottled but who made no sound—he whom yesterday no man living could have crossed with impunity in his own home. Round-eyed, Martin sank into the indicated chair, and accepted numbly the corpulent, gold-corseted cigar which Mr. Krieger graciously forced upon him.

"You see, Martin my boy, it's like this," Mr. Krieger said, "your father has decided that it would be better, in view of the present business and financial outlook, to merge as it were with a larger company, to reorganize the grocery as one of the Great East and West Stores."

Martin choked on the strong cigar and his head began to whirl. Krieger's voice hurried along, pitiless and brisk. "He will be the manager, and you will clerk, beginning at twelve dollars, with a raise soon. Your hours are from six to six. We want you to feel that the change has been for the better, and in your own interests. You couldn't have kept the store open much longer, you know, and this way you'll have a regular salary whether busi- business is good of bad. Better, isn't it? And if I were you, Mr. Meredith and Martin, I would not discuss the change with the folks around town, beyond assuring them of the same E & W prices they would find in Haines- ville, Maumee, or Johnstown." Still smiling, he turned to Strickler and be- gan to glance through some official looking documents which the banker had unfolded and placed deferentially before him.

On the table between the chain-store man and the banker, the blunt hands of John Meredith, grocer, sprawled inert and bloodless, like slaught- ered prey.

After a while Martin got up, went out into the hall, and unsteadily climbed the stairs. He guessed it must be that awful cigar that was making his head swim. As he passed his mother's door he heard weeping. He went in and sat down on the edge of the bed where she lay. "Mom," he quavered.

"Strickler's ruined us!" she moaned, "he's got the store, and sold it to the E & W, and we're going to lose the house!"

"My God, Mom, how—"

"Oh, go away and leave me alone, go away!"

Thursday

Neither his father nor his mother were in the house when Martin got up next morning, but the coffee pot was still warm on the stove. He drank all there was, avoided half an apple pie he saw on the windowsill. From time to time he shook his head quickly, impatiently, as though trying to free his mind from the clinging tentacles of a persistent nightmare.

His forehead wrinkled, his fists clenched in his pockets, he plodded down Main Street. In the distance he saw a ladder leaning against the front of the store, and a man on the ladder wielding a hammer vigorously.

Across the front of the store, above the awning, where the weather-beaten, black-and-white "J. H. Meredith, Groceries" had always hung, now blazed a new larger scarlet-and-gilt sign: THE GREAT EAST AND WEST STORES.

Martin stopped stock still in the middle of the sidewalk directly across the street from the store. He did not move as the man drove the last nail, came down, put the ladder in the truck that stood at the curb—a shiny scarlet and gilt truck blazoned with the same E & W sign that burned above the store.

After the truck had driven away, Martin gave his head a final and decis- ive toss, drew a deep breath, and slouched across the street.

At the roll-top desk in the rear of the store he found Mr. Krieger going over the inventory with John Meredith. "Good morning, Martin," he said, a little less pleasantly than he had spoken the night before. "It's ten o'clock. Your day starts at six, remember. Don't let this happen again." He led Mar- tin to a pile of canned goods cases apparently delivered by the truck that had brought the sign. "Take those oranges out of the window—why did you ever dump them in there so untidly, anyhow?—and put these canned goods in, all of 'em, and stack 'em high. Then paste these streamers on the inside of the glass and roll up the awnings." Handing Martin a bundle of

paper banners that screamed prices in large red numerals, he turned on his heel and rejoined John Meredith at the roll-top desk, all the drawers of which sagged open.

Martin stood holding the paper banners and glaring at the derby above the tight-fitting tailored coat. He made an impulsive motion as if to throw the banners on the floor, checked the gesture in mid air, thought better of it With narrowed eyes he set slowly, very slowly, to work.

An hour later, when Mr. Krieger had gone across the street, Martin approached his father, slumped like a half-empty flour-sack in his squeaky swivel chair, dully fingering the inventory lists.

"Dad, what's this about—losing the house?"

The elder man did not raise his eyes. "Strickler's fixing us up with a place outside of town," he said hoarsely. "We've got to move tomorrow. You go home and help your mother pack."

At the door Martin encountered Mr. Krieger. "Where are you going?" he demanded.

"Home to help my mother pack."

"What, are you moving?"

Martin looked steadily at the dapper little man, suddenly conscious of how beautifully easy it would be to knock him head over heels. He felt something boiling up inside of him, a feeling that took his breath away.

"You know damn well we're moving," he said in a low voice.

Mr. Krieger studied the boy's face. His mind was busy. He had one of two choices, and in making his decision he recalled the words of the Mid-West Regional Sales Manager, Mr. Lapidis. "Your job, Krieger, is half politics," that great man had told him in the awesome grandeur of the Chicago office, and Mr. Krieger, a harassed little tsar in his strip of bankrupt corn-belt, quaked at the vast dark meanings behind the Chief's remark. It had cost dearly he recalled to hush up that messy affair coincident with the opening of the first store in Maumee; the former owner had probably been just as crazy before he went broke as he became afterwards, but that hadn't softened the brick he heaved through the plate glass; neighborhood trade was lost for weeks, and when the man was committed to the asylum, somebody wrote unpleasant things in soap all over the new windows.

Mr. Krieger wanted nothing of the sort in Westfield, a smaller town where local feeling against "Wall Street" would be correspondingly more intense. After all, he reflected swiftly, this burg was proving an easy nut to crack; Strickler was desperately grateful for even a little cash on the mortgage, and the man Meredith was done for; after his fit in the bank yesterday afternoon all the fight had gone out of him. The kid, naturally, was sore; but handling people who hated the Company was a practiced art for a diplomat of the E & W empire.

Mr. Krieger pushed his derby a little farther back on his head, and smiled faintly with tired eyes. "You may have the day off, this one time," he said. "Run along."

Friday

Clattering in the grey light of five A.M., Martin's alarm clock drove him protestingly to his feet. He began mechanically to dress, his mind still full of his dreams, their imagery drawn from the previous day, their content troubled and conflicting . . . elephantine moving vans backing up across the torn lawn to the front door, callous men stripping the house of the old

accustomed things that had stood in their places for twenty years, his mother sniffling and packing dishes in barrels of newspapers; his own gargantuan labors.

The movements of putting on his clothes sent flashes of soreness stabbing through his strained back. He recoiled from the appalling bareness of his room, in which nothing remained save the bed he had slept in. Half awake, he twice reached for things that were no longer there.

He hardened himself to ignore the disemboweled, looted emptiness of the house as he came downstairs. From force of habit he walked into the kitchen, stopped short, regarded the four stark walls, and walked out again, realizing that he would have to buy his breakfast at the all-night lunch stand on the highway which passed through Westfield.

He swung out into the cool morning air. His father and mother had gone out to the new place the night before, leaving him, they said, to stay with the few remaining chattels, for which the moving van was to return today. But Martin decided, with a dark and thoughtful frown, that the real reason why they had left him in town was so that he could get to the store at six, as Mr. Krieger ordered.

A few people were astir already along Main Street, mostly men with fishing poles. Lucky bastards, Martin thought. A couple of housewives in aprons were digging greens in a vacant lot.

As Martin came into the business block, a large and exceedingly wrinkled American flag was unfurled by a man from a second story window. It bellied out in the lazy morning breeze.

Martin blinked at the flag in puzzlement. Today wasn't a holiday, he told himself—or was it? Then gradually, as he pieced together time, place, and circumstances, he guessed that it was on account of the Hunger March.

The first floor of the jerry-built frame structure from which the flag hung was occupied by the toughest and most noisome of Westfield's two tough and noisome poolrooms. Upstairs, however, above the poolroom, was a den which local old wives' tales held far more iniquitous—the American Legion Post.

Here certain alleged participants in the World War met for all-night poker games, corn-likker bouts, and, as every pious old lady in the vicinity shudderingly averred, "orgies they larned from them rotten French." This titillating belief dated from the day when a naked whore, imported from urban Johnstown, had jumped, fallen, or been pitched from the Legion Post window to the cement sidewalk below, cracking with one loud thump both her scull and Westfield's mask of smug respectability. For weeks, Martin remembered, the countryside had reeked with scandal; the Methodist minister had taken in a record-breaking collection with his sermon on "The Whore of Babylon"—said the word right out loud, twice, so that Claypool's maiden aunt had a jittering spell and had to be taken out of the house of God.

But the matter had been hushed up, and the coroner bought a new car, for the Legionaires were an influential group consisting of local merchants, a few of the most nearly prosperous farmers, and all the county politicians. Three times their number were the men in Westfield Township who had been in military service, but most of them were poor farmers, hired hands, and day laborers, who showed as violent an aversion to the "official" veterans as the heroes of the poolroom loft exhibited toward them. Fred Warner's faltering feet were barred from the premises, and during the flag drill in the big celebrations last Fourth of July in the Fair Grounds, Martin had

heard him told "keep your damn mouth shut or you'll get something worse than your fake shell-shock." The remark had been made by Captain George Benton, Commander of the Post, a barrel-shaped man who described himself as "owner of half the good soil in Westfield Township."

And thus it was that the *Tri-County Star* obediantly broke out with a rash of stars and stripes at the bidding of the Legionaires, the town band preserved the yellowing music of *Over There,* and an egregriously large American flag waved over Main Street on occasions all and sundry.

Today, Martin reasoned, was an extraordinary occasion: the Hunger March was coming, with Reds from the city!

The thought of the Hunger March brought back the electric feeling of excitement. What did they want, those guys, marching all the way from Toledo, Cleveland, Akron, down to Columbus? Did they really wear long black beards and carry bombs? He resolved to look them over carefully as they passed through town.

He entered the little lunchroom beyond the pool hall, seated himself on a revolving stool at the counter, and ordered coffee. As he sat gulping the bitter brew, a large touring car roared in off the highway and stopped outside. Three men got out, came in, ranged themselves along the stools. One of them was Martin's Uncle Ned, from Hainesville, the county seat. They recognized one another simultaneously.

Pumping Martin's hand, Uncle Ned proudly displayed a star on his vest. "I've been deputized," he said. "I'm keepin' these damn marchin' Bolsheviks in line. Been with 'em since yesterday morning. Met 'em at the county line. Kicked the pants offen 'em last night, up at Maumee. Bastards tried to camp in the Free Municipal Tourist Grounds! We'll see 'em out of our county today, and make 'em wish they'd never come this way. They're due here about noon." He grasped his mug of coffee and began to blow on it, sticking out his pendulous under-lip and squinting at Martin. "Say, what you doin' here this hour of the morning? Been out all night?"

Martin shook his head. "Nope. Got to be at the store early." He lowered his voice. "Say, Uncle Ned, have you heard what happened to us?"

"No. What's up?"

"Dad's lost the store and the house. We're moving out of town today."

"You don't say. How'd it happen—has Strickler's bank gone bust?"

"No, he just foreclosed, I guess. I don't understand, really. The E & W people got the store." Martin's voice began to tremble with suppressed bitterness. "I'm clerking for the E & W now—twelve dollars a week."

"Well, now, that's sure tough luck," said Uncle Ned, but as he studied the hot, unreconciled resentment on the young face beside him, he sensed something that was anathema to him and his manner changed. Harshly and with a show of authority he said, "Matter of fact, Martin, it's John's own damn fault. I told him a year ago to get rid of that store. He had a chance to run for County Clerk, and he'd a-been elected, too, if he'd just had sense enough to get out and hump hisself and show a little gumption. Politics—that's the business to be in these days! Why, he'd a-been on easy street by now."

"But listen, Uncle Ned, how can they do a thing like that, take everything, all at once? What right have they—"

"John was in debt," the deputy said solemnly, "you got to remember that. Head over heels in debt. And a man has got to pay his debts. Yessir, one hundred pro cent!"

Martin felt his throat contracting spasmodically. "Just the same," he said, "it ain't right, any more than a hold-up. Old Strickler, the buzzard—God damn it, it ain't right!" The pain of the past thirty-six hours welled to the surface.

Uncle Ned swung around ponderously on his stool to face Martin. "Look here, young feller," he said sternly, "you know what you're talkin' about? Strickler had first and second mortgages on the store and a first mortgage on the house, I happen to know, and that means they belonged to him, you understand? He simply took what was his'n accordin' to the Law. It's John's tough titty for not listenin' to my advice." He turned his back on Martin with an air of finality and began to talk to the other two deputies.

Incredulously at first, then with searing, sudden understanding, Martin stared at the fat back before him, straining at the seams of its shiny coat, the bulge of a holstered gun protruding at the kidney line. And that he thought had been his Uncle Ned, who had taken him fishing and made sling shots for him. And all on account of losing the store. Before Martin had finished his coffee things seemed clearer, less pleasant. He put down the empty mug and marched out of the lunch room. He was too mad to cry, although the tears burned in his eyes like drops of acid. He had not quite choked them back when he reached the store. As he turned the key in the lock he heard the phone ringing inside. It was Mr. Krieger, calling from Johnstown.

"Wanted to see if you were there," said the voice over the wire. "I'll be over later. If there's any trouble today, lock the door, stay inside, and phone Central—there will be three deputy sheriffs stationed in the telephone exchange. Where's your father?"

"He told me last night that he wouldn't be in till afternoon today," said Martin. "He's out at the new place."

Mr. Krieger seemed on the verge of saying more, hung up instead with an abrupt "All right."

Slowly Martin replaced the receiver on its hook, sat down in the swivel chair, tipped far back. The store needed sweeping out, but he felt an angry satisfaction in not doing it. What did he care whether the store was clean or not, now? he asked himself. After a while he moved to a seat near the door, where he could look out into the street.

There was almost no trade during the morning. Westfield was restless. Half a dozen Legionaires appeared in faded uniforms and cocky overseas caps. Conspicuous among them was the barrel-shaped form of Captain George Parsons, whom Martin saw greet the three deputies cordially. They went up the stairs by the side of Beasely's Hardware Store to the telephone exchange above. Martin thought that Claude Claypool and "Golden Rule" Frank looked foolish in their misfit army britches and collars that wouldn't button around the fat necks they had grown since the war.

At noon a battalion of state motorcycle police roared into Westfield and stationed themselves at intervals along Main Street. In spite of the heat they all wore black leather uniforms close-fitting helmets and great square goggles. They all looked exactly the same, each one tall and burly, each with the same forbidding chisel-nick of mouth showing in the strip of beef-red face below the staring goggles. As they swaggered to and fro, patrolling their stations, they seemed not men but mechanical monsters capable of carrying out with no flicker of feeling any grim business, once they were wound up and set in motion by their master.

About one o'clock a motorcycle and sidecar appeared from the north, the direction from which the marchers were expected. It was driven by a big fellow in a flaming red sweater, and in the sidecar rode a Negro all in white. They put-putted the length of Main Street, sizing up the situation, then whirled about and sped back to the north.

Soon Martin heard a band playing in the distance. The music was martial, unfamiliar. He went out and sat down on the front step. All along Main Street people were coming out of stores and houses and drifting to the curbs.

The band appeared, wearing grey uniforms, and after them the marchers, eight abreast. Like storm wind they surged into drowsy Westfield. Above their heads they carried banners and placards held on sticks, and as they marched they sang and shouted.

Wonderingly Martin scanned the ranks—men and women, black and white, young and old. These folks didn't look so fierce, he decided. He saw but two beards, one of them red and neither of them very long, and no bombs. Some of the marchers were foreign looking, in his estimation, but otherwise they weren't much different from the people he had seen in Johnstown, around the mills. The sprinkling of overalled farmhands among the marchers made him think of Jake Worley.

He read all that was painted on the placards and banners. Certain phrases, which he understood, flashed through his mind like scarlet rockets ripping open a turbid sky. The boldness of their demands dazed him—would they ever get all those free things and insurance and all? Even the slogans he did not understand excited him, like war cries in a foreign language. A few of the painted words that passed his eyes merely puzzled him; what in the dickens was "imperialism?" and what kind of a trade-union was that Soviet Union they said must be defended?

The militant songs and the shouting struck a note of defiance, of resolved rebellion, that set Martin's scalp to tingling and his teeth to gritting. These people, he decided, were mad about things in general. Well, so was he; the last thirty-six hours had changed the looks of things from the ground up and the future made him feel cold and panicky. A hard lump rose in his throat as he watched the marchers pass. Suddenly he thought, "What if I went with them, went off shouting and marching and fighting the police, getting in jail and everything, like they do? Like Jake and Lem will?" Then he shivered, as one who has glanced over a precipice and felt a weird desire to jump. Five minutes later he would have denied that the thought of his shotgun gleaming in the dusk of his clothes-closet corner had for an instant risen in his mind like a steely fish glinting briefly in deep waters; and when a bare-headed girl in a white blouse waved to him as she passed, and cried with a smile, "Come along with us! On to Columbus!" Martin could only blink and stare like the other Westfieldians who teetered on the curbs to his right and left.

Jake Worley and Lem Mullett swung into view, and close around them in the ranks were other faces familiar to Martin, faces of poor farmers and farm hands whom he had seen at one time or another in the store, on the street, or had gone to school with. As the local contingent passed the American Legion headquarters there was a stir among the handful of uniformed figures underneath the flag. "Golden Rule" Frank clenched his fist and shook it at Lem Mullett. "You'll get yours when you come back!" he bellowed.

Following the marchers came the trucks, dozens of them, a startling procession with the huge caricatures, signs and slogans that covered their

sides. One sign read, "We Want Bread!" and bore a picture of a large brown loaf clutched by a silk-hatted fat man whom Martin took for a big banker. Martin dropped his eyes. He guessed he'd been pretty snotty with Jake and Lem—and now the bread didn't belong to him and his father at all, but to the Great East and West Stores, to—as his father said—Wall Street, (which he visualized as a row of banks surrounded by a high brick wall). While this thought was still in his mind, a huge and terrible picture, covering the whole side of the largest truck, appeared before his eyes. It was labeled, "Wall Street War." As Martin gazed at it, wide-eyed, his mind was wrestling with the paradox of the bread, simple bread that had never before puzzled him. Suppose he had slipped them a couple of dozen loaves?

F. C. Weiskopf

The Stronger

Three Sketches from Present-day Germany

At the concentration camp P . . . near R . . . in the Braunschweig district the prisoners, four hundred Braunschweig workingmen discovered by some accident that Clara Zetkin—whom many had seen and whose last Reichstag speech pronounced almost in the shadow of death they still remembered—had died about a week ago and that her ashes were buried under the Kremlin wall near the Lenin Mausoleum in Moscow.

They were all agreed that the memory of the dead should be honored; how was it to be done? A day passed before they decided, that as a symbol of mourning and loyalty, they would spend the whole of the next day in solemn silence.

This they did in spite of the guards who attempted to bring the prisoners to "reason." Not even the camp commander, a Lieutenant-Captain with years of experience as a successful leader of the Baltic and Upper Silesian corps of the Black Reich Army could break their will. His efforts ended in twenty-two prisoners being transferred to a hospital late that afternoon, suffering from dangerous loss of blood.

So powerful was the effect of the silence of the four hundred that after supper, punishment was reduced to the "second course," the singing of *Horst Wessel*. The camp commander doubled the guards and held machine guns in readiness on the towers of the prison. He and his men spent that night awake and fully dressed in fear of some uncanny trouble attacking them suddenly.

Towards morning, whether from fear or the thought that he could break the silence that way, the Lieutenant-Captain had three prisoners brought before him, an old metal worker, known to have been a Spartakist during the war, and two young men at whose homes Communist leaflets had been found. Since they still remained silent after running the gauntlet of the crew's guns, he shot them "attempting to escape."

The International

Six hundred Communists were arrested in the Westphalian industrial city E . . . during a general raid on the printers and distributors of the leaflet which day after day appeared in letter-boxes of tenements, came flying down from roofs of warehouses and found their way among the pages of telephone books in booths. By orders of the chief of police they were not placed in the investigation prison but sent to the S.A. barracks on the K . . . market place.

The two hundred still strong enough to stand after the many hours of examination were ordered to form in ranks before the assembled S.A. in the yard and sing the *International*.

Whether the intention behind this order was just mockery, or an attempt to rouse the S.A. men, somewhat tired from the exertions of examining the prisoners, to subdue the "revolt," remains a secret. The order was not obeyed. Had the command been to say the Lord's prayer, or to greet

Hitler, or any of the other things usually demanded of prisoners in concentration camps or S.A. barracks on such occasions, they would perhaps, after what they had been through, have obeyed. But to sing the song they had sung at hundreds of meetings, demonstrations, and celebrations, here, by order of the S.A.?

When the S.A. began to apply rifle butts the prisoners held each others hands. Like a single body they stood thus through several blows, then collapsed together. Soon they were a mass of beaten bodies.

As the S.A. were forming into groups to march off, a single hoarse voice arose from the mass of bodies singing the song it had proved impossible to force the prisoners to sing.

Surprise at the courage of the singer, a handsome young fellow with flaming red hair lasted until the second verse of the *International* was sung Then he was silenced.

The Last Wish

During the execution of four Altona workmen condemned to death for defending themselves with arms against an armed attack of S.A. men, the following incident occurred, the subject of conversation in all of Hamburg's taverns, factory canteens and tenement houses.

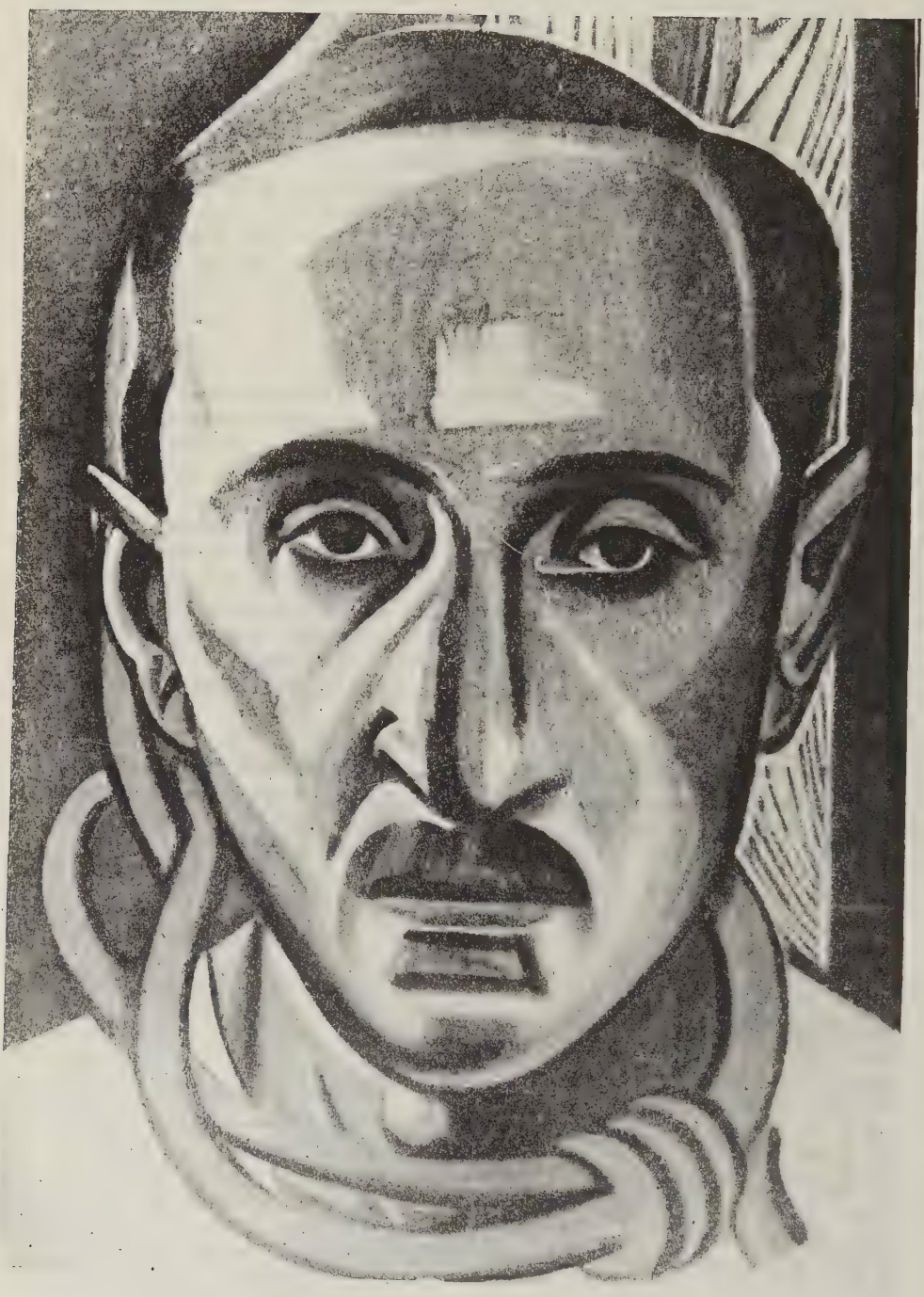
Seventy-five prisoners were taken from their cells in order to witness the death of their comrades. The youngest of the condemned, a nineteen year old lad, was asked, just before the execution whether he had any last wish. He said: yes, he would like to be able to stretch himself again if they would only take his handcuffs off. The commander of the watch took the irons off and the young workman stretched himself. With his fists raised he stood still for a moment; then, before the onlookers could grasp what had happened, he knocked the front teeth out of the mouth of the S.A. commander.

Which done he put his head on the block.

Hamburg workmen understood him perfectly. They knew he hit not from powerless rage, but as a reminder to his watching comrades of the day to come to remember then his last words: "For your children, for our comrades, for the future of the working class—STRIKE!"

Translated from the German by S. D. Kogan

NINE DRAWINGS BY BELA UITZ



"You can kill me, the Revolution never!" Hungarian revolutionist murdered by the Horthy Regime

Secret printing press—spying and arrest

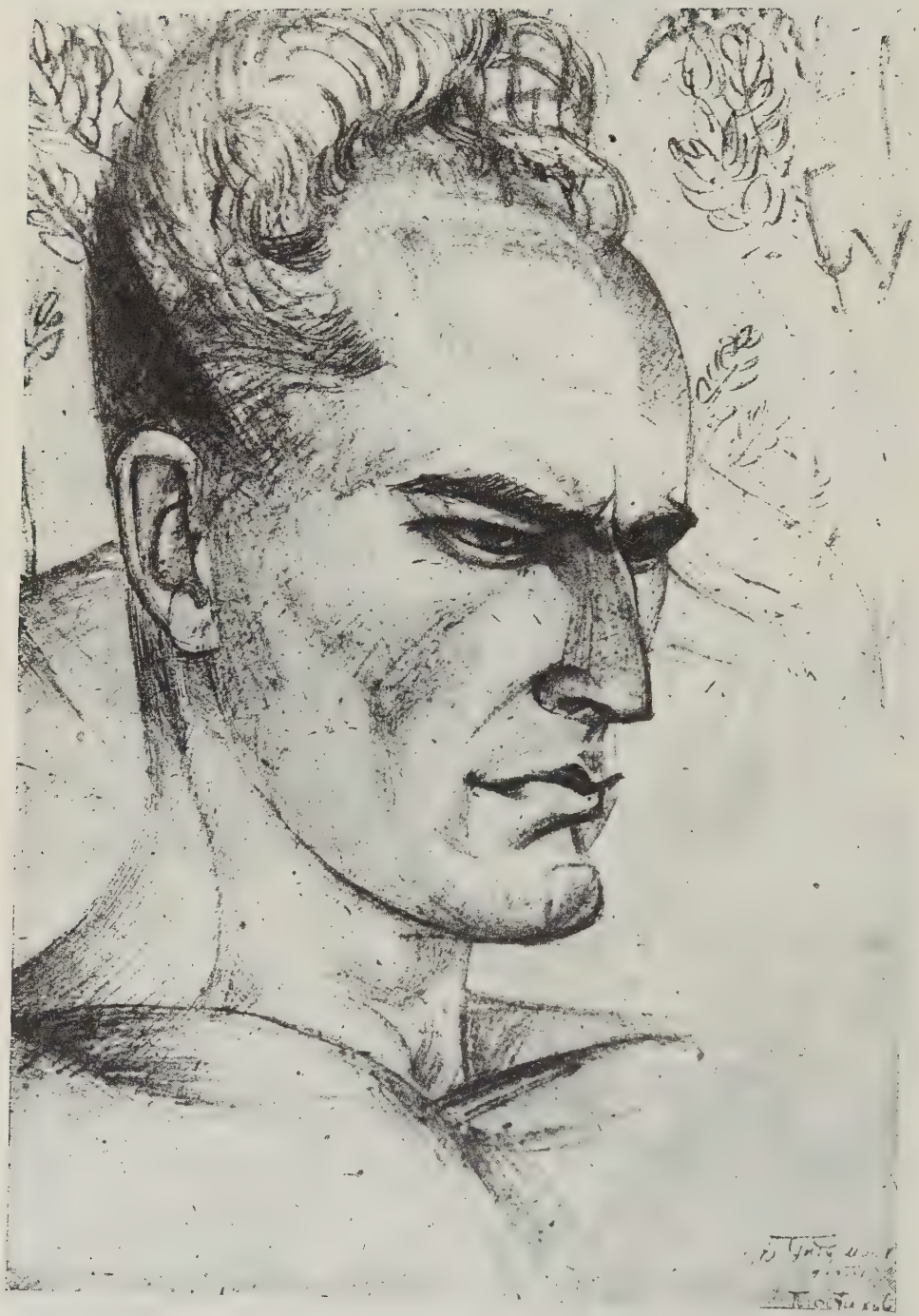
"Under the Banner of Marxism" – design for a frescoe

"Dominoes"—design for frescoe for a workers rest home in the Crimea

Harvest Celebration at Beckendorf, German Volga Region

On the Kolkhoz—Volga German Region

Fishermen



A Soviet Writer

The Paris Commune

Where we Stand

On the occasion of the Soviet Writers Congress the secretariat of the IURW addressed three questions to prominent writers in a number of countries. The questions were:

1. What influence has the October revolution had upon your work?
2. What do you think of Soviet literature?
3. What problems interest you most at this time?

Below we present the answers of a number of American and English writers. In the next issue we will print the answers of writers from France and Denmark, to be followed by letters from other countries.—*Editor.*

Theodore Dreiser

(Noted Author of Sister Carrie, An American Tragedy, *and Many Other Novels.)* *U.S.A.*

1. I have watched, with the profoundest interest, the inception and growth of the USSR. To do this, and remain in thought uncolored and in work uninspired by its tremendous and humane concepts and their gradual achievement would, I think, be impossible. I have not, since my first analytical understanding of its processes and results, been anything but despairing of the miserable and degrading inequity fostered by the capitalist system, but while this condition was plainly and at once evident to any honest inquirer, to combat it he had only the phantom and so often derided weapon, theory.

With the advent of the USSR, and even throughout the struggle of its early years, there was provided that most instructive and unanswerable reference, an example, and now a successful one. Here, for all the world to see, was a nation which said, in effect: By our system, the producer, not the provider of capital, shall benefit, and benefit by every equitable and comfortable condition of life which the genius, the art, the sciences, the general humanitarian forces of the human mind can conceive and practice.

2. Because translations are not readily available, I am not familiar with all phases of Soviet literature as I could wish to be. But I am aware of the most representative work, and, lately, have been particularly interested by *International Literature.* I find, for one thing, satisfaction in the present trend toward a literature which is not wholly and solely propagandist, or, better, which does not concern itself entirely with the minutae of doctrine. I do not at all question the extreme necessity for this insistence on Soviet principles and technique while there was still need of utilizing every field to demonstrate and educate and to triumph over the ancient prejudices and inertias which held captive so great a part of your nation. But now, when so much of this work has been accomplished, and particularly since the years which have given you a new generation whole-heartedly bent on the preservation of its incalculable advantages over the rest of the world, it is refreshing and vitalizing to find that your writers can and do turn to an easier and less limited expression, and to the task

of giving the world a more generously rounded picture of your life—and to which it can look only with envy.

There are superb and uplifting connotations to the vast, humanitarian projects you have initiated. And they are so plainly antipathetic to any economic background other than the one you provide that, conceivably, their presentation to the world can safely be made without undue emphasis as to their origin, leaving the easy discovery of that to the onlooker.

One phase of your literature which has recently engaged me is the work of your humorous writers; a wider appreciation of those sportive and ludicrous elements which, to the Slav, constitute humor, suggests a not inconsiderable field for a more flexible attitude toward other phases of your life.

3. Those events and processes which, seemingly mirror some phase or other of the larger economic outlook of the Soviet system. But in this connection, my attention has paused in every case not so much before the event itself as before the mental processes which saw fit to introduce it. I refer, for one thing, to the vast governmental projects in the United States which at present represent the source of so much pother in the press as to a new deal. When, even to the capitalist class itself, it became to some extent obvious that the continuance of its huge return was dependent upon something other than the mere urgent motive of its own greed, they bestirred themselves to provide the appearance of concession to the mass—to seek the charm which, hung about their necks, was to ward off further evil. We have had, as a result, their *public* acceptance of the N.R.A., not in itself a wholly invaluable plan, since it copies your minimum wage and maximum labor time, but without any of the other advantages which your workers enjoy. Its chief purpose is to provide work for more workers, but not at wages that spell a decent living or provide means for using the shorter hours. Yet patriotic banners were hung; a huge parade in New York indulged in it. But labor is still underpaid and the profiteers are still in the saddle. And they are still comfortably waiting for the return of the good old thousand percent profit days. The one thing which astonishes me is the naive expectation, on the part of the masses, of real benefits to come. But from where I fail to see, unless capitalism can be swept away.

To illustrate what I mean, there was recently printed here a report by Joseph Eastman, Railroad Coordinator, and blazoned by headlines in the papers, purporting to announce that he favored government ownership of the railroads—one of the most flagrantly money-hungry of industries. But a reading of the report itself, compound of the most guarded and sterile phrases, makes it plain that Mr. Eastman recommends nothing of the sort; that he advises only the most tender and expensive attentions to the railroads to insure the continuance and extension of their gigantic grafts and greeds.

Yet, not only here in the United States, but almost universally is the shadow substituted for the substance. Outside of Russia, there is no true fulfillment anywhere for the masses. Italy, France, Germany, England, here, it is the same. In the United States there have been active protests in certain farming sections against shamefully inadequate return; also the dissenting voices of some student bodies to a program which graduates them for no more noble purpose than to starve on a park bench; but that is all. The people have not suffered enough, or they lack leaders. In short,

the vast need of the mass to free itself of wolfish greeds and the chimeras of religion remains unanswered.

As to the postscript requesting mention of stories characterizing relations among intellectuals, there are no such stories here—and damned few intellectuals.

Malcolm Cowley

Author of Exile's Return

1. The October Revolution meant very little to me in 1917. I was on a slow boat from Liverpool to New York, and was passing through the submarine zone north of Ireland when the ship got two wireless flashes: near Cambrai the British had advanced on an eight-mile front, and in Petrograd there had been another revolution. One dispatch meant scarcely more to me than the other. That was sixteen years ago, and it's hard to believe now that I once came out of the ship's smoking room whistling happily because several thousand Englishmen and Germans had killed each other in a war of which they knew neither the real cause nor the results.

The Russian Revolution means more to me now than any other event in history. And it doesn't merely mean October, or the long war against the White Guards and the British, French, German and American troops that were supporting them. The revolution is still going on, and is still the most important event not only in history but in current affairs. The battle for the liberation of the working class in other countries is being fought today chiefly in Russia. When it has been won there so thoroughly that the cotton mill hands in North Carolina and the tenant farmers in Alabama know all about the success of it and cannot any longer be filled up with lies about famines and collapse in Russia—then will come a new stage of the revolution in the rest of the world.

2. Nobody here in the United States who doesn't read Russian knows very much about Soviet literature. A good many Soviet novels are translated, but they are always the novels read four or five years ago in Russia—thus, during the first five-year plan, we were getting the disillusioned books written during the NEP, and at present we are gettting novels written in the first flush of the five-year plan—and we aren't getting enough of them.

Those I have read give me the idea that Soviet writers have a permanent advantage and a temporary disadvantage. The advantage is that of belonging to a great and young society from which they can draw strength, and a feeling that their books mean something and will be read; over here writers are forced to do their work for a small audience of snobs. This advantage already has made Soviet literature the most vital that reaches us. The disadvantage is the tempo of Soviet life. Writers are slow to digest things, and in Russia today by the time they have digested them, things are changed. It seems to me that the real creators in the USSR are at present the workers, the engineers and the Party leaders. They are making a new world—the writers have to scramble to keep up with them.

3. The march toward Fascism and war is the central event in capitalist countries today. But the cultural process that interests me most is the

decline of individualism in art. Its own defenders have betrayed it—they raise weak little shouts about the importance of being real individuals, but their actions speak louder. Their actions are helping to prepare for a sort of slave collectivism which is the opposite of Communism. It is the Fascist writers, and not the Communists, who surrender their individuality to the State.

Meanwhile the move towards Communism on the part of other American writers is not imaginary. In spite of its being deserted by some writers of whom much was hoped, it is growing stronger month by month.

Louis Adamic

(Author of The Natives Return, Laughing in the Jungle, *and other books.)*

1. The existence and achievements of the Soviet Union have been for years one of the most important factors in my intellectual and emotional consciousness. The ideas, principles, and methods which are the basis of the Soviet Union doubtless are the highest promise and hope that humanity has today. In the USSR alone the two chief virtues of human life, energy and intelligence, are successfully teamed and harnessed to pull mankind up the road of progress. . . . I have had leftist tendencies ever since I can remember, but my study of the Soviet Union—mainly from reports printed in the American press, notably those of Walter Duranty in the *New York Times,* and from numerous books dealing with Russia that have been published in the U.S.A. in recent years—has helped to clarify my outlook upon the world to the extent that now I consider myself a Communist.

2. My opinion of Soviet literature? . . . The novels and short stories of the Soviet writers that have come to my attention in English translation seem to me technically inferior to the novels and short stories produced by non-Communistic writers in the United States and other capitalist countries. But that is natural. The revolutionary writers in the USSR are still experimenting with forms, looking for themselves as artists, trying to invent styles which would be effective for their materials, trying (as individuals) to grow up to statures commensurate with the colossal goings-on within the borders of their enormous empire. One recent translation into English that interested me very much was the novel, *Time. Forward!*

3. What events and cultural processes in capitalist countries are specially attracting my attention? A year ago I returned from an extended visit to my native land, Yugoslavia, where I had found a tense revolutionary situation. I just published a book about that. Yugoslavia and the rest of Balkans and Eastern Europe are a vastly important factor in the world situation, much more important than generally recognized, and I eagerly watch for developments in that part of the world. Lately Cuba has been very interesting. So has been the Far East. And, of course, there is the "New Deal" in the United States, with its imperialism that will help bring on a new world war, which I expect will end in a world revolution—in the sovietization of all the countries. . . .On the side of culture, I consider the most noteworthy the growing radicalization of serious writers and artists everywhere.

Two illustrations from Karl Marx's Capital in Lithographs *by Hugo Gellert.... "You have nothing to lose but your chains....*

Joseph Freeman

(Author of The Soviet Worker, *co-author of* Voices of October, *and other volumes.)*

1. I may say simply and baldly, that the October Revolution altered my life completely; it determined my political affiliations, my work, my thought, my feelngs; it drew me into the worldwide struggle of the workers for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a classless society. The continued successes of the Soviet Union, verifying the teachings of Marx and Lenin, have inspired millions of workers, farmers and intellectuals throughout the world; and among these millions I have the honor to count myself. We look upon the USSR as the vanguard of the world revolution, upon its achievements as the living verification of Communist principles. The victories of the Five-Year Plan, for example, have had a profound effect upon many workers and intellectuals in the United States, who have

. . . and a world to gain!"

drawn the necessary conclusions from the sharp contrast between socialist planning and capitalist anarchy.

But not in economic thought alone has the Soviet Union affected certain American writers; we have learned from it to look with new eyes on questions of philosophy, literature and art; on questions of race and nationality; on the position of woman and the education of children; on the treatment of criminals and defectives; and even on the most subtle and profound of personal relations—love, friendship, and the attitude toward one's self. My own work (since you ask about it) has been under the influence of the Soviet Union and the Communist movement for many years. In journalism and criticism, I have tried to apply the principles of Marxism-Leninism to American problems, as well as to explain some of the aspects of Soviet life. My first book (written in collaboration with Scott Nearing in 1924) was *Dollar Diplomacy,* a study of American imperialism; my second book (in collaboration with Joshua Kunitz and Louis Lozowick) was *Voices of October,* a study of Soviet literature, art, the theatre and the cinema; my third book, *The Soviet Worker* (1932) was a study of labor conditions in the USSR.

The title of these books, will, I think, indicate the extent of the influence which the Soviet Union has had upon one aspect of my work. In another of its aspects, the influence of the USSR has been equally great. I have

since 1921 been one of that group of writers and artists centered around the *Liberator* and *New Masses* which has learned much from Soviet art and literature. Our development toward an American revolutionary art and literature has been slow and painful, but in the last three or four years the movement has gained momentum and has begun to produce works of genuine merit. From Soviet literature we learned to see life socially, to describe from the revolutionary viewpoint. This constituted the first step in the break from the individualistic literature of the bourgeoisie. It affected our themes, but with it came a considerable amount of sectarianism and a contempt for form. There appeared to be certain contradictions between politics and poetry, between art and revolution which we were unable to resolve. As a result of this sectarianism, a number of our writers abandoned literature altogether and devoted themselves exclusively to journalism, and in some cases even to purely political work.

When I came to the Soviet Union in 1926, I discovered that those American comrades who despised (or feared) art and literature did not at all represent the Communist viewpoint in the USSR. It was not a crime to write poetry as some of our sectarians in the USA thought. I had abandoned writing poetry for several years, but resumed it under the influence of Soviet writers and artists whom I met in Moscow, notably Mayakovsky, Asseyev, Dinamov, Anisimov, Eisenstein, and Meyerhold. I mention this as an example of the influence of Soviet literature upon our group of American writers not only in regard to theme, but also in restoring a respect for the specific functions of art, for its importance in the revolutionary movement, for the need of effective form. Since then I have not only continued to write verse expressing thoughts and feelings aroused by the revolutionary movement, but have been active in groups of revolutionary writers, artists, as well as the revolutionary theatre and cinema.

Some of the things I have said above, answer, in part, your second question which asks for an opinion about Soviet literature. To us the most striking feature of Soviet literature is that it is not the anarchic outpouring of isolated talents, but part of the gigantic process of building a socialist society. Its theme is a great historic period which opens a vast new epoch in the life of humanity; its hero is the worker laying the foundations of a classless Communist world. The present generation of Soviet writers has had the task of describing one-sixth of the globe completely transformed by the October Revolution. This in itself is extremely difficult; how much more difficult has it been to absorb the Marxist-Leninist viewpoint which alone enables one to understand this epoch and to develop the adequate aesthetic form which raises the novel or the poem about revolutionary change from mere agitation to the level of art. Hence, Soviet literature has gone through various phases of development, each marked by the inevitable struggle of currents and tendencies. Notwithstanding the libel of those enemies of the Soviet Union who pose as literary critics, Soviet literature has never been uniform and is not uniform today. It is too vital to be standardized; groupings, tendencies, currents are bound to exist, each contributing its work to Soviet literature as a whole, each learning from those writers who best understand the essence of the proletarian dictatorship and who best understand form.

Already a number of Soviet writers have won reputations for themselves in the United States. The best known, for one reason or another, are Yessenin, Mayakovsky, Pilnyak, Leonov, Fadeyev, Babel, Gladkov, Vsevolod Ivanov, and—best of all—Maxim Gorky. These have been translated into

English. Their fresh approach to life, inspired to a greater or lesser extent by the October Revolution, and their vivid literary gifts have aroused the admiration of American writers and critics. But unfortunately, Soviet literature as a whole is still a closed book to America. For this reason, professional anti-Soviet agitators are able to spread the most fantastic rumors about Soviet writers. Soviet writers may be surprised to learn that they are "artists in uniform," complete slaves compelled to confine themselves to the crudest political agitation, victims of a ruthless literary "inquisition," etc. Yet such nonsense will continue to be circulated by the unscrupulous and believed by the naive until an honest and intelligent history of Soviet literature appears in English. A number of American writers are eagerly awaiting such a book; the power and depth of Soviet literature must be described for them.

You ask: what events and cultural processes in capitalist countries are especially attracting my attention? I am especially concerned with the problems of fascism and war. Fascist tendencies are more and more manifesting themselves in all capitalist countries; in Italy and Germany ,fascism dominates. Fascism is the last stand of capitalist society; its attempt to save itself by brute force. With it goes the feverish and desperate preparation for war as a possible way out of the economic crisis. There can be no possible way out of the economic crisis. There can be no possible doubt that Japan is preparing to attack the Soviet Union; nor can there be any doubt that fascist Germany seeks war.

Along with the piling up of armaments and the ruthless persecution of working class organizations, all capitalist countries, and those with fascist dictatorships in particular, have evidenced all the signs of cultural decay on a vast scale. Today Germany and the Soviet Union stand as the living symbols of two worlds. Germany once stood on the highest level of world culture; today, when capitalism has reached the last stages of its mortal illness, it has regressed to the cultural barbarism of the middle ages. Russia, before 1917, was among the most backward countries in the world; today, as the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, it is among the most advanced countries technically, and the first socially. The issue has been clarified; the choice cannot be evaded. We must fight against the spread of fascism in the capitalist countries, the USA included; we must defend the Soviet Union aginst military attack; we must expose the decadent elements in capitalist culture, and taking from it what is healthy and useful for our purposes, we must build roads in our country toward a revolutionary socialist culture.

Isidor Schneider

(Author of the novel Doctor Transit, *the volume of verse* The Temptation of Anthony *and other books)*

When the news of the October Revolution came to America, I was tremendously enthusiastic. Not once in all the years since then did I lose my feeling of joy that socialism had at last come to realization, that in Russia a happier future for humanity was being shaped.

At the time I was a member of the Social Problems Club in the College of the City of New York. Many of the members of a social-democratic

stamp even then regretted the Menshevik defeat and predicted the fall of the Bolshevik government first in days, then in weeks, then months. I had daily debate with them.

My enthusiasm, however, for the USSR did not lead me to participate in the revolutionary movement in America beyond a period of mild activity in the old Socialist Party. I left a better-paying job for a place on the staff of *Soviet Russia,* which gave me six happy weeks, cut short by suspension of the magazine during the 1921 famine.

I became absorbed by my personal ambitions and yielded to the comfortable doctrine that a man could separate his political beliefs from his functions as an artist. When I voted, it was for the Communist Party: and when, among the people with whom I had my social life, the question of revolution came up, I was its advocate; but the question came up seldom and my advocacy was merely that of the cheering spectator.

I hated the society in which I lived, as the whole generation hated it. Dreiser thought he could lead it to a reform from within by showing how it made monsters out of its masters and hunted rabbits out of its multitudes. Sherwood Anderson felt that it could be cured by a flight to the primitive, by a mud bath of animal freedoms. Winston Churchill thought that condescension to leadership on the part of the aristocracy, a genteel and presumably honest minority of the upper classes, could guide our society out of its pits. Sinclair Lewis believed that reducing idealized American types to absurdity would draw attention to the artist as somebody it would he healthy to imitate. H. L. Mencken sought to save us with cynicism and exaggerated hedonism to the abundant corruptions of the system and to hand over sex and art to business exploitation.

Many of the men of my own age—men fifteen to thirty years younger than those I have mentioned above—took a different stand. They had without realizing it, no faith in our system, no hope for it. They did not want to reform it, to bother with it. In effect they seceded, culturally, from the bourgeois capitalist society that they despised so deeply; and it is significant that of two of the leading magazines of the movement, one was named *Secession* and the other *Broom* (with a motto to the effect that it intended to sweep clean the scene). They issued manifestos which, when we read them today, sound absurd because they struck at the wrong thing like an animal who bites the arrow, instead of attacking the bowman.

It was not till the capitalist crisis occurred that these writers began to understand the situation. Their hopes of an island of safe exile within bourgeois sociey went to pieces. The rich people whom they had amused, turned anxiously to their own affairs. The only serious section of their audience, the self-educated workers, no longer had time to waste on literary and artistic experimentation which grew more and more fantastic as it left its base of reality. The repudiation of contemporary realities was then seen to be not a concession, but an explosion. What it blew up was a section of the cultural morale of the system, and to that extent it served the interests of the revolution.

It was in the capitalist collapse that once again our eyes turned to Russia. There the Five-Year Plan, which even its enemies, by the tone of their criticisms, considered to be the boldest, wisest and noblest enterprise ever undertaken by men, showed an ascent when all life around it was in descent, in plunges into ruin and despair.

Then we realized that the foulnesses we had avoided were not the exhalations of a filthy, but lusty and healthy organism, but the odors of de-

cay, the smells of death. Then we understood that as artists we could never find there fulfillment, even in exile; that there was no room for artists and writers except as betrayers, those who took pay for using the resources of art to corrupt and demoralize and anaesthetize the masses. Many of the big names in American literary life committed this treason.

Of my generation, the experimenters and self-exiles, some turned to exploit death, romanticizing it like Hemingway, or joined the dead, like the traditionalists, Allen Tate and his group; or, unwilling to leave the refuge, they stayed inside a sanctuary that did not exist, a realm in a nightmare, and attacked the revolution—men like Archibald MacLeish, Paul Rosenfeld, E. E. Cummings.

Others accepting the Marxian interpretation, became participants and collaborators in the revolutionary movement.

It took me a long time and involved a strong personal conflict for me to make my decision. What held me back was my fear that to make myself a revolutionist I would have to unmake myself as a writer. It was my old error in another form.

In time I learned that my nearly thirty years of literary training were of value to the revolution.

In the revolutionary movement I am finding subject matter that draws out of me energies and emotions that before have been stagnating and fermenting into poisons. Some of my writing of that period, as I read it now, has a tainted quality.

In the revolutionary movement I find a living, reacting audience. Having made my living as a worker in a publisher's office and as a book reviewer, I know what the bourgeois audience was. It was a dead audience, an uninterested audience, anxious only to be in fashion. It did not, could not react. To a degree, its principles of taste was to have no taste. Thus it could applaud in turn, with the same mechanical claqued enthusiasm, a work of genius, a dull biography, a bubble of froth, a satire, Keyserling's mystical slop, an economic treatise, a journalistic novel exposing corruption, a cheap confession story. The sophisticates flaunted this sterilization of taste by carrying together under the same arm a tabloid newspaper and the most advanced literary periodical.

By this degradation of its own culture, capitalist society allowed it to become a force for demoralization, a focus of decay.

But the workers' audience knows what it wants and gives to its reading the ardor that it gives to all its activities. To write for these readers is to enter a current of communication that vitalizes both the writer and his audience.

The above is a reply to two of the questions contained in your letter—the first and third. To the second question, to give an opinion of Soviet literature, I am not competent to make a reply because I have not read enough of that literature.

In a postscript you ask for a description of the conditions of intellectuals in the United States. Economically, conditions are deplorable. Professionals and scholars are jobless. Their morale is weakening. The intellectual level is lowering visibly.

The writers with whose conditions I am most familiar face an impasse. Many not only expect no earnings from their works, but cannot even have them published. Poets of a status which, I am told, would assure them of collected editions of their works in Russia, fail to have their books printed unless they can afford to do it at their own expense, and then

they reach an audience of two hundred readers. Those writers who appeal to bourgeois audiences and deal with commercial publishers have an almost hopeless future if they are honest men and want to use their talents without perversion. But the writers who want to reach the revolutionary workers audience have a healthy future. They cannot live, of course, on their writing, but they can get a fine audience for it. The *New Masses, Partisan Review, Dynamo, Blast,* and other magazines, well printed and alive, exist for them. There is a nucleus of proletarian culture that grows in extent and weight, and is in heartening contrast to the contracting, weakening bourgeois culture which it is displacing.

Granville Hicks

(Author of The Great Tradition *and other volumes: literary editor of* New Masses*)*

1. I was not old enough at the time of the October Revolution to be fully aware of its significance. However, the existence of the Soviet Union has inevitably affected my thinking, almost from the time I began to think. Particularly in recent years I have come to regard the USSR as being, in a very real sense, the fatherland not only of the workers of the world but also of such intellectuals as myself.

2. It is very difficult for one who does not read Russian to form an opinion of Soviet literature. Judged by the novels and stories I've read, it is very vigorous, in many ways very new, and certainly very hopeful.

3. At present, the most significant development in the United States, it seems to me, is the beginning of an alignment of intellectuals on a more or less consciously Fascist basis. Three or four years ago, the most important tendency was that toward Communism. Today many of the intellectuals who were then only slightly interested in Communism have become strong supporters; others have been unable to affiliate themselves in practice with the revolutionary movement, but remain sympathetic. These writers, together with the younger men who are growing up in the revolutionary movement, represent a strong and important literary tendency. But, on the other hand, a certain number of other writers, who three years ago seemed too bewildered to take any stand, are now openly anti-Communist and a few of them are supporting avowedly Fascist movements. I think this movement toward Fascism is bound to continue because it is becoming increasingly difficult for any intellectuals to remain neutral and many intellectuals are, for one reason or another, unable to accept Communism. This situation obviously offers a challenge, both of a literary and of a political nature, to those writers who are on the revolutionary side.

Corliss Lamont

(Author of Russia Day by Day *and other books)*

1. It was the great and dramatic achievements of the Soviet Union that first made me realize that complete and uncompromising Socialism is the only way out, for the united States and other capitalist nations, of the ever recurring depressions, mass unemployment, war, and other such ills. Since I awoke to this fact some years ago my writing and thinking has proceeded in general along Marxist lines.

In the summer of 1932 I made a two months' trip to the Soviet Union and saw for myself the tremendous advances that have been made there in both economic and cultural ways. When on the background of Russia's terrible ordeal in the Great War, the civil war, and foreign intervention I paint the picture of the Soviets' progress during the last decade, I cannot help concluding that their achievement has been the greatest and most heroic in human history. I am enclosing a small pamphlet telling in more detail just what the Soviet Union means to me. *(On Understanding Soviet Russia*—Ed.)

2. To be perfectly frank, I know very little about Soviet literature—not enough to venture a reliable opinion concerning the subject. I will only say this: that in old Tsarist Russia where 70 per cent of the population was illiterate, literature could have meant little or nothing to the masses of the people. By practically abolishing illiteracy the Soviet Government has paved the way for a renaissance of literature unprecedented in the history of the country.

3. I am much interested in the growth of Marxist theory and practice in all capitalist countries, especially in the United States. In America the Marxist movement has been particularly backward and is still greatly in need of competent Marxian analyses along the whole economic and cultural front. I am especially interested at present in class analysis of religion in America.

Joseph Kalar

(Young Worker-Writer, One of the authors of the volume of verse We Gather Strength)

At the time of the October Revolution, I was eleven years old, a member of a suspect (Austrian) nationality, and fully under the domination of a stupid unimaginative pedagogy administered by unimaginative pedagogs. It goes almost without saying that these pedagogs in the backwoods of America, were not stirred imaginatively by that colossal historical event. The October Revolution was not a reality to me. All that I can remember, and that dimly, is a series of cartoons in the abominable *Review of Reviews* picturing a horrible bearded monster with bared wolfish teeth, booted feet trampling women and children, but even these cartoons made no impression on me, so wrapped was I in the mystical ecstacies of a boy of eleven

When I finally and thoroughly became aware of the October Revolution, at the age of eighteen, I was just beginning to disentangle myself from the vile web of cynicism spun by the adept cynical spinsters, Mencken and Hecht. I boasted of being a cynic. The knowledge of a Soviet Union, my own proletarian origin, clashed with this cheap cynicism and resulted only in intensifying that cynicism. Despite myself I was stirred deeply by the realities of the October Revolution, and, as the years went by, my acceptance of these realities became a fact, and by accepting the October Revolution without reservations, I was drawn naturally to Karl Marx and Lenin, with the result, even of a superficial knowledge of Marxism, that my entire psychology was changed and my point of view irretrievably altered. Instead of thinking with my mind so carefully fostered and moulded by the aforesaid asinine pedagogs, fitting events neatly in the proper and accepted groove, I now saw the world through the lenses of Marxism, saw through my shoddy pretenses and perfumed and carefully posed despairs. For it

must be remembered that even when I had accepted and absorbed so completely the cultural attitudes of the ruling class, I was really living a proletarian life, working at day labor. It took me years to observe the incongruity of it, and not until I had fully assimilated the realities bred by the October Revolution, i.e., until these realities downed the cynicisms fostered by the contradictions inherent in the acceptance of cultural values so alien and out of tune with the realities of my everyday existence, did I realize that I belonged to a class, and accept gratefully the implications of that realization.

Previous to my experiencing the renaissance engendered by the October Revolution, I wrote copiously silly and stupid and very sad erotic and cynical pieces bordering on the neurotic. These pieces I have preserved, and when I now reread them I am struck forcefully by the complete metamorphosis. Previously, I was absorbed with thoughts of death and decay and sex, and outside of this trinity, I had no vision, no desire, no appetite. I saw the world through the black spectacles of death and its gruesome concomitant, decay, and tried my best to accelerate my own decay by alcoholic debauchery. There was no growth, there was only stagnation.

Had there been no Soviet Union, I am afraid that I would have dismissed Karl Marx as a utopian dreamer. The Soviet Union, however, was a reality, a beacon of hope, a condensation of Marxism into realities. One could not easily dismiss Marxism as the futile cerebrations in a vacuum of a failure, when at the same time the Soviet Union was so successfully building its foundations. The existence of a Soviet Union in a world torn and chewed by the crisis, with a world proletariat sinking to new low levels of degradation at the insistence of the masters, but beginning militantly to resist, is a challenge to bleak hearts, a blow at despair, and a song for the future. The existence of the Soviet Union keeps alive the revolutionary fire in all the world, and gives direction and purpose to revolutionary endeavors, and makes concrete our efforts.

I no longer can write anything that does not reflect, even if only remotely, my changed conception of the world. It would now be absolutely impossible for me to write as I once did, or "popular" fiction, or "pure" poetry. No matter what I write, somewhere, even if dimly, is the class struggle, and I firmly believe that what value my meagre work has, is the result of this new point of view. I admit that my work has not even begun to reflect fully the implications of the October Revolution, and the new vision, but my position is daily becoming more clarified, and daily am I getting rid of more and more of the irritating residues of the past.

2. I am sorry to say that living as I do in a comparatively backwoods country where books by Soviet writers are difficult to obtain, I have read but little of Soviet literature. Therefore am I so enthusiastically grateful for *International Literature*. What Soviet literature I have read has impressed me with its earthy and healthy and intelligent optimism. It is difficult for an American living in an epoch of crisis and unemployment, to grasp fully and react wholeheartedly to this optimism. I am afraid that for my Americans a pessimistic literature is still to be desired, since it better reflects the conditions of their own existence. In this connection I wish to say that I share the view of Comrade Hicks in suggesting that *International Literature* be devoted less to works by American writers (for after all it is a fact that American left journals are crying for suitable material) and more to works by Soviet writers, giving larger selections wherever possible. For I am sure there are many like myself, unable to purchase books by Soviet

writers, whose only contact with Soviet literature is through *International Literature*.

3. What impresses me most of all in the current cultural processes in America, is the amazing birth and growth of left literary journals. Every month finds a new magazine being launched. And what is so surprising is that the material published is of a relatively high quality. At the launching of N.R.A., a temporary enthusiasm seized a considerable number of people and a rather feverish optimism briefly prevailed. Now that the N.R.A. begins to look like a rather sad and bad joke, it is well, and very good, that we should have so many left journals of the calibre of the *New Masses, Anvil, Dynamo, Left Front, Partisan, Partisan Review,* and the new successor to the *Left,* the *New Quarterly.*

I find that proletarian writers usually gravitate toward the large centers of population, and theoretical discussions usually have in mind these fortunately situated groups. Nothing whatever has been said about the writer in a small town, a writer with broad revolutionary sympathies, forced to live almost an isolated intellectual existence. For the fact is, however pessimistic it may sound, the revolutionary realities have not penetrated as deeply as one would wish into the backwoods. The small city in which I live is almost completely under the domination of the American Federation of Labor, and its ideology consequently is preponderant. Of course, even here labor begins to awaken, even here criticism of the A. F. of L. flourishes, and even here does capitalism get the severe scrutinizing eye. But what I am driving at is that under conditions such as these the proletarian writer has difficulties far greater in number than those besetting the more urban resident. His struggles against pessimism must be greater, he becomes less rooted to the local realities and his creative work tends towards an abstract internationalism that may be very fine as far as the particular work in question is concerned, but dangerous to the writer. As in my poems, "Invocation to the Wind," "Now That Snow Is Falling," "After the Storm," you will note an evasion of local realities by substituting an internationalism or a recreation of the past. It is a significant point that the two poems dealing with local realities. "Papermill," and "Poolroom Faces," have been characterized as defeatist, passive, etc., etc. The comrades must take these things into consideration in dealing with a writer "in the sticks."

James Steele

(Author of the novel Conveyor)

1. The October Revolution and socialist construction have implied no fundamental change in my thought and work because ever since I began to write I have been an adherent of Marxism-Leninism and a supporter of the Soviet Union.

The existence and achievements of the Soviet Union mean much to me. They have confirmed in practice the correctness of the theories of Marx and Lenin, thus providing my work with a solid, positive quality it would lack otherwise. This is the most important point, but it is also important that the Soviet Union has shown that the working class has the will and the intelligence to create a society in which people can not only work, can not only get bread, but can get learning, recreation, and the opportunity of developing their creative talent—a talent present in nearly all people but warped and distorted under capitalism. The Soviet Union has proved

the falsehood of capitalism's claim that socialism would reduce humanity to a "dull, dead level;" indeed, it is proving the contrary—that only under socialism, can the human spirit truly be liberated. The Soviet Union, in throwing off the shackles of insecurity from the limbs of men and women, is showing that humanity's Golden Age is still ahead.

2. I have not read enough Soviet literature to have an opinion that means much. My general feeling is that it has not yet grasped the underlying unity of socialist construction and revolution; it seems confused and upset by surface and temporary contradictions and difficulties.

3. Events and social processes in capitalist countries which attract my attention are as follows:

a. The tendency of intellectuals to see that under capitalism science and art are being stifled.

b. The failure of the Fascist regime in Germany to solve the basic contradictions of capitalism.

c. The war danger, directed against the Soviet Union, and the part which the intellectuals will play in it. I feel that the IURW should provide us with more clarification on this issue. Shall intellectuals allow themselves to be conscripted if that means putting them in propaganda bureaus? Shall intellectuals simply refuse to fight? These questions are becoming more urgent each day, especially in the United States with the government building up its war machine to an extent unheard of in peacetime before.

d. The growth of the proletarian literary movement, which, in spite of its weaknesses, is daily growing stronger in numbers, methods and material.

ENGLAND

John Strachey

(*Author of* The Coming Struggle for Power *and* The Menace of Fascism)

1. "What have the existence and achievements of the Soviet Union meant to you?"

Taking this question in its broadest sense, I would say that the October Revolution and the successful building up of the Soviet system have revolutionized my whole outlook. For it is this event, together with its world-wide repercussions, reacting on the working class movement in every country, which has opened my eyes to the new world of Marxism. Two factors are at work influencing me, as they influence to a greater or lesser degree, all intellectuals in Great Britain, that is, the successful emergence of the Soviet Union from its difficulties, and the ever growing chaos, despair and ruin in the capitalist world.

2. I have not sufficient knowledge of Soviet literature to give any very useful answer to this question. I have read a certain number of Soviet novels, etc., of which Gladkov's *Cement* impressed me the most. I have also seen a certain number of Soviet plays while in Moscow in 1928 and again in 1931. I have only an extremely imperfect impression of these, however, as I do not know Russian and relied on interpreters. Of these plays, *Roar China* impressed me the most, but it was of course the extremely successful production by Meyerhold of this play, as I did not understand the words.

3. The overwhelming event in capitalist countries is the rise of Fascism

in Germany and elsewhere. The systematic destruction of German culture by the Fascists has a profound effect on me and upon most of my contemporaries. There is still an immense amount of confusion in the minds of most English intellectuals as to the nature of Fascism. They do not yet, for the most part, understand that Fascism is the last inevitable phase of capitalism, and that capitalism in its death agony has to destroy all manifestations of human culture; but those of us who take this point of view are making strenuous efforts to prove it to our colleagues.

A. P. Roley

(Author of Revolt)

1. That class solidarity is not the myth alleged by "converted labor stars" who prefer the milky ways of affluent security to twinkling in the outer spaces of proletarian struggle.

2. I have been too busy in actual participation in the trade union struggle to read much Soviet literature, so therefore do not pass any comment on same. I believe the loss to be mine and hope to enjoy same in the near future.

3. The growth of Fascism in Germany and other European countries and —via Mosley and Rothermere—in Great Britain in particular, coupled with the danger of war on the Soviet Union are the events attracting my attention. Our workers must be on their guard and all proletarian pens utilized in making issues clear.

Naomi Mitchison

(Author of The Delicate Fire *and other books)*

The success of the October Revolution and the existence of the Soviet Union has certainly had a deep effect upon me and my work. I was engaged in writing a very long historical work called *The Corn King and Spring Queen* between 1925 and 1930 and I became aware during these years of the change in my attitude towards the historical revolution with which it dealt. I went on from that to write an educational book which provoked a very fierce controversy, because it didn't mention the church and in several chapters spoke with approval of the Soviet Union, and in general of the Socialist way of life. Since then I have been constantly attacked by conservative and organized church writers. My next book was still more obviously influenced and I am now in process of trying to get published a book dealing with the current political situation in England.

2. One has to depend on translations and there is no opportunity of judging poetry. A good many of the earlier novels which I happened to come across struck me as dull and not very competent. I could not help feeling that the denouement could usually be foreseen and that the characterization was too obvious. I much enjoyed the *Little Golden Calf,* though of course it is not a great work, and I am now reading *Forward Oh Time* with great interest. I very much enjoyed *Science at the Cross Roads,* though it was very badly translated, but I have little leisure for reading non-technical works, and I may have missed good stuff.

3. This is extremely hard to answer when the whole European and world situation is of such passionate interest. I am actively engaged in left-

wing Labour Party activities, and find the whole business of the awakening of the skilled and intelligent workers of this country profoundly interesting, especially now when I feel that I can make a real contact with them and learn from them. I cannot now enter into arguments as to whether the Labour Party way of achieving Socialism is more likely than the Communist way, but I assure you that we in our party are thoroughly awake to the course of events. Naturally the question of war and peace occupies our minds a great deal, especially the whole problem of helping the revolutionary-minded groups in Germany against Nazi government. We must also keep a close eye on the U.S.A. and on India, and at the moment above all on the Far East. Everyone's own country, in-so-far as it is the place where one is taking action, is bound to be of prime importance. One small but quite interesting movement is Scottish Nationalism and the possibility of action by the revolutionary groups within it, but of course the Midlands and London are the most important part of this country to watch.

4. As to the position of the intellectuals here. Most of the younger ones of any merit have been deeply influenced by the events of the last 16 years and the success of the Soviet Union. This is especially noticeable among the younger poets, Auden, Day Lewis, Spender, Madge, Muir, etc. This group is to some extent represented by *New Verse* and similar periodicals and *New Country* (published by Hogarth Press), which also included short stories by some of our more interesting younger writers. Many of the older intellectuals rather deliberately try to keep out of the new sphere of things, thought I doubt whether they could keep up this attitude if some of them could be brought to the USSR, so as to make contacts. I hope for instance that Aldous Huxley will sometime do this. There are not many proletarian writers at present who can be taken seriously as technicians. I think the only one who is really worth watching is Walter Greenwood who wrote *Love on the Dole*. Like other workers we must see that those who represent us are above all good technicians.

One of the most interesting phenomena is the effect on scientific workers who would a few years ago have declared themselves "pure scientists" but who can now no longer keep out of the struggle.

ARTICLES and CRITICISM

A. Stork

Mr. Calverton and His Friends

Some Notes on Literary Trotskyism in America

Not a little water has flown under the bridge since V. F. Calverton came out on the American literary arena as the herald of "modern," "social," "radical," etc. views on life and art. The magazine *Modern Quarterly,* changed in the past year to *Modern Monthly,* could have celebrated its tenth anniverary in 1933. Ten years, in our stormy, impetuous period is a long time, long enough, at any rate, to sum up and draw some conclusions in any branch of life and struggle. American social life, particularly American literary criticism underwent most interesting changes during this decade and these changes reached their apex in the years of the economic crisis and the much different circumstances involved. It would be exceedingly interesting to trace, on the background of these now definite changes, the growth of the revolutionary Marxian thought among the representatives of the young generation of American critics, analyze the causes of the intellectual bankruptcy of the liberals of all brands, demonstrate the deep lying marasmus characteristic of the neo-humanistic "thinkers" and Hitler adherents of the *American Review.* If instead of this work, pleasant to us and not lacking in interest to the reader we turn instead to reflections on dates of celebration of the *Modern Monthly* and estimations of the critico-literary activity of Mr. Calverton, it is not at all because this promises any special pleasure to anyone, but because Mr. Calverton has lately become the official corrupter of the left intelligentsia, serving up, through his magazine, under the flag of Marxism, the most anti-Marxian, counter-revolutionary rubbish.

There have been many and most varied phases in the activity of Mr. Calverton as a philosopher, political publicist, theoretical sociologist, critico-litterateur—it would be hard to enumerate all the sides to the man. At one time it seemed to us (the impression was rapidly dissipated) that Mr. Calverton wanted to seriously study Marx. Reviewing now all the previous writings of Mr. Calverton we cannot but conclude that he has cruelly distorted Marxism during all the periods of his activity becoming the consecutive mouthpiece of now one, now another trend in bourgeois sociology in their more popular, vulgarly advertizing form. The theoretical activity of Mr. Calverton was accompanied by the most dubious political conduct. Flirting with the revolutionary working class movement and speaking unabashed in its name, this petty-bourgeois intellectual proved capable not only of

a seeming friendship with all groups in the American labor movement including the reformists, Thomas and Company, renegades from Communism, etc., but bowing assiduously both to right and left, be accepted by left-bourgeois circles as a perfectly respectable representative of American revolutionary thought.

It is no wonder that the "breadth of view" of Mr. Calverton— and Mr. Calverton is famous for the "breadth" of his views—impressed the liberals, tired and nervous from the "narrow dogmatism" of the Communists; Mr. Calverton served up before the liberals a totally harmless dish having the remarkable property that, while bearing the terrible label of "Marxism" it had a very familiar odor and, although not particularly delicate to the taste (the chef continually lost all sense of proportion in one thing or another), was easily digestible to the liberal stomach. We are not surprised that the Communist movement renounced the friendship of Mr. Calverton and refused to serve as a spring board for his prosperity. In an article by Wm. Z. Foster in the central organ of the Communist Party, Mr. Calverton was very justly characterized as a malicious marplot and distorter of revolutionary Marxism, combining "revolutionary" phraseology with Fascist and Social-Fascist ideas, and his magazine as a haven for Social-Fascist and liberal elements that do not in the least reflect the rising tide of revolution amidst the left intelligentsia but on the contrary, arrant enemies of the revolution and of Communism.

Since the appearance of that article, Mr. Calverton, after posing for some time as the innocently persecuted victim, has experienced an invincible sympathy to Trotskyism and already as a Trotskyite began an attack of the Communist movement armed with lies and libellous calumny. Thus Mr. Calverton's "communism," is now shed entirely. This, by the way, does not prevent Mr. Calverton from continuing to claim in his voluminous scribblings on philosophical and literary subjects to be a "Marxist" as before. It is not possible to stop on all the endless number of distortions of Marxism in the writings of Mr. Calverton available to us. Mr. Calverton's mistakes are not very instructive; they are not original but, so to say, borrowed mistakes. The individual "discoveries" of Mr. Calverton are usually absurd combinations of the uncombinable, the result of unbelievable confusion, and are thus not events in the history of social thought but sad facts in the personal biography of Mr. Calverton. David Ramsey and Alan Calmer, authors of an article on Calverton in the *New Masses* have taken upon themselves the labor of daring investigators in the theoretical jungles of Mr. Calverton and have brought to light a number of perfectly astounding examples of crude pseudo-Marxism and extreme confusion. Even if we admit without reservations that all the questions against which Mr. Calverton protests in his amusingly self confident answering article are the purely fantastic work of the printer and the fierce cannibal hatred of the authors, and in addition consider half the remaining quotations (at Mr. Calverton's own choice) unwritten, the remaining half, refreshed by *any* new article of Mr. Calverton will prove to anyone not blind that this writer has no right whatever to call himself a Marxist.

All that we want to do here is to reestimate his achievements, and to cut short the somewhat prolonged masquerade, publicly dispute the opinion still shared by some that Mr. Calverton is "the best known American critic, whose approach is that of Marxian Communism" (the kindly estimate of the now defunct *Bookman*) and according to the famous advice of Boileau, *call a cat, a cat.*

In the *Modern Quarterly* No. 1 of 1932 there was an article of Mr. Calverton's entitled "Art and Social Change." We begin with this article since out of all the work of Mr. Calverton available to us, this gives the fullest expression of the views of the author on art and secondly, this article is of a, so to say, synthetic nature: here we have general methodological, philosophical premises and historico-literary expression and current critical opinion and what not. One cannot fail to note also the sharply polemical character of the article. Mr. Calverton's article is no more and no less than a decisive reply to the answer of Mr. Hazlitt of the *Nation,* (now of the *American Mercury)* to eight questions propounded to him by Mr. Calverton.

Mr. Calverton opens his article with a statement of the general principle which he considers (and justly so) definitive of his position. He declares that his dispute with Hazlitt is not a conflict based on the difference of individual attitudes to the subject under dispute. The conflict lies much deeper. But let Mr. Calverton speak for himself:

"As I see the controversy, at least, the conflict is one which is profoundly rooted in social fact and is tied up with those *cultural compulsives* which shape judgements in keeping with class attitudes and outlooks. Consciously or unconsciously the critical position which one adopts inevitably reflects the cultural attitude and conception of a social class. Objectivity, thus, in critical matters—as well as in others—is a myth." *(Italics mine, A. S.)*

The reader endowed with even a slight idea of Marxism and unacquainted with the Calvertonian "cultural compulsives" may find the last, subjectivist conclusion of the author somewhat unexpected. The seemingly Marxist principle announced by the author does not at all seem to call for such a surprising conclusion. Some additional explanations may help us to understand Mr. Calverton's artful construction. First of all the veil must be lifted from the mysterious "cultural compulsives" because it develops that these "compulsives" are the foundation of a complete "sociology" developed by our theoretician. Here is what he has written about them shortly before this in a special article "The Compulsive Basis of Thought." [1]

"It is not what has usually been called the truth of their doctrines which makes them so powerful, but their adaptability to other interests, class interests in the main, which they subserve. It is these other, these more basic interests that turn these ideas into cultural compulsives, invest them with social meanings which are more imporant than their intrinsic content."

And in another place:

"Cultural compusives are necessary to social thought, Without them social thought would lack unity and integration. . . . The radical is just as caught by such cultural compulsives as the reactionary. The radical will point out the compulsive thought on the part of the reactionary but will never discern the same compulsive mechanism only directed toward a different and active in its own thought.' "

And the final chord:

"No mind can be objective in its interpretation and evaluation of social phenomena... Interpretation necessitates a mind set, a purpose, an end... The existence of cultural compulsives, then, makes objectivity in the social sciences impossible."

Mr. Calverton's remarkable "sociological" discovery then amounts to this,

[1] The original article not being available at the moment we are using a summary of it and quotations sent us by a correspondent. We believe the quotations to be correct.

that the *field of ideology is declared inaccessible to objective cognition.* (that must be what was meant by the promising "in critical matters as well as in others"). Every interpretation of social facts in a society divided into classes is determined—Mr. Calverton reasons—by class, group interests dominating (as a matter of compulsion) the thought of the class as a whole as well as that of its individual representatives, i.e. it is a *subjective interpretation* of social facts. The *purposefulness* of every class ideology makes the applicability of a "doctrine" to class interests of more importance than (the classic formula of the agnostic!) "what has been usually called the truth of the doctrine." At the basis of this curious process lie the "cultural compulsives." V—very good! Three cheers for the "cultural compulsives!"

The overwhelmed reader, unacquainted with Mr. Calverton's iron logic may, in simplicity of soul ask the grim philosopher: "Say, how about the doctrine of the socalled *scientific socialism, Marxism,* of which you, Mr. Calverton, are rumored to be such a prominent theoretical exponent? Is it possible that this 'doctrine' also has no objective historical sense resting on scientific laws of social development, is it possible that the facts on which it bases itself are tendaciously interpreted, 'adjusted' in accordance with the action of 'cultural compulsives' to a previously adopted conclusion?" "Of course," Mr. Calverton will answer kindly, "I am exceedingly sorry, but that's the way it is." And he will point out with unmalicious reproach the fact that Engels, presumably, supported Morgan's anthropological theories not because they "fitted so well with their (radicals') own doctrine of social evolution." And can one blame Engels? He was only a class determined man and expressed the interests of his class, in this case, the proletariat. He was, alas, without suspecting it, like everyone else under the domination of "cultural compulsives." His ideas were useful for the purpose of the class struggle of the workers and their truth (or what is usually called that—according to Mr. Calverton's elegant way of putting it) did not matter so much. Thus Mr. Calverton disposes of *Origin of the Family and Private Property,* representing the result of the collaboration of Marx and Engels on the remarkable investigations of Morgan, which has become an invaluable heritage of modern social science. Lenin called this book "one of the basic works of modern Socialism, every phrase of which one can trust, because each phrase was not written at random but on the basis of a tremendous amount of historical and political data." But then Lenin was under the domination of "cultural compulsives!" We involuntarily tremble at the idea that Mr. Calverton might some fine day, whenever he feels like jesting, "do away" just as rapidly, by a flourish of the pen, with *Capital, Anti-Duhring* and *State and Revolution.*

Jesting aside, it was necessary to see the suspiciously pompous references to George Sorel in the preceding number of the *Monthly Quarterly* to guess at the origin of the Calvertonian "cultural compulsives." We are dealing with a somewhat modernized and Calvertonized, which means vulgarized, version of the "social myth" theory of George Sorel. As is well known the Frenchman, George Sorel, head of the school of "neo-Marxists," under the influence of the philosophical concepts of Henri Bergson and following him in disputing the possibility of scientific cognition of the world, took as the central point of his revision of Marxism the voluntaristic theory of the "social myth." This theory substituted for the scientifically based Marxian class struggle and imminent victory of the proletariat—"Socialist intuition," will, desire organizing the movement and struggle of the masses. The function of any such *myth,* which is a "product of the faith

of the masses," an ideological symbol—take the idea of the collapse of capitalism or, what was more attractive to Sorel, the idea of the general strike—according to Sorel amounts to, first of all, the *formation of a characteristic class ideology.* The myth lends the proletariat the necessary "vital urge" (Bergsonian *elan vitale)* which little authentic modern science is incapable of giving him.

Myths, as is clear from their very name, have nothing in common with science. Sorel was very uncomplimentary to people that tried "out of hankering for analogy to transfer the laws of science to sociology." "These myths should be taken simply as a means of influencing the present and any controversies as to the means of their real application in the process of history are devoid of any sense," wrote Sorel. *(Reflections on Violence,* Russian translation M. "Polza" 1907, p. 57.) In his "Letters to Daniel Halevy" he asserted that the myth is *identical with the convictions of a social group* and is therefore beyond dispute, because it cannot be eliminated. "It cannot be resolved into parts and viewed in the light of historical description," wrote Sorel.

It is perfectly clear that all the profound cognitions of Mr. Calverton about "cultural compulsives" can be completely inscribed within these ideas of Sorel's together with the highly authoritative warning about the *danger of carrying over the laws of science into the field of social ideas* copied verbatim from Sorel or from some one of his American popularizers. It is very instructive that Mr. Calverton turns to Sorel, that "well known blunderer" as Lenin called him, the "left" opportunist who covers up his anti-Marxian concoction by resounding "revolutionary" phrases. Mr. Calverton just simply could not find a better teacher.

If Mr. Calverton expected insulted Marxians to enter into a subtle philosophical controversy and naively try to prove by speculative means to the relentless disciple of Sorel that they are incapable of objective cognition, he was deeply mistaken. Mr. Calverton will make no theoretical capital here.

In his day, criticizing Feuerbach and evidently waving aside a swarm of pestering spirits of Mr. Calverton's forebears, Marx formulated the position of dialectic materialists on this question: "The question as to whether objective truth is compatible with human thought is not at all a theoretical, but a *practical* question. Man must prove in practice the truth, i.e., the reality and power, the earthliness of his thinking. Controversy over reality or irreality of thought isolated from practice is purely scholastic." *(Theses on Feuerbach)*

We, may Mr. Calverton forgive us, with our usual dogmatism (there it is—the effect of "cultural compulsions") maintain the view that revolutionary Marxism is a *scientific world view,* based on the entire previous experience of man and expressing real laws of development of the objective world independently of human consciousness. We further claim that Marxism, the philosophy of dialectic materialism, is a class world view of the revolutionary proletariat. We do not see any antinomy in this. The fact that a definite class is the carrier of a definite philosophy depends not on its *being a class,* Mr. Calverton's entire brilliant conception resolves itself to this tautology, but on its historical situation, on that objective role which it plays in the process of historical devolopment. The foremost revolutionary class has, in its best ideologists, the foremost revolutionary philosophy allowing it to cognize surrounding reality with relative (we have in mind the given level of scientific knowledge) objectiveness. Every class, so long as it is not in conflict with the fundamental trends of historical development, is capable

of a degree of objective cognition of nature and society. However, the exploitatorial essence of class domination in all previous eras has limited fatally the revolutionary scientific elements of class philosophy, turning even the strongest minds of the dominating class to the working out of "illusions of the class about itself." The proletariat, according to Marx, is the *last class of society,* the only class *revolutionary to the end,* the historic grave-digger of class society. "The main thing in the teachings of Marx is the uncovering of the world historical role of the proletariat as the creator of the Socialist society," wrote Lenin. The criterion for the truth of their philosophy, Marxists seek, not in comparative theoretical discussion but in the course taken by historical development itself. The revolutionary proletariat proves with its live practice the truth of the scientific prognoses of the great founders of revolutionary Marxism. Social development of the past 70 to 80 years has compelled even the more perspicacious people of the bourgoeisie to admit this.

However loth we are to aggrieve the shade of George Sorel as well as his hale and hearty disciple Mr. Calverton, we are, nevertheless, compelled to state that the revolutionary theory of the proletariat has already become a powerful weapon for the first *scientific transformation* of the world in history, a transformation that demolishes the historically condemned exploiting classes and leads to no mythical, but an extremely real and palpable classless society.

We finally take the liberty to declare that the above are elementary, simple truths of Marxism not to accept which and yet call oneself a Marxian only great blunderers are capable of, people totally irresponsible intellectually and politically, or a shameless rogue, exploiting the class struggle of the proletariat in his own base interests.

Let us summarize our examination of the "generally methodological" thesis of Mr. Calverton. This "Marxist" stands with both feet on the ground of agnosticism, relativism. He leans not on Marx but on Sorel. His "theory" of "cultural compulsives" does not contain a single grain of Marxism and is in direct support of bourgeois "sociology" in its struggle against the ideology of the revolutionary proletariat.

Let us now see what happens when Mr. Calverton begins to apply his theories to concrete material, in this instance, to art. His first attempt at "applying" his "cultural compulsives" in the field of art Mr. Calverton made in his review of Michael Gold's estimate of the work of Thornton Wilder which created a furore at the time. Henry Hazlitt also begins his "eight answers" with a reference to this estimate of Gold's which called out a veritable storm of rage among bourgeois critics. Mr. Calverton's cognitions thus assume the character of an answer to Hazlitt's remarks.

"Hardly have we emerged from a wave of humanist criticism which rated a work of fiction low or high in direct ratio to the amount of will-to-refrain exhibited by its hero," writes Hazlitt, quoting himself, "than we are hit by a wave of Communist criticism, which hoots or hails a work of art in proportion as it seems to oppose, ignore or support the opinions of a German economist who died in 1883."

We shall this time pass without comment on the wit of the esteemed editor of the *American Mercury, J'ai d'autres chats a fouetter,* Plekhanov said in such cases. We only note that Hazlitt compares Marxian to neo-humanist criticism rejecting both on account of narrowness and bias. Let's see how Mr. Calverton answers Hazlitt.

His first stern verdict in the case of Gold vs. Wilder reads:

"It has always been a characteristic tendency of lower classes which are struggling for power to oppose the art of the upper class... Thornton Wilder's work stood out as an embodiment of ruling class art to Mr. Gold and as such he could have no toleration for it."

Thus Mr. Calverton unequivocally joins forces with his opponent Hazlitt on the fundamental point, that Gold's opinion of Wilder was dictated by narrow class interests, the antipathy of the "lower classes." Unlike Hazlitt, however, he tries to prove in accordance with his theory that *it could not be otherwise,* that Gold is not "mistaken" as Hazlitt thinks, but simply, as a class-determined subject he is "*incapable* of objective judgement."

"The conflict here then is not a rational one, as Hazlitt seemed to think, in which he and Mr. Gold where in disagreement about the interpretation of a common premise," writes Mr. Calverton, "it was, on the other hand, an ideological one in which the dispute did not revolve about a common premise, but about two different premises which could never converge."

In conclusion, viewing evidently, with great satisfaction, the picture drawn, Mr. Calverton adds the final flourish:

"The cultural compulsives at work in such sociological differences make it impossible for individual logic to solve them."

Finis!

We dare not express aloud our own opinion of Michael Gold's article out of mortal fear Mr. Calverton may immediately declare it subjective and narrowly class judgement (on the quiet we might tell you that Gold's article contained more revolutionary truth than all of the *Modern Quarterly* for ten years). His own opinion of the question propounded by Gold, Mr. Calverton does not announce, issuing, evidently, from the dictum on the unsolvability of the problem in principle.

Marxism, of course, never even entered into this, but outside of that everything is fine. "Cultural compulsives" function irrestibly, Thornton Wilder's works remain uncognizable and one can find no fault whatever with Mr. Calverton.

Is it really so, however? Let us return to the "answers" of Mr. Hazlitt. We find there a quotation from Mr. Calverton's writings on this question that produce a veritable revolution:

"His (Gold's) review, as it now stands, reads more like a moral indictment of Wilder's philosophy but not a criticism of Wilder's work."

To our class distorted way of thinking this quotation in spite of Mr. Calverton's own dictum, still ringing in our ears, of the total impossibility of solving a conflict of two class determined views on a matter, looks like an attempt on the part of Mr. Calverton himself to solve such a conflict, namely, by exposing Gold's improper approach point a way of obtaining an objective opinion on the subject under dispute. So objective cognition is, after all, possible! And where, in the field of art, a field definitely ideological.

But how about "cultural compulsives," the reader will ask—those "cultural compulsives" that determine class ideology and prevent objective, scientific, cognition? Or, are they abolished? No, they are not abolished, they are only *evaded.*

Here sly Mr. Calverton outdid himself, revealing all his secrets. If a class viewpoint does not permit objective cognition of social reality and yet objective cognition of social reality is nevertheless possible it evidently follows

that true knowledge can only be had from a *super class position* and must evidently operate with *extra class elements* of reality, i.e., not with "myths" (such in the world of "cultural compulsives" are all class ideologies), but *realities* freed from the dominating influence of "cultural compulsives."

Although only a few pages earlier Mr. Calverton, as a true follower of the faith of relativism and agnosticism declared that "anything pertaining to the science of esthetics" is inevitably an error resulting from "the belief of the socalled objectivity of science" and the criminal transfer of the laws of "physical science to social science" we shall not, now, reproach Mr. Calverton of contradicting himself and honestly say that he has everything necessary to create, not an objective, but a *super objective esthetics.*

After having spent so much energy to prove the inevitably class nature of art, Mr. Calverton begins his researches in the field of super objective esthetics with a feverish search for *super class* elements of art. As has been pointed out above the presence of such *extra class elements* in an artistic work is, to Mr. Calverton an *a priori* requirement for the scientific cognition of art. But where look for such elements? "It is an indictment of Wilder's philosophy but not a criticism of Wilder's work," writes Mr. Calverton. The idea behind such a crude opposition of the terms "philosophy" and "work" is that Mr. Calverton stops his hungry gaze in search of extra class realities on the *form of artistic work.*

In his "answers" Mr. Hazlitt very successfully ridicules Mr. Calverton's "theory" of the separate existence in a work of art of the two components "social significance" and "craftsmanship." "A work of art is a unit," Mr. Hazlitt sympathetically coaches Mr. Calverton, "the critic's judgement of it must be based, not on any single quality, but on all its qualities taken together."

But that's not the way Mr. Calverton is made—to listen to the arguments of a "bourgeois eclectic." We can reveal the secret of Mr. Calverton's persistence, however, in advance. Without singling out "craftsmanship" in a work of art into an independent self sufficient category, his "super class" esthetics loses its corner stone, falls to pieces. It is awful to think, that in his absurd structure Mr. Calverton proceeds along the too well known scheme of Plekhanov's two acts in critical analysis—the finding of the sociological equivalent of a work of art and its esthetic evaluation. Plekhanov's scheme is mechanistic and suffers of many defects, no gainsaying, but Mr. Calverton shows an extraordinary ability in vulgarizing and reducing others' ideas to an absurdity.

We confess, we exaggerated Mr. Calverton's persistence. Under the influence of his opponent's arguments he decided to "reform" his scheme and substitute for the term "craftsmanship" the term "execution." The change is one of terms only "Mr. Calverton himself does not deny this) and brings with it no change in the conception. What is "execution?"

"It is something intrinsic in the organization of the art object itself, whether it be poem, novel, painting or symphony."

The definition is too general? Here is another:

"Execution embodies that whole coordination of response and expression which are necessary for art creation."

Not satisfied with this definition either? Let us see what we can do without Mr. Calverton's aid. Starting out with a remark of Mr. Calverton's that

"execution is the only constant which is characteristic of art in every age," and "the only element in literature, which can continue to impress even after values have shifted and changed, is that of execution," we shall try to catch this mysterious category by a process of elimination, by the negative process of eliminating those elements in a work of art, which, according to Mr. Calverton, are shifting. We could call in the help here of the example with the threadbare fragment from Macbeth beginning with the line "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow," which Mr. Hazlitt quotes in his "answers."

Hazlitt ironically bids Mr. Calverton separate "social significance" from "craftsmanship." Let's see what Mr. Calverton says:

"There is certainly nothing new or revolutionary in the idea of the passage. The idea is an ancient one, found in oriental literature, as well as occidental. . . It is not the idea as a whole here which is so significant or original, but the words which the poet has chosen to express the idea, the word patterns and organizations."

There can be no doubt. The significant opposition of the "philosophy" of an artist and his "work" in the expression of Mr. Calverton quoted above is revealed here as the *opposition of the form of a work of art and its intellectual content.*[1] As proof of the fact that Mr. Calverton slights the intellectual content of art and is pushed out of the sphere of art generally, we bring up still another quotation:

"Literature as well as art, is fundamentally emotional in its appeal, and since the emotions of man are more abiding than his ideas, and since the whole problem of execution itself is an attempt to attain the greater heights of emotional response, those literary works which are still able to carry over their emotional force into other periods retain the longer duration of esteem."

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[1] Mr. Calverton's reflections at this point on the fate of the works of Homer and Shakespeare could call out "great Homeric laugther" even in the most melancholy reader that had almost fallen asleep over the wise utterances of the great theoretician. For this innocent purpose we quote them. It develops that our ability to be interested in the contents (ideas) of the Shakespearean dramas depends to a great extent on the fact, that "we are stil close enough to the period of feudalism to be able to appreciate something of the tribulations of a king and the ambitions of a lord, the struggle for thrones and empires." As far as "our interest in heavenly powers" this is an antiquated theme and, at present, "is quite void of appeal." (Poor Homer!) The time is not far off, Mr. Calverton prophecies in italics, when "the struggles of emperors and lords" will become uninteresting to us too, and then, "The value of Shakespeare's dramas, like all other expressing the attitude of feudalism will suffer distinct diminution." We shall quote the well known remark of Marx with respect to Greek art (and Shakespeare) to show the monstrous vulgarity of Mr. Calverton's "sociological analysis." "The difficulty lies," writes Marx, "not in understanding that Greek art and epos are connected with social forms of development. The difficulty lies in understanding why they continue to give us artistic satisfaction and to a certain extent preserve their status as standards and unduplicable examples." (*Towards a Critique of Political Economy,* Introduction). We do not understand why, in the case mentioned by him, Mr. Calverton thinks the value of Shakespeare's work "will suffer distinct diminution." The dissolution of ideas will not embrace the "fundamental" element of works of art—"execution." "The word patterns and organizations" can be dug out from the heap of antiquated ideas no less successfully than it was done by Mr. Calverton on the fragment from Macbeth. We shall have an "execution" of the Odyssey freed, at last, from absurd and ignorant myths, an "execution" of Hamlet, freed of ideas that contain nothing new, especially nothing revolutionary, etc., etc. The trouble only is, that the results of such "rejuvenation" operations on writers of the past that were careless enough to depict reality (*reality,* Mr. Calverton) in the concrete images of their social world will be, how shall we express it, say—insufficiently palpable. With our weak imagination we cannot even conceive them mentally. In order to achieve this something like spiritualist seances will have to be organized and the aid of mediums called in.

Here Mr. Calverton makes it perfectly clear that the category "execution" has no connection with the intellectual content of art and is achieved, as he thinks, *emotionally,* by feeling. Everyone must admit that emotional experience opposed to active reasoned knowledge (feeling artificially opposed to thought, must be treated as primarily passively intuitive knowledge. The category "execution" is cognized in an intuitive way, the intellectual content is cognized by the mind. Man's mind we understand is controlled and directed by the action of "culture compulsives," the same can not be said, evidently about intuition.

We are therefore not in the least surprised to find that "cultural compulsives" do not reach the heights of "execution" rising above the fuss and falsity of the class struggle. They have remained below to produce the tendacious pseudo-art of the struggling classes. Here we have the super class Olympus:

"Execution is the one point upon which some kind of agreement can be reached even by critics of conflicting ideologies—an exquisitely made vase can be pronounced exquisite by a revolutionary critic as well as a reactionary."

Mr. Calverton exclaims in ecstasy. But why, one may ask, does "execution" have that charming privilege of being recognized by all, irrespective of class? Very simply, because it does not include in itself *elements of class bias* embodies in the *ideology of a work of art,* in other words, in its content, and consequently is an extra ideological essence, self sufficient, independent of the movement of reality, and having an absolute, extra historical, extra class significance.

We can consider the question sufficiently clear now. The category "execution" appears, according to Mr. Calverton, as pure form. We can assure Mr. Calverton that we are dealing here with a fairly typical and hardly original idealist, formalistic structure, originating, not in Marx, but with a well known German philosopher.

Mr. Calverton writes:

"The only element in literature which can continue to impress even after values have shifted and changed is that of execution." If someone should ask me whether I find the palace I am looking at beautiful, I might of course say: I don't like things made only to be gaped at, or answer like the Iroquois Sakhema who liked nothing better than the restaurants in Paris—besides I could, in the spirit of Russeau, curse the lords that waste money on such things one can easily do without. . . . All this it is possible to approve and admit, but that is not the question. The question is, does a feeling of pleasure accompany the image of the object even if I am totally indifferent to the existence of the object in question. It is easy to see that the possibility to pronounce the object beautiful depends only on what I do with the image within myself and not on what I derive from the existence of the object. Everyone must admit that the judgement of beauty to which the least bias is admixed is very partisan and is by no means a pure judgement of taste. . . . Pure judgement of taste is a judgement of taste determined only by the adequacy of the form."

We are fraid our little mystification fell through. Comparing the previous quotations, the reader has guessed that such a clear statement of a position, although it fairly completely covers the theoretical lucubrations of the article in question, cannot be ascribed to the pen of Mr. Calverton. And as a matter of fact, except for the first phrase, already known to the reader, these thoughts belong, not to Mr. Calverton, but to Immanuel Kant *(Critique of Judgement)* and Mr. Calverton is only his humble disciple, although out of a peculiar shyness he does not divulge this.

The pedantic reader may object that while to Kant, in accordance with his general conception of *a priori* forms of consciousness, the beautiful is a

subjective category having no basis in material life, to Mr. Calverton "execution" is, at least he says it is, the embodiment of real elements of a work of art existing in reality. Kant is an idealist; Mr. Calverton a materialist, isn't that so? Let the reader examine more closely Mr. Calverton's construction and connect it with his "philosophy." The relativist Mr. Calverton not having put the question in the part of his "philosophy" about objective reality as a criterion of truth of an ideology, (his criterion being, as the reader will remember, the superiority of ideology over classes), ignores, of course, the external world, objective reality, both as the source and the criterion of beauty. Mr. Calverton's scandalous attempts to realize the category "execution" (for example in his remarks on Shakespeare and Homer), eliminate it, bring about the disappearance of the work of art along with the material elements separated out by Mr. Calverton. In the place of "execution" remains simply nothing, and it could not be otherwise. What corresponds to pure form without content in the objective world? Nothing, of course. It must further be noted the *intuitive cognition* which Mr. Calverton recommends for the grasping of his "execution" cannot be distinguished, in principle, from the Kantian *pure reason* as it has no prerogatives in the least with respect to it in the matter of a *real* mastery of the material world.

We decidedly recommend to the reader not to place any faith in separate, segregated from the general context, statements of that shy idealist Mr. Calverton, because he contradicts himself at every step, often without noticing it himself, and at times as if to "insure" himself against criticism. Thus after eloquently proving the total impossibility of freeing oneself from the action of "cultural compulsives" Mr. Calverton, with a shake of the tail, lets us in on the secret that there is such a way of freeing oneself, or, in another case he goes on for several pages to show how form can be isolated from content and then suddenly without batting an eye, he declares: "when all is said, formal values can never be completely divorced from conceptual" and so on. Equivocation with quotations which develop with each "refutation" by Mr. Calverton, should not dupe anyone. Shy idealism is still idealism whatever cloaks it may drape about its nakedness, in search of protective coloring.

In the concluding part of his article Mr. Calverton dwells on the problems of revolutionary criticism of which he considers himself, as is well known, a representative. Mr. Calverton is not at all disposed to give up his methodological forts.

> "As to the question, what is the critical approach to art that should be advocated, I should say at once that the answer depends upon, for whom?"

writes Mr. Calverton, and only then, satisfied with putting the question this way he declares:

> "For the revolutionary proletarian critic the approach should be one that demands art that will voice the needs of the proletariat, lend strength to this cause, and power to its convictions."

Regardless of the voluntarism of such a formulation which robs it of all objective meaning, it still, even in this form, it would seem, obligates to something. Let us grant the uncognizability of objective reality. But, it develops that even the "social myth" with all its sad defects still has the virtue of compelling the person that has announced himself a proletarian revolutionist to come out in active defense of the working class. Not so here! Sly Mr. Calverton executes a familiar by now pirouette and our illusion of a moment goes crashing. The revolutionary duty implied in Mr. Calverton's

formulation quoted above, is the duty of a class individual acting under the influence of "cultural compulsives," i.e., issuing, in his actions and judgements, not from real relations in life, but from subjectively class tendencies. But Mr. Calverton does not belong to this class of people; he, having freed himself from the yoke of "cultural compulsives" can achieve super objective cognition of reality. In other words that incorrigible relativist, Mr. Calverton, is inclined to seek emancipation from the onerous duties of a "revolutionary proletarian critic" by appealing to . . . "objective conditions."

Mr. Calverton thinks America has not matured yet for revolutionary literature. "The few revolutionary writers that we have," writes Mr. Calverton, "are so definitely the products of an ultra bourgeois civilization that it is well nigh impossible for them to escape the emotional conflicts and contradictions of their own personal lives and the background in which they arose."

Although we have solemnly promised not to vex Mr. Calverton, we must evince some persistence now. Let us for a moment assume that Mr. Calverton is right, that there is as yet no revolutionary proletarian literature in the USA by virtue of the backwardness of the American working class and that those few writers who try to create revolutionary works are firmly fettered with the chains of "ultra bourgeois civilization." So what should the only revolutionary proletarian critic who sees the real state of affairs do under the circumstances? He should, evidently, help revolutionary literature crystallize and take the right road; he should help young writers in their creative searchings and experiments; he should help the writer revolutionaries of the middle class intelligentsia get rid of their petty bourgeois prejudices and traditions; he should, last but not least, struggle against all kinds of bourgeois influences in the young revolutionary literature and expose the decay of bourgeois culture and bourgeois art from the positions of militant revolutionary Marxism.

It is perfectly clear that such a perspective does not at all attract Mr. Calverton who stands above all classes. And it is not attractive to him for the very simple reason that, in spite of all Mr. Calverton's solemn assertions, he does not, of course, see, upon a super objective comparison of the struggle of the working class for the social revolution with the struggle of the bourgeoisie for power any reasons for preferring one class ideology to another.

That revolutionary art, like art generally, has at its base what Mr. Calverton terms "execution" is another matter. That is a reliable criterion, because this category, as we have already elucidated has in it no class elements and is an extra ideological category. Here, of course, *free competition* is possible between bourgeois and proletarian art. With his usual kindness, Mr. Calverton is ready to play the role of super arbiter in this case also. We take the liberty of pointing the following instructive picture as a conclusion to our reflections. Two pretenders appear before the high priest of "super objective" esthetics. One, widely known in highbrow circles of the intelligentsia, a past master in literary craft, a refined bourgeois decadent; the other, an author of a first book, a somewhat unattractive gloomy person of uncertain nationality, who, according to the claims of a handful of doctrinaires imagining themselves critics, has warmly and truthfully depicted in his story the events, say, of a recent strike. Mr. Calverton casts his eagle eye on the suspicious looking individual, and in the full armor of his already well known by now esthetic principles, gives the following admonishing oration (borrowed by us from the article under consideration).

"Young man," he says, "revolutionary art has to be good art first before it can have deep meaning, just as apples in a revolutionary country as well as in a reactionary country have to be good apples before they can be eaten with enjoyment."

And he adds, with a smile,

"The fact that the pottery or the apples are the products of a revolutionary culture, that is, made or grown by revolutionists, does not of itself, or by any kind of special magic, make them good. It simply gives them a new form of ideological identification!"

Such bourgeois vulgarity!

In his letter answering the article of David Ramsey and Alan Calmer in the *New Masses,* Mr. Calverton turns to all "who understand the revolutionary significance of Marxism as a scientific method" with the tearful plaint that "bureaucrats, slanderers and liars" are pushing him, Mr. Calverton, "the best known, etc." away from the revolution, pushing him away from Marxism. Mr. Calverton is the victim of a grievous misunderstanding; his fears, we can assure him, are totally unfounded. In his day, Plekhanov, polemizing against the revisionist Bogdanov, who raised a howl that those malefactors, Plekhanov and Lenin want to exile him, Bogdanov "beyond the borders of Marxism," wrote:

"You are cruelly mistaken, dear sir. If anyone should have thought of doing such a thing he would have met the obstacle of finding it impossible to execute his dire undertaking. Dumbadse,[1] himself, in spite of all his miraculous powers, could not exile from his territory a man who did not reside there. Similarly, no ideological autocrat could "exile" from the borders of any doctrine a "thinker" who is *outside those borders.*"

No one can exile Mr. Calverton beyond the borders of Marxism;

If we were to assert that the main feature of the activities of the literary folk from the *Modern Monthly* is the combination of Sorel and Kant and the formation of a bourgeois formalist "super objective" esthetics, we should be representing this activity as too academic. The magazine is not lacking in trenchant articles on current literary political themes. In this connection we cannot overlook a series of articles published in 1933 from the pen of Max Eastman. We have in mind the articles: "Artists in Uniform," "How Art Became a Class Weapon," "Stalin's Literary Inquisition"[1]. All of these articles are devoted to a political evaluation of the theory and practice of the revolutionary literary movement in the USSR and the USA, its achievements, slogans, methods, and represent, as anyone knowing the political biography of the renegade and revisionist Eastman can easily guess, malicious, libellous attacks on the Soviet Union and revolutionary Marxism.

After reading these articles we find it exceedingly strange that Eastman whose hysterical and insincere passion for intrigue show the definite traits of a provincial old maid, has not yet been elected an honorary member of the D.A.R.

It would be difficult to refute every lying invention of Max Eastman as his articles are false from beginning to end. We find it necessary, however, to stop on the two in our opinion, most essential points. These are, first the crude distortion of Lenin's views on art and culture by Max Eastman, and second, his just as shameless misrepresentation of literary development in the Soviet Union.

Let us take the first question. Eastman asserts that Lenin was in full agreement with Trotsky on questions of art and culture. From this Max

[1] Dumbadse was a Tsarist governor general notorious for his willfulness.
[2] All now included in a book just issued under the title *Artists In Uniform.*

Eastman concludes that the struggle against the Trotsky conception of the problem of proletarian culture conducted both in the USSR and by the revolutionary movement in the West is *a struggle of Stalin adherents against the doctrines of Lenin.* The formula "art is also a weapon of the class struggle" is an invention of "Stalin adherents" inconsistent with Lenin's views. Is that really so, Mr. Eastman?

Trotsky's views on proletarian culture are fairly well known. But let us recall some of his fundamental expressions. In his book *Literature and Revolution,* Trotsky writes:

"It is radically incorrect to contrast bourgeois culture and bourgeois art to proletarian culture and proletarian art. These last there will not be at all as the proletarian regime is temporary and transitory."

In another place he expands this thesis:

"Those that speak of proletarian culture as a lasting proposition, who make a platform of proletarian culture, think on this question on the basis of a formal analogy with bourgeois culture. The bourgeoisie captured power and created its own culture: the proletariat, having captured power will create a proletarian culture! But the bourgeoisie is a rich class and hence educated. There was a bourgeois culture before the bourgeoisie formally captured power. The bourgeoisie capture power in order to entrench its domination everlastingly. The proletariat in bourgeois society is an impecunious and disinherited class and can therefore create no culture of its own. Only after capturing power it first realizes its horrible cultural backwardness."

The period of proletarian dictatorship can not produce a new proletarian culture, Trotsky asserts:

"The years of social revolution will be years of bitterest class struggle when destruction will be more prevalent than new construction. There can be no talk of creating a new culture in the period of the dictatorship, i.e., there is no possibility of construction on a great historical scale, and the cultural building which will be incomparable to anything in the past and which will begin when the necessity for the iron vise of the dictatorship will disappear will already have no class character. From this the general conclusion follows that not only is there no proletarian culture, but there will never be any, and it should really occasion no regret: the proletariat assumes power for the very purpose of finishing forever with class culture and paving the way for human culture."

The cultural problems of the dictatorship of the proletariat, according to Trotsky, are reduced to "the most concrete culturality." He writes:

". . . our day goes on washing one's shirt, get a haircut and comb the hair, and primarily, clean and oil the rifle," and hence, "the main prospects are—growth of literacy, education, work, movies, gradual transformation of life, and a further rise of civilization."

These quotations should suffice. Trotsky's point of view is perfectly clear. Anyone the least acquainted with Trotsky's general interpretation of proletarian dictatorship in connection with the theory of permanent revolution can easily see that Trotsky's views on proletarian culture are consistent with his general conception.[1] Even Eastman, it would seem, has guessed as much. Thus, citing Trotsky's declaration, sympathetically, that the proletariat will cease to be the proletariat before a new culture is created, Eastman exclaims:

"It is clear that these views rest in a conception of artistic culture directly opposed to that which is now being assiduously piped through the world from Moscow. They rest also, no doubt, in a different conception of the revolution."

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[1] A more detailed account will be found in W. Kirpotin's article: "Trotsky and Literature" to appear in a coming issue of *International Literature.*

As an exception, we consider these remarks of Eastman's entirely correct and are ready to take up the polemic cudgels against any foe of Mr. Eastman that dares dispute them.

We do not know whether the American reader is aware that Trotsky's views on proletarian culture and the role of the proletariat in the cultural development of mankind (which, in Mr. Eastman's authoritative opinion, were fully shared by Lenin), are not Trotsky's "original" creation, but had been formulated long before the October Revolution by a number of influential "Menshevik" Social Democratic literateurs, sworn enemies of Lenin and Bolshevism. It is enough to mention in this respect, the most interesting article by A. Potresov, one of the most reactionary Menshevists, an active "liquidator" during the years of reaction, a desperate social patriot during the war, and, of course, an emigree after the October revolution. Potresov's article was published in 1913 in the Menshevist liquidator magazine *Nasha Zarya* under the unequivocal title "Tragedy of Proletarian Culture" and contains the gist of all Trotsky's "original" reflections on the historically determined inability of the proletariat to create its own culture.

According to Potresov, the struggling proletariat cannot create a culture, as he has no time for this job which he has to do in his "overtime" and which is "beyond his budget" while occupied with his everyday practical work. "The little time left to the proletarian after he has done his capitalist service," writes Potresov, "is taken up by the struggle in work at his club, attending meetings or the union, in a word in the social *cause*." Potresov immediately draws a "theoretical basis" under these practical observations, establishing in principle the "applied" nature of the proletarian ideology. He writes:

"Under pressure of the relentless laws of struggle in capitalist society, a tendency to unconscious conservation of energy is worked out in the proletariat, to an involuntary restriction of culture by the practical needs of the basic process of the proletarian movement and his entire culture acquires a somewhat utilitarian character. The psychology of a proletarian Sparta is created and they cannot create an Athens."

Alongside this "internal" element detrimental to proletarian culture, Potresov, proposes the "external" factor of the "power" and "subjugating force" of capitalist civilization. Here Potresov spares no color. He exclaims:

"We are speaking not of the civilization of dying Rome or the miserable Middle Ages, but of a forward rushing and upswinging civilization. . . . Together with the growth of production and material culture grows, simultaneously, culture that is not material: there is a tremendous accumulation of spiritual riches," etc., etc.

From this Potresov draws the conclusion that "the great treasure house of values" of bourgeois culture of the past and the literature of petty bourgeois progress of today will replace (and already replaces) the non-existent proletarian culture and proletarian art, that the proletarian "kingdom of the future" will come not in the

"holiday clothes of a rich and varied culture but in a shabby blouse, with calloused hands and only after it will have come will it begin to create an art culture and every other kind of culture."

As is well known, Trotsky considered, that the function of a substitute in the period of proletarian dictatorship will be fulfilled by the art of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia, and afterwards there will be no need for a proletarian culture.

It is exceedingly curious to note, that in another article on this question, published in one of the subsequent issues of the same magazine, Potresov.

defending himself against the attack of a young worker litterateur accusing the respectable liquidator and opportunist of lack of faith in the strength of the working class, declares solemnly that he does not at all deny proletarian culture *generally:* his denial only refers to the period preceding the social revolution. He writes:

"I really think that it is just the proletariat . . . that will develop the richest of all cultures during that very probably long period of reforms which separates modern capitalist society from the socialist order for which this period is paving the way. The blossoming of the culture which can be fully and properly called the culture of the proletariat I anticipate precisely in the period of social revolution."

These observations are, of course, nothing but "lip service." Tomorrow, tomorrow,—but not today! The Menshevists were never sparing in left "Marxist" phrases when the question concerned the *future* (as they thought —the very distant future), but simultaneously they insisted on minimalism for the *present.* And when the future unexpectedly became the present and the social revolution which these people never believed in, of whose shadow they were afraid, the idea of which they secretly abhorred, explored with breath taking speed over their heads they came to the defense of the bourgeoisie and, defeated, they ran together with the bourgeoisie and landowners to seek a haven in the world of capitalism.

We do not know whether Potresov took back his careless words on the blossoming of proletarian culture in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, but we cannot help but see an organic continuation of the Menshevist tradition in the Trotsky conception of proletarian culture, transplanting this sacramental formula of "not today, but tomorrow" into the period of the proletarian dictatorship. Neither Potresov nor Trotsky saw that "tomorrow" become "today," believed that this "tomorrow" will really come, because they pictured it to themselves in the form of an abstract scheme, tore away this problematical "tomorrow" from the actual live reality of today and thus deprived it of any concrete sense or content. Trotsky contrasted proletarian to socialist culture because he failed to see the growth of socialist relations under conditions of the proletarian dictatorship. Hence he pictured the cultural growth of the proletariat and the entire mass of workers in the period of proletarian dictatorship as the mastering of bourgeois culture. Hence the future "socialist culture" he proposes, if it is not to be taken as a direct continuation of bourgeois culture, proves nothing more than an empty lifeless, abstract slogan, lacking all flesh, promising nothing and projected into "tomorrow" but having no roots in "today."

I hope the reader will forgive this somewhat lengthy digression; it was necessary to establish the historical roots of the theory of "denying proletarian culture in the name of socialist culture" with which many petty bourgeois poseurs that do not believe in the socialist cause and have no desire to work for the cause of proletarian socialist culture, cover themselves.

Let us return to Eastman's absurd invention of the identity of Trotsky's and Lenin's views on art and culture. Eastman does not prove his thesis, he prefers to just "declare" it. But then, as a special feature Eastman publishes the article of the recently deceased Soviet critic V. Polonsky, "Lenin's View of Art," which should prove the correctness of Eastman's assertion. Why did Eastman pick Polonsky's article out of all the numerous ones on this subject? What place did Polonsky occupy in Soviet critical literature?

During his entire activity Polonsky, together with Voronsky, another noted Soviet litterateur, was more or less an adherent of Trotsky's views on art

and culture. In his literary practice this expressed itself in an underestimation of proletarian socialist art and culture, in befogging the process of the class struggle in Soviet literature, in a constant struggle against the associations of proletarian writers contrasting them with the writers of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia. Polonsky's book *Essays on the Literary Movement of a Literary Period,* one of the chapters of which makes up the article chosen by Eastman, is perhaps the worst of Polonsky's books. Its external lack of principle (together with the chapter on Lenin's views there are chapters there on Trotsky's, Bukharin's and other views, without any traces of dissension or a unified point of view) is united however with a silent smuggling in of Trotsky's opinions and an attempt to quietly compromise the idea of a proletarian culture.

At first we were rather skeptical of Eastman's venture knowing that, whatever Polonsky's position may have been, he could not fail to mention in his article at least some of the widely known opinions of Lenin on bourgeois and proletarian culture, which would at once prove the absurdity of Eastman's lying inventions that Trotsky's and Lenin's views on this subject were identical. Great was our astonishment when, on opening the *Modern Monthly* we saw that the article, even if it does not directly support Eastman's invention, does not in any way refute it. Noticing, however, in the introduction, Eastman's modest mention of certain "omissions" in the process of translation we were naturally interested in the nature of these "omissions." Comparing the translation with the original Russian text, we discovered that *in translation all quotations of Lenin and remarks of Polonsky which would in any way be interpreted as refuting Eastman's assertion were omitted.*

All Lenin's utterances on the necessity of creating a proletarian culture were thrown out, so that the reference to his severe fight against Proletcult assumes the character of a denial by him of the independence of proletarian socialist culture; all examples of Lenin's merciless class analysis of the culture of the past were omitted, so that Lenin's struggle against the "nihilists" who denied the value for the proletariat of the culture of the past appears like liberal apologetics of bourgeois landowner civilization and his doctrine of a "cultural revolution" becomes a Trotskyite sermon of bourgeois culturism. All Polonsky's statements characterizing Lenin's position which Eastman did not like, such as: "Against the theories of Proletcult, which means for real creation of proletarian culture," or "We see that V. I. Lenin did not deny the necessity of creating a proletarian culture," were all omitted.

Lack of space prevents us from exposing in detail all the swindling distortions of that article. One very clear example showing the technique of Eastman's "abridgement" we cannot pass up. The question is of Lenin's attitude to old art.

"When in the winter of the 'bare year 1919' Golkin raised in the Council of People's Commissars the question of closing the Bolshoi Theatre, defending his motion from just that point of view of the uselessness for the proletariat of this 'relic of a landlord culture' which was presenting 'the same old bourgeois operas' and nothing for the workers, nothing for the Red Soldiers,' it was Lenin who saved the Bolshoi Theatre from being closed.

"'It only seems to me,' Lenin observed, 'that Comrade Golkin has a somewhat naive idea of the role and significance of theatres. A theatre is necessary not so much for propaganda as to rest hard workers after their daily work. And it is still too early to file away in the archives our heritage from bourgeois art. . . .'

"The Great Theatre survived."

Anyone acquainted with Lenin's views on the culture of the past in this episode, will be struck by the onesided expression of Lenin's position, totally at variance with the general tenor of his doctrine. And really, to take a concrete example, do the above remarks characterize Lenin's attitude towards the Bolshoi Theatre? In Lunacharsky's reminiscences, referring to this very period, we read:

"At one session (of the Council of People's Commissars, *A.S.*) I argued against his (Lenin's *A.S.*) attacks on the Bolshoi Theatre. I pointed out its undoubted cultural value. Then Vladimir Ilyitch screwed up his eyes craftily and said: 'It is nevertheless a remnant of landlord culture and no one can argue against that."

There it is, the other half of Lenin's view. The entire picture changes most materially. Lenin exposes the class content of the "remnant of landlord culture" but, at the same time, considers it necessary to extract from this heritage everything that is of the least value.

Very well, the reader will say, but where does Eastman come in? He may not have known Lunacharsky's reminiscences and besides it was not his business to amplify Polonsky's article with Lunacharsky's recollections. He just gave what Polonsky wrote, which is all that is required of a translation.

But Polonsky knew of the fact mentioned by Lunacharsky, he could not ignore it, and he mentioned it. The translator, Eastman, omitted from the quotation cited the first four lines. They read:

"Lenin considered the Bolshoi Theatre a relic of landlord culture and once during the horrible hunger years, even raised the question of closing it. But this did not prevent Lenin from properly evaluating this relic of a landlord culture."

Due to Eastman's "art of translation" the expression "a relic of a landlord culture" is ascribed to Golkin. The underscoring in the translation (of the words referring to propaganda and rest) does not follow the original. Its introduction by Eastman as underscoring by Lenin himself serves a self evident purpose.

Similar brazen swindles and distortions of documents can be met with only in the annals of the yellow venal press!

And these people, traitors to the cause of the working class, political adventurers, "free writers" who betray and sell the cause of Marx and Lenin by whose names they have the brazen nerve to swear, these people pose in the role of proletarian revolutionists! Engels was positively more than right when he wrote about certain types of bourgeois writers:

"When things will come to the point when . . . the proletariat will get even with the bourgeoisie and the other propertied classes, they will show these writers, this basest of venal crowd, by means of a lamppost how far they are from the proletariat."

Despite all liars and falsifiers Lenin was not an adherent of Trotsky's conception of revolution and culture. Facts are stubborn things, Sir Writers of the *Modern Monthly,* you may ignore them, do violence to them, but you cannot destroy them. Lenin not only "admitted" proletarian culture, he was one of the greatest propagandists for it and its greatest theoretician. Lenin fought against Proletcult not because he was against proletarian culture, but because, in the first place, Proletcult distorted the idea of proletarian culture (isolated it from all preceding cultural development of mankind, segregated it from the essential cultural problems of the present, attempted to erect it artificially by "laboratory methods" by the help of special "specialists of proletarian culture," in a word, transformed it into a petty bourgeois Utopia) and secondly, and this is closely connected—had become a center of anti-Marxian elements that put themselves in opposition

to the Party and the proletarian government (at the head of Proletcult stood A. Bogdanov, well known for his revisions of Marx). "Under the flag of proletarian culture A. A. Bogdanov puts over bourgeois and reactionary views," wrote Lenin at that time.

In fighting Proletcult, Lenin came out in defense of proletarian culture and against its distorters.

"Lenin fought not against its (Proletcult's, *A.S.*) cultural activity (theatrical workshops, art classes, etc.) But against its philosophy—a philosophy which Bogdanov's disciples developed, against the rejection of the old cultural heritage and against hot housing,"

writes N. Krupskaya. Who will say that in Lenin's well known attack on Proletcult which Eastman as "translator" so carefully omitted from Polonsky's article contains a denial of proletarian culture? Here are Lenin's words:

"Proletarian culture does not appear from no one knows where, is not an invention of people who dub themselves specialists of proletarian culture. This is complete nonsense. Proletarian culture must come with the regularity of the development of those reserves of knowledge which mankind has worked out under the pressure of capitalist society, landlord society, official society. . . . Without understanding clearly that only by an exact knowledge of the culture created by the entire development of mankind; only by working it over can a proletarian culture be built up—without such understanding we shall not solve our problem." (Speech at the third convention of the RYCL).

How did Lenin understand "exact knowledge" and "working over" of old culture? Perhaps like Trotsky, who thought that the proletariat being incapable of creating its own class revolutionary culture must entrust the "creative cultural tradition to the bourgeois creative intelligentsia" which will ensure cultural continuity until such time as "the kingdom of socialism" arrives and there will be no need of any class culture altogether? No, esteemed falsifiers! Lenin takes the viewpoint of a revolutionary, proletarian, socialist culture. Here is what he writes in a proposed resolution for a convention of Proletcults:

"Marxism has conquered for itself its all-world historical significance as the ideology of the revolutionary proletariat by the fact that it, Marxism, has not at all cast aside the most valuable conquests of the bourgeois era but, on the contrary, by mastering and working over everything that was valuable in the more than two-thousand years of development of human thought and culture. Only further work *on this basis and in this direction,* enspirited by the practical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the last struggle against all kinds of exploitation, can be recognized as the development of a *really proletarian culture.* The entire experience of latter day history and especially the more than half a century of revolutionary struggle of the proletariat of all the countries of the world since the appearance of the *Communist Manifesto* have proved beyond peradventure of doubt that only *the world philosophy of Marxism is the correct expression of the interests, the view point and the culture of the proletariat.* (Italics mine, *A.S.*)

This is the kind of working over of the culture of the past that Leninism requires, Sir Falsifiers! Listen!

"In the Soviet Workers and Peasants Republic the whole mater of education, *in the field of political education as well as, and especially in the field of art, must be permeated by the spirit of the class struggle of the proletariat* for the successful accomplishment of the aims of its dictatorship, i.e., for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the abolition of classes, the doing away with all exploitation of man by man." (Italics *mine, A.S.)*

So, you think that considering art as a weapon in the class struggle is an invention of Moscow to fight the views of Trotsky and Lenin? Is that so, you theoreticians of the *Modern Monthly?*

In order to finally demonstrate the concrete application of this point of view of Lenin's to the question of the theatre which Eastman has utilized for his purposes of falsification, I shall quote a sentence from Yakovlev's famous article written at Lenin's request *against Proletcult* and approved by him:

"We want to see in the proletarian theatre elements of artistic recognition of our revolution, revolutionary cheerfulness and enthusiasm, elements uniting the workers in their determination and readiness for struggle, creating in worker audiences a sense of contact with the members of his class, finally the real introduction of the living masses on the stage."

The proletariat does not play the role of the poor relative that has received an "inheritance" in order to live off the interest on it. The proletariat as the foremost social class accepts the inheritance belonging to it, of the best that mankind has achieved, and creatively absorbing and mastering it, builds the foundation of its own class culture, the culture of all workers, the socialist culture.

But maybe Lenin, though he did not share Trotsky's views on proletarian culture, agreed with him on the question of "the most concrete culturism?" Everyone knows the value Lenin set by initial cultural educational work among the workers, the abolition of illiteracy, the struggle against prejudices religious and otherwise, etc. and how he ridiculed all those that

"soar in the skies of 'proletarian culture' and do not see how much persistent plain labor is facing us yet before we reach the level of the usual civilization of a West European country." (Wrote Lenin in the beginning of 1923).

Lenin did not conceive of proletarian culture being built up otherwise than by a general rise of the cultural level of the entire mass of workers, but at the same time, he did not conceive of this rise without the building up of proletarian culture.

That this problem (the abolition of illiteracy) fell to the proletarian revolution was due to the wild reaction and cowardice of the dominant classes in tsarist Russia, to the extreme backwardness of Russian capitalism. The proletarian revolution in Germany or England will not encounter these problems, at least on such a scale. But inasmuch as the problem existed it had to be solved, and Lenin demanded a rapid and honest solution of it. Only one blind can fail to see the difference between Lenin's statement of the problem and Trotsky's bourgeois democratic culturism.

Here is what Lunacharsky, who, from the first days of the revolution, led the entire work of education and cultural development under the direct guidance of Lenin, writes about this:[1]

"Lenin knew that we must seriously and diligently take to study and draw out of bourgeois wisdom and technique everything that could be useful to us in the destruction of the bourgeoisie and build our own world. At the same time, however, he knew very well that we can not learn from the bourgeoisie everything that we need, knew that we have what is peculiarly our own, rejected and condemned by the bourgeoisie. We have our own class verities, our new revolutionary attitude towards the world, knowledge, history, the present and the future. . . . And Lenin, from this point of view,

[1] Lunacharsky, as is well known, was neither a supporter nor defender of the RAPW, but of course, like every Leninist Bolshevik, stood for proletarian culture. Eastman's reference to some "old Bolsheviks" that presumably supported Trotsky's views is just as false as his other statements. Out of the prominent Party people of those days that expressed themselves on the subject of proletarian culture besides Lunacharsky one can mention in addition only Bukharin. Although Bukharin's views on culture contain a good deal that's in error, he disagrees, however, sharply with Trotsky on questions of principle in the very statement of the problem.

insisted that, of course, our very literacy, from the very first word which the child, or the illiterate mother at the school for adults, reads, shall be permeated by another spirit, urging the consciousness in another direction." *(Reminiscences of Lenin,* 1933).

Who will say that the Leninist "cultural revolution" permeated by the idea of the creation of a new proletarian, socialist culture, is identical with the "most concrete culturism" of Trotsky frankly opposed to proletarian culture?

We have shown how Eastman has distorted the ideas of Polonsky's article. But it does not follow, from this, that the article in its unadulterated form would give the reader a sufficiently correct and full presentation of Lenin's views on art and culture. The article contains a number of crudely mistaken, partly dictated by polemic motives, theses and thrusts. Among the completely erroneous things in the article is the account Polonsky gives of Lenin's famous essay on "Party Organization and Party Literature." It is worth mentioning that this part of Polonsky's article Eastman translates in full regardless of space, without omitting a word and without the least attempt at abridgement. This is not at all surprising. Polonsky's account of Lenin's article Eastman considers one of his main trumps. No card sharp has ever thrown away a necessary card.

In publishing this part of Polonsky's article Eastman intended to refute all arguments of his opponents at once inasmuch as they would base themselves on the famous article by Lenin. In the introduction he already settles accounts with Joshua Kunitz:

"Kunitz presents Lenin's specific opinion about a specific situation thirty years ago—a situation in which the very meaning of the words was different from what it is now—as a general opinion applicable to the existing situation, ignoring meanwhile Lenin's repeated statements to the contrary about the existing situation."

Barring the jaunty invention regarding "Lenin's repeated statements" presumably refuting the principles laid down in the article "Party Organization and Party Literature," Eastman transmits fairly accurately Polonsky's interpretation of Lenin's article only, with unerring instinct, giving definite form to what Polonsky gives with reservations and in hints. The logic of this, also interpretation, is something like this: Lenin wrote an article on a definite occasion in definite circumstances unlike the present, hence, *(sic!)* there is every reason to assume that in the present circumstances the article loses its significance.

If Mr. Calverton in his fantastical prevarications encourages himself with his idea that the reader, enthralled by his "cultural compulsives" will find it impossible to dig up the truth anyhow, Mr. Eastman, being strictly pragmatic and opposed to all metaphysics modestly relies on the reader being ill informed.

Only because the American reader is so poorly informed on the general situation and development of Soviet literature and criticism is it possible for fakers like Eastman to play up such "trump cards." In Soviet Russia there isn't a first year student who is in the least interested in literature that would not laugh out of court anyone who would now repeat, keeping a serious face, the absurd Polonsky version which is profoundly contradictory to the very spirit of Leninism and was of course in its day, exposed immediately upon its appearance.

Remembering that Eastman puts such stock in his "trumps" we purposely refrained from any reference to this momentous article by Lenin and did not quote it. We wanted to show that it is not a matter of quotations, but

of the *essence* of Leninist doctrine which can be mastered only with the entire complex of the theory and practice of Leninism and which would not change one iota even if by some accident the article "Party Organization and Party Literature," which so irritates the esteemed falsifier *had been lost to us entirely.* [1]

The article, however, *exists and is a veritable treasure house of Leninist thought,* a classic expression of revolutionary proletarian views on the problems of art in the era of the revolution.

What is it that Mr. Eastman dislikes in this article? Although the essay is widely known, we shall quote several fragments all the more willingly since the most essential parts are lacking in Polonsky's article.

Lenin wrote:

"Literature must become Party literature. As opposed to bourgeois custom, as opposed to the bourgeois commercial venal press, as opposed to bourgeois literary careerism and individual 'lordly anarchism' and chasing for profits,—the socialist proletariat must put forward the principle of *Party literature,* develop this principle and realize it in its fullest and most complete form."

Lenin Further ASKS:

"What does this principle of Party literature consist of? Not only in that for the socialist proletariat literature can not be a business for the profit of individual business at all apart from the entire proletarian cause. Down with non-Party writers! Down with literary supermen! Literature must become a part of the proletarian cause as a whole, 'part and parcel' of a single whole, of the entire social mechanism set in motion by the whole conscious vanguard of the entire working class.

..."Every comparison is lame says a German proverb. So does my comparison of literature with the movement of a mechanism. There will be, I imagine, hysterical intellectuals that will raise a howl against such a comparison as abasing, deadening, 'bureaucratizing' the free struggle of ideas, the freedom of criticism, free literary creation, etc., etc. As a matter of fact this would only be an expression of bourgeois intellectual individualism. There is no denying the fact that literature lends itself least of all to mechanical comparisons, to levelling, to the domination of the majority over the minority. There is no denying the fact that in this field there must be the widest freedom for individual initiative, individual bents, free swing for thought and imagination, form and content. There is no gainsaying all this, but it merely proves that the literary side of the proletarian party business cannot be tritely identified with other phases of the proletarian party business. Far be it from us to propose any uniform system or the solution of the problem by a few resolutions—no, there can be no question of schematization in this field. The thing is for our entire Party, for the entire conscious socialist proletariat to realize this new problem, to state it clearly and begin its realization everywhere. . . . We want to create and we shall create a free press—not in the police sense only, but also in the sense of freedom from the domination of capital, freedom from career making; more also free from bourgeois anarchist individualism."

Finally we shall cite Lenin's remarkable answer to the "intellectual supermen," the "touchy defenders of freedom."

"Messrs bourgeois individualists, we must tell you that your talk of absolute freedom is—only hypocrisy. In a society based on the power of money, in a society where masses of workers are paupers and handfuls of rich men are idle there can be no real and actual 'freedom.' Are you free from your bourgeois publisher, Mr. Writer? Of your bourgeois public which demands pornography in novels and pictures, prostitution as a 'supplement' to the 'holy' scenic arts? Absolute freedom is only a bourgeois or anarchist phrase (because, as a world philosophy, anarchism is only the wrong side of bourgeois). It is impossible to live in a society and be free from it. The freedom of the bourgeois writer, artist, actress is only a masked (or hypocritically masked) dependence on the money bag, on being bought and maintained. And we, socialists, expose this hypocrisy, tear down the false signs—not in order to obtain a classless literature or art (this will be possible only in the socialist classless society), but in order to counterpose a really free literature *frankly* wedded to the proletariat against a hypocritically free literature which is in reality dominated by the bourgeoisie. Such a litera-

[1] This article, in a translation from the German appeared in America in the January, 1929 issue of *New Masses.*

ture would be free because not greed or a career, but the idea of socialism and sympathy with the workers will attract new and ever new forces into its ranks. It will be a free literature because it will serve not a blase heroine, not a bored and suffering from over-stoutness 'upper ten thousand,' but millions and tens of millions of workers that are the flower of the country, its strength, its future. It will be a free literature fructifying the last word of mankind's revolutionary thought with experience and the live work of the socialist proletariat creating a constant interaction between the experience of the past (scientific socialism completing the development of socialism from its primitive Utopian forms) and the experience of the present (the present struggle of the worker comrades)."

According to Eastman this is a "specific opinion about a specific situation" which can by no means be lent general significance. It is true that on the background of what Eastman communicated of Lenin's views on art and culture these quotations must seem, to one unacquainted with the Leninist doctrine, as something altogether exceptional, that does not at all follow from the general Leninist conception. We hope that after our amplification the impression will be materially altered.

True, Lenin's article was written *a propos* a very definite occasion, namely, in order to bring in order the Party press, "Bolshevize" it, to consolidate the revolutionary minded writers about the cause of the working class struggle, about the Bolshevist Party. In the essay proper there are many remarks and directions on practical matters relating to organizational Party work (we do not quote them becaue they are brought out in Polonsky's article). But what of it?

How "what of it?" answers Mr. Eastman, diplomatically referring to Polonsky, "Party" means "having to do with Party affairs," Party affairs in 1905 required a definite policy with regard to the Party press and Lenin's essay answered this purpose and pretended to no more, which is confirmed by all of Lenin's writings in not one of which does he indentify art and literature with Party publicism, with inner Party matters.

Let us quote an estimate of Lenin's essay by Lunacharsky shortly before the latter's death, contained in his book *Lenin and Literature.*

"Notwithstanding the fact that more than a quarter of a century has elapsed from the time that essay was written it has not lost an iota of most profound significance. What is more, the fundamental principle of Party literature, serving the cause of the socialist transformation of the world, is just as vital now as the flaming indictment of bourgeois literature, as the ardent description of the future socialist literature to serve millions and tens of millions of workers."

What "principle of Party literature" does Lunacharsky speak of? Did not "Party" in Lenin's conception mean "relating to Party affairs?" "Materialism implies, so to say, Party adherence, obliging one in every evaluation of an event to take, directly and candidly, the point of view of a definite social group," wrote Lenin contrasting materialism to bourgeois objectivity. "Political economy. . .is just as much a *Party* science in modern society. . ." wrote Lenin elsewhere. We return here to the question we already touched upon in analysing Mr. Calverton's theories. The only method of objective cognition of reality, the method of dialectic materialism, which is a method adequate to reality, the "analogy of reality," to use Hegel's expression, is the *class, Party method* of the revolutionary proletariat rebelling against bourgeois domination in the name of mankind. On the *regularity* of this process Lunacharsky writes excellently in the work already cited, summing up Lenin's views.

"Lenin insists that dialectics is inherent in human cognition generally because nature itself lives dialectically. . .Nevertheless man only attains consciousness of the dialectic

property of his thinking so profoundly consistent with the properties of nature itself occasionally, under favorable circumstances. On the contrary, frequently his own class interests of those that guide him completely kills the dialectics alive in the activity of his brain, putting in its place inert metaphysical methods of thinking. It is now, with the triumph of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie that the natural dialectical methods of thinking, distorted by the proprietary social system, is finally also triumphing. This will take place in all fields of knowledge and creation. . ."

Is the concept of "Party" in the narrow sense of this word opposed to the broad social and philosophical significance of the term "Party" in Lenin's essay "Party Organization and Party Literature?" Every honest reader will admit that not only are they not opposed but that they are intimately connected and *interact* upon each other. How could it be otherwise? The Bolshevik Party has always been and is the advance guard of the revolutionary proletariat. The man of the street in 1905 could imagine that the "internal Party affairs" of the Bolshevik Party have no connection with the fate of mankind (mankind does not belong to the Party! The repetition of this narrow minded philistine "philosophy" in 1933 can only be met with disdainful laughter.

And so, Mr. Eastman, in view of his political inexperience and general lack of orientation in Marxist literature proved himself unfamiliar with the contents of the "Party" category in Marx and Lenin's works. Or, perhaps Mr. Eastman knew of this but forgot, was mistaken? We should gladly accept the latter alternative, as we find it embarrassing to accuse of a lack of acquaintance, at least a nominal one, with the abc of Marxism-Leninism a gentleman who has had the temerity to foist upon the American working class a thick volume of bourgeois revisionist banalities entitled *Marx, Lenin and the Science of the Revolution.* The only trouble is, that the errors and failings of the memory of Mr. Eastman are of altogether too regular a nature and threaten the object of Mr. Eastman's attention with great losses as we already had occasion to prove.

We regret that space does not permit us to stop at length and exhaustively on Eastman's false interpretation of the literary development in Soviet Russia. The task of a properly documented treatment of this development requires a series of articles.

We must, however, make a few brief remarks with regard to some "mistakes" of our Mr. Falsifier. Eastman paints a picture something like this: since the organization of the RAPP, a creation of the "Stalinites," whose main purpose was to combat the influence of Trotsky (and hence Lenin), Soviet literature became a barren desert; artistic work has been mercilessly destroyed and only circulars and official hymns to the "bureaucracy" have been encouraged. One nice April day in 1932, at the whim of the "Stalinites," the power of RAPP was destroyed and together with it all theories of proletarian literature and dialectic materialism in literature. Writers received permission to engage in artistic work. However, (here Mr. Eastman's ideas become so steeped in emotion that they lose all logical coherence) nothing was changed in general, because the proclaimed "freedom" proved freedom only to mystics and relics of the old regime like Andrey Biely, the rest remaining in the same old torpor.

As regards Eastman's contention that Soviet literature is a "barren desert" —that requires no refutation; anyone having the least acquaintance with Soviet literature knows that very many exceedingly interesting, diversified and significant works by Soviet writers were published during those years

that call out Mr. Eastman's paroxysm of wrath. That the RAPP was created especially to combat Trotsky's theories on culture is untrue; there was simply no need for this as Trotsky's views never enjoyed any wide distinction. Incidentally to the struggle for a proletarian socialist culture, the RAPP conducted a vigorous struggle against Trotsky's theories, and that was entirely proper since these theories as we already have shown, were of and anti-Marxian, demobilizing nature; in this the RAPP enjoyed the support of all writers and critics that stood on the Leninist platform of proletarian culture.

That the disbanding of the RAPP in April 1932 came as a sudden, unexpected event, due to someone's whim—is a lying invention. The disbanding of the RAPP was preceded by a long period of ardent polemics of the Party and Komsomol press with the leadership of the RAPP and a lengthy series of articles by outstanding critics and writers demanding a change in the policies of the RAPP. The disbanding of the RAPP was only a radical solution of a matured problem. But why was the RAPP disbanded and what does its dissolution mean? It is characteristic that Eastman proves entirely incompetent to deal with this important question and glosses over it with some raillery and by retailing a few bits of scandal.

Culture does not consist of the writings of verse only, even the most excellent verse. Culture in the true sense includes the entire complex of social practice of man. It is impossible to segregate the question of cultural development *per se* from economic development, the level of technical development, etc.—i.e., it is impossible to separate spiritual culture from material culture. Without understanding that the forms of development of spiritual culture depend entirely on the movement of material forces in society, it is impossible to understand the changes in cultural policy, i.e., the forms of regulating the development of spiritual culture in the Soviet Union, where, in the hands of the followers of Marx and Lenin, policy is a conscious process of organizing society's revolutionary forces for the building of the socialist classless society and the struggle against the aftermath of capitalism. Changed economic conditions, and the correspondingly altered balance of class forces in the country during the period of tremendous achievement of socialist construction could not but affect the forms of development of the new culture, particularly, the development of art and literature. The RAPP did not respond to the new requirements of cultural development structurally. The situation was aggravated by the fact that the leadership of the RAPP failing to understand the new problems, tried to entrench itself in its old positions which led to a gradual bureaucratization, to esoteric sectarianism, closed away from life, that is from life itself and the broad circles of writers and critics. This brought about a hypertrophy of many of the faults that were present in the organization but did not bulge out before, such as, for instance, the tendency to command, to administration on the literary front. There was such reliance on this as if one could compel life to turn back its course and adapt itself to the requirements of the RAPP leadership on a mere command. As a result a considerable section of Soviet writers and critics, including many prominent Communist writers and critics, steered clear of the RAPP and conducted a struggle against it which culminated in its disruption in the spring of 1932.

On the question of the basic error in principle on the part of the RAPP, on account of which it remained stagnant and acted as a brake on literary development, we shall quote the excellent remark of the prominent Soviet

critic Helen Uskevitch. These remarks, by the way, touch on the question of proletarian literature which, according to Eastman, has been abolished.

"The mistake of the previous RAPP leadership," writes Uskevitch, "was not that it emphasized the role of proletarian literature and the necessity of battling for its hegemony, but that the leadership did not realize, understand, that the border line separating proletarian from non-proletarian literature is flexible and shifting, that in the period of NEP this border line was located at a different point than during the period of military communism and sabotage of the intelligentsia, while during the reconstruction period, during the period of decisive achievements of socialist construction and the veering about of the intelligentsia this borderline again shifted positions to include broader sections. . . . The mistake of the previous leadership of the RAPP, was, that it tried to rigidly fix an artificial dividing line between proletarian and non-proletarian literature at the same point where this line existed several years back. . . With such an attitude the process of revolutionizing the writers, the process of their turning towards the proletariat could not but fall beyond their field of vision. . .They thus did not take into consideration that as a result of this veering of the intelligentsia in favor of the Soviets a number of features, which were up to then pecular to proletarian literature only, became general to Soviet literature. It was also not taken into account that as a result of this the very framework of proletarian literature expanded to include a host of writers whom socialist construction had helped realize in actual life what they heretofore failed to understand." ("For Concrete Leadership")

These remarks could be substantiated by literary data, but, we repeat, that's a matter for a separate essay.

Mr. Eastman's "logic,"—"If the RAPP was wrong, then it has always been wrong, if it was right (or was considered right) then its disruption was the result of someone's whim," looks exceedingly shabby on the background of this dialectical analysis of the RAPP mistakes.

Mr. Eastman's judgement on the question of the attitude of Marxian philosophy to artistic work in new circumstances is also colored by emotion. The RAPP slogan "a dialectically materialist method of art" is rejected and condemned as an empty scholastic one. Does this, however, mean that Trotsky is right when he asserts that "the methods of art are not the methods of Marxism" or (O, triumph!) that Mr. Eastman himself is right in his voluminous work when he utters the great wisdom that "abandoning the Marxian philosophy will also put the revolution in a true attitude towards art and poetry?" Alas, not at all, Mr. Eastman. Let us, on this question, quote the remark of the well known Soviet critic, Yudin, one of those who fought for a correct policy after the disbanding of the RAPP:

"The words of Engels about naturalists, are also applicable to writers: no matter how the naturalist may try to steer clear of philosophy, no matter how he may try to stick to the ground of pure fact and experimental data, in approaching the facts, in generalizing them he is guided by one or another theoretical consideration, one or another philosophy. The difference is only, that in such cases he is usually guided by the worst possible philosophy, idealist systems and sub-systems. That the Soviet and proletarian writer, if he wants to be an artist-thinker and not just a chronicle writer mustering facts, must seriously master the philosophy of the proletariat, his world philosophy—dialectic materialism, is an indisputable and self evident truth."

No, Mr. Eastman, the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism is a monolitic revolutionary world philosophy embracing all spheres of life and resting on the knowledge of the real laws of development of nature, society and man. You may shout and rail till you are blue in the face, those lovely days are gone when the mountains came to Mahomet—and are you Mahomet?

In conclusion, a few words on the demagogic wail of Mr. Eastman that the new situation in literature gives free swing to writers who are not sufficiently revolutionary for this Jacobin.

Mr. Eastman, wringing his hands in grief, exclaims:

"Freedom for Andry Biely unrepentant preacher of a state mystic salvation, freedom for Andrey Biely to come forward amid the plaudits of a great united front of Soviet writers, exchange embraces with the zealots of the late 'Bolshevik creative line' and declare that he is prepared to socialize his skill."

If all of Mr. Eastman's previous maneuvres called out indignation and protest, this last hypocritical gesture calls out nothing but disgust. Have some shame, Mr. Libeller, or wasn't it you that wrote in your remarkable "work": "The realizations of artists may help the revolution or oppose it, but they may also be as indifferent to it as the wind of a spring morning . . . "? And you have the nerve to accuse Soviet writers of "opportunism" because they "gave Andrey Biely freedom?"

Yes, Andrey Biely, now dead, was, for a long period of his life a mystic and an idealist. But you, Mr. Eastman, are incapable of understanding the complex relations which bound this great artist to the proletarian revolution. You are incapable of understanding why this mystic and idealist, the day after revolution, went to teach young worker poets literary craft! You are incapable of understanding why this great, remarkable, Russian symbolist did not emigrate to the capitalist world where he, together with Joyce or Proust, could have become one of the masters and idols of bourgeois esthetes and an apologist of the unconscious!

You are incapable of understanding this because you are a stranger to that deep, ineradicable hatred borne by this old idealist towards the world of property holders, philistines and exploiters, a hatred which helped him, especially in his later novels and in his memoirs, expose the old world in remarkable satirical images. You are a stranger to this hatred, Mr. Eastman, because you are just a superficial petty bourgeois intellectual flaunting left phrases but firmly allied to the capitalist world. Andrey Biely, that "unrepentant idealist and mystic" has *never* written such verses as you Mr. Eastman did when you decided to be like "a wind of a spring morning."

And you lie, Mr. Eastman, you lie again when you represent the thing as if the new situation in literature abolishes the struggle against inimical class ideology in works of art, even in those of that same Biely. The idealist tendencies in Biely's work called out sharp retorts of Marxian critics during all the years after the revolution (and Biely published not a few books during this time); particularly sharp criticism of Biely's work appeared in the magazine *Na Literaturnom Postu,* central organ of the critics that entered the RAPP.[1] Did this criticism stop after the RAPP was disbanded? Of course not. It is enough to point out the long article in the magazine *Literary Critic* on Biely's last novel *Masks,* (1933) written by a prominent Soviet critic Bolotnikov, editor of the *Literary Gazette.* The Bolshevik *Party* character of Marxian criticism has not been replaced by any compromise agreements whatever, Mr. Eastman, having gone the limit in lying, might invent.

We again look through Mr. Eastman's libellous articles. How much downright lying, how much anti-Soviet insinuation, how much calumnious gossip

[1]Inasmuch as Mr Eastman tries to represent all criticism during the period of RAPP activity as inmical to artistic work, bureaucratic, etc., etc., it may be interesting to note that at the first plenum of the new writers organization where everyone that had anything against RAPP freely gave vent to his feelings, it was Biely that declared that the most interesting articles about his work he read in the magazine *Na Literaturnom Postu.*

overheard somewhere or other! Answering Eastman's disdainful remark thrown at revolutionary writers: "You are artists in uniform," Kunitz very aptly remarked, in his article in the *New Masses:* "Max Eastman too is a writer in uniform; but not in that of the Red Army." We might be more definite: *the esteemed gentleman disports in the uniform of bourgeois counter-revolution.*

A NOTE

It was with regret we heard that Edmund Wilson has joined this company of blundering calumniators and falsifiers. We have followed with close attention the evolution of this talented writer during the past few years. Noted for supreme honesty and courage his intellectual searchings during the first year of the crisis ending in his leaving the *New Republic* and taking up the cudgels for Marxism and the proletarian revolution form a splendid chapter in the history of the revolutionizing of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia in America. However, after a short period, Edmund Wilson began to resort to an ambiguous silence. In his few attempts at applying the Marxian method to concrete analysis of literary events he could not get beyond a left bourgeois "objective sociology" because he emasculated Marxism of "Party" adherence, of class content. Then he was captivated by the Trotsky rhetoric, not seeing under its outer, seemingly effective revolutionary shell, its anti-Marxian, anti-proletarian essence. We should prefer to prove a poor prophet, but believe that an alliance with Messrs Eastman and Calverton will, for Edmund Wilson, be the beginning of the end of his courageous attempt to break with the bourgeois world and fight for a just social order, for Socialism.

But Edmund Wilson can see for himself best with whom to ally himself and what direction to take. There may be others who want to add themselves to the list of editors of the *Modern Monthly?* There may be some that will shed tears over the fact that such well known veterans of Marxism-Leninism, widely known for their merits before the American proletariat and personal revolutionary courage, as Eastman and Calverton are subjected to unmerited reproach and abuse, and that will reproach revolutionary criticism for its unwillingness to "join forces" with the heroes of *Modern Monthly?*

To such revolutionary criticism we will answer in the momentous words of Lenin:

"We are proceeding in a close crowd tightly holding hands along a precipitous and difficult road. On all sides we are surrounded by enemies and we have to procced almost continually under their fire. We have united by free choice for the very purpose of fighting the enemy without making a miss-step into the neighboring mire. . .And there some of us begin to cry: let's go into this mire!—and when they are called to order, they answer: what backward people you are! And aren't you ashamed to deny us the right to call you to a better road! O, yes, gentlemen, you are free not only to call us, but to go yourself wherever you please, even into the mire: we even find that your right place is there in the mire and we are ready to do all we can to help *you* move there. But then you must let go of our hands, do not grasp at us and do not soil the great word freedom, for we are also free to go where we please, free to struggle not only against the mire but also against those that turn towards the mire."

Translated from the Russian by S. D. Kogan

G. Zinoviev

Concerning One Philosophy of Imperialism

About The Hour of Decision, *the Latest Book by Oswald Spengler*

The recently issued book of the much mentioned Oswald Spengler (*The Hour of Decision)* around which the bourgeois press of the world has raised a great shout is undoubtedly the most interesting, the most indicative, the most characteristic of all the recent literary productions of the ideologists of decaying capitalism. This philosophy of imperialism is undoubtedly worthy of detailed consideration.

The ideologists of the contemporary German bourgeoisie in view of their situation possess today the advantage over bourgeois ideologists of other countries in that they frequently put the cardinal questions of the future fate of capitalism more openly, with less deceptions and illusions. Already in 1918, the German bourgeoisie had the opportunity of witnessing quite near at hand, staring them in the face, their social defeat. In the depths of their souls, the majority of the more far seeing ideologists of the German bourgeoisie understand the doom of capitalism and feel that the fascist "era" is only a delay and then the finish. The present bourgeois philosophers of the most powerful imperialist countries figure as follows: if the business of capitalism is in bad shape, it is not the end: in case of need, we always have in reserve fascism and if it will be necessary, "we" will institute a fascist regime. But the more far-seeing bourgeois ideologists think somewhat differently: the business of the capitalist regime is in very bad shape, even there where we have already entered the stage of fascism, they declare. Thus, particularly in those countries, where "still" has been replaced by "already" it has been necessary to seek more open bourgeois ideologists.

Oswald Spengler, in his book indicates that by disposition he stands nearer the latter group of bourgeois ideologists. The famous author of *The Decline of the West* now comes forward as the author of a book about the decline of capitalism in general. He pictures it in darkest colors, throwing fear into the imperialistic bourgeoisie of the entire world, calling upon them for a most "heroic" girding of their strength against the revolutionary proletariat, urging upon them the most "arrogant", the most daring methods—since he sees no others—for the saving of capitalism. To him in his present mental frame there no longer is need for caution, for diplomacy, for compromise. The cup is approaching the lip. History has left capitalism little time for thinking it over, for experimentation.

One must act. One must call the danger by its name. One must throw himself knife in hand, upon the foe, that is upon the working class, the future grave diggers of the bourgeoisie, immediately, while there still remains even a little chance to tear off the enveloping ring of death.

For this, it is necessary, forgetting all compromises to loudly proclaim that the main enemy is the worker. For this it is necessary to seize the worker by the throat more rapidly. The present years, are the deciding years, wails Spengler. And between the lines, may be read: perhaps, already decided! In this frame of mind, this bourgeois ideologist cannot but blab forth that in the present historical period the imperialist bourgeoisie are quivering in the

bottom of their souls. What is in the mind of the Hoovers, Krupps, Baldwins, Morgans, Rothschilds and Deterdings, in Spengler (and the others, in the expression of Lenin "Spenglerians") is on the tongue.

Spengler's book develops two main themes: the situation of capitalism in contemporary Germany, and the situation of contemporary capitalism in general. Far more interesting is the latter theme. In a number of cases the author *volens nolens* has to take the bull by the horns and pose the most fundamental questions of the historical morrow. This philosopher of the bourgeoisie in primitive fear before the awaited unfolding of a series of events blurts out much which more calmy disposed leaders of the imperialist bourgeoisie keep silent about (at least in the press) and puts his finger on some of the sorest wounds of capitalism. The reader will agree with us that such books, do not appear every day, and that this work written by somewhat of an "authority" in bourgeois philosophy, not by a vulgar hawker, but by a writer who is attempting from his class point of view to unravel the most deep-rooted problems of contemporary life, is worthy of deep-fixed attention.

Spengler considers himself a representative of "valiant pessimism." In this role he gives us a series of most valuable confessions concerning the relative strengths of the world revolution and the world capitalist reaction.

About the world economic crisis Spengler writes:

"The economic catastrophe, rhapsodically predicted a hundred years ago (in the *Communist Manifesto)* has occured. The world crisis which has been going on for a number of years and which will continue for many years more, is not in the least taking into consideration all its consequences merely transitory as the whole world seems to think."

The world war is not responsible for the present world crisis. The war only ceased to hold off the crisis explains Spengler.

"History gave us only one more short spell for self-deception: the spell for the preparation of the world war (*i.e.* the war 1914-1918) which demanded a tremendous number of workers, removed from production—soldiers for the standing army, and workers engaged in all the necessary preparations for war. Then came the great war, and together with it —and here we repeat, not the war brought on the crisis, it only served to cease holding it off,—the economic catastrophe of the entire white world."

"We are experiencing a volcanic eruption of unprecedented force. Came the night, the earth trembled, and streams of boiling lava poured over the territory of many powers. And in the face of such a state of affairs, people expect to be rescued by the fire brigade!"

In such tones does Spengler picture the contemporary catastrophe of capitalism. He is opposed to self-deception. He is opposed to flippant optimism, this "valiant pessimist!"

"This cowardly and dishonest optimism regularly once a month announces that the crisis has lessened and that once more 'bright prospects' and 'prosperity' have come to pass,—serves only a pair of speculators to succeed in periodically raising the prices on the stock market. This cowardly and dishonest optimism proclaims that unemployment has ended, as soon as somehow or other a hundred workers have somewhere or other managed to secure work. And this cowardly and dishonest optimism particularly loudly shouts out about an 'accomplished agreement' of peoples every time that the League of Nations, that gang of idlers and vacationists, lolling about on Lake Geneva, passes some kind of a resolution."

Quite frankly spoken! Such frankness, naturally, is not to the liking of other representatives of the "solid" imperialistic bourgeoisie.

Spengler wants to put the question concisely. The bourgeoisie cannot liquidate the present crisis, without settling their account with the working class. The question of liquidation (or even of considerable easing) of the economic crisis is also the question of the struggle of the bourgeoisie against the workers, he states openly.

"No, they wanted this crisis. This crisis in all its existing features is the result of definitely conscious work of the leaders of the proletariat." "This work begins from that moment when the professional revolutionaries of Marx's generation understood that in north-western Europe industry (tied up with coal) is the most important element of economic life."

In this "peculiar" form the "philosopher" Spengler expresses the idea that the "professional revolutionaries of Marx's generation" on the basis of scientific research predicted the present stage of the "growth" of capitalism and its present world economic catastrophe. The leaders of the proletariat "wanted" the crisis! The leaders of the proletariat "brought on" the crisis! Only by breaking the backbone of the revolutionary proletariat have "we" some chance of breaking the crisis—this is what Spengler "teaches" the capitalists.

"In periods such as the present there are two natural parties, two fronts of the class struggle, two original forces, two directions and only two, no matter how they call themselves, or into how many different party organizations they are divided. This is shown in the strengthening of the bolshevizing of the masses in the United States, it is shown in the Russian type of their thinking, in their hopes and desires. Such is one 'party'.

"This is why the Liberal Party of England has disappeared, and why its successor—the Labour Party of England,—today in its present form is also disappearing. This is why the middle parties of Germany disappeared almost without any resistance. The will for the 'middle' is an old man's will for rest at any price. It is an historic resignation."

This is what Spengler "teaches". He hates the theory of the class struggle. He speaks about it foaming at the mouth. At the same time, he sees the only chance for the bourgeoisie to get out of the present crisis in the fierce sharpening of the class struggle,—in the struggle of the capitalist against the workers.

II

The hatred of this philosopher of the decline of capitalism for the working class is truly limitless. He boils, he bubbles over with the hate of the world proletariat. Our class has already caused his class much worry, so that it is even pleasant to read how this philosopher writhes in "frenzied" accusations, in helpless tirades against the international proletariat, as he rabidly foams at the mouth. Permit me on this point to quote in more detail from the writings of our philosopher. Doesn't it really make absorbing reading:

"Since 1848, the word, 'worker' has been surrounded with some sort of a halo of holiness, and people moreover do not think of the meaning and boundaries of the application of that word. What is there in common between a miner, a sailor, a tailor's apprentice, a metal worker, a waiter, a bank clerk, farm hand, a street cleaner?! And yet they unite them all into the one meaning, 'the working class'. In fact, such a class in the economic structure of peoples does not at all exist. Nevertheless, 'the working class' becomes politically active, becomes a militant party which splits apart all the white races into two fronts."

"In circles of 'good society' in Western Europe, people make much of Russian nihilists, Spanish anarchists, and so on. They surround them with sentimentality, arousing a feeling of pure nausea. They cater to them, they honor them in intellectual salons. In Paris and London, and particularly in Switzerland, they not only carefully guarantee them the possibility of existence, but also the possibility of carrying on their nefarious work. The liberal press fills its pages with jeremiads about the difficult conditions in the prisons where these martyrs of liberty are forced to remain. But they have not one word of sympathy for the ordinary soldiers and policemen, who become the victims of the attempts of the enemies of society when they fulfill their sacred duty of defending the order of society. These simple soldiers and policemen are killed and maimed, but the liberal press says not a word."

" 'The worker' appears as the only real person, the 'real' people, in him is the aim and meaning of all history of all politics, of all social needs. That all people work, not

only the workers, that others perform far more important work,—for example, the inventor, the engineer, the organizer,—all this is forgotten. No one dares to point out that the quality of work, its rank, has a particular significance. Work is considered only that which can be expressed in the number of hours, while at the same time 'the worker' is regarded as poor, miserable, deprived of all rights, starved, exploited; on him alone is heaped all care; no one thinks any longer about the peasant, who has to work on land hardly fit for cultivation; no one weeps about the peasant's poor harvest, about his dangers connected with hail and frost; no one worries about how the peasant will sell the products of his labour; no one worries about the unfortunate life of the poor artisans, spread throughout the districts of heavy industry; no one stops to think about the tragedy of the small merchant, fisherman, inventor, doctor, who by the sweat of their brows manage to scrape up a bit of bread in their severe struggle for existence in which thousands perish. All sympathy belongs only to the 'worker'. To him alone is given support, him they insure, him they worry about. More than that, out of him they make a saint, out of him they construct *the idol of the age*. About him the whole world turns. He is the center of all economic life, he is the favorite child of all politics, all exists only for him. The majority of the nation is obliged to serve him. At the dull and heavy peasant, at the lazy official, at the shady actions of merchants, one may laugh and joke; one may also have a good time at the expense of the judge, the officer, the entrepreneur, who always appears as the favorite object of vindictive jokes; only no one dares to laugh at the 'worker'. All the others are non-workers; he alone is occupied in toil; all the others are egoists, only he is free of that vice. The entire population has to burn incense before this idol, all have to get down on their knees before him, among them those who have done much in their lives. His mode of life stands higher than all criticism."

"Never before has the cowardice of parliaments, parties, orators and writers of the whole world been greater than now. They all bend low their knees before 'the people', the mass, the proletariat."

Not so bad, reader!? This philosopher flies "high". But the underlying kernel of his thought he lets out amusingly when he complains about no one caring for the policemen, "fulfilling their sacred duty in the defense of social order." Poor policemen! The real hero of the "aristocratic soul" of this "superman," of this "second Nietzsche" is—the policeman, "fulfilling his sacred duty in the defense of social order," in the defense of private property.

"Property above all is connected with a high culture."

"The property of a man determines his tone, as well as his culture."

"A high culture is inseparable from luxury and wealth."

"He who is against property, is against the family. If the idea of property disappears, all meaning of the family will amount to nothing."

The institution of private property Spengler, generally speaking, prefers to defend under the pseudonym of "culture," but he does not always keep to the general line, and occasionally, tearing himself away, he states directly that nearest of all to his heart *is the policeman defending "the bases of capitalist governmental order."*

Spengler hates the working class with an animal hatred. And he does not conceal it. The growth of the political role of the working class, the growth of its organizations, its influence, its power sweeps this ideologist of capitalism into a white fury.

"Every person engaged in economic activity is dependent for his income on the economic situation; only hired labor is freed of this dependence. It demands for itself wages, based not in the least on an organic connection, but created by a political party."

Workers in the capitalistic prison live, you see, without any worry, "like the children of a rich family." (!) With a serious face, the "philosopher" Spengler writes such nonsense. It is a pity that he did not explain to us whether this refers also to the tens of millions of unemployed workers. In order to reach such conclusions, it is necessary to reach a stage of almost

complete forgetfulness, it is necessary that biological class hatred deaden the brain almost to the point of insensibility.

But listen further:

"During the reign of the trade unions (in Germany) from January 1925 to the beginning of 1929, that is, in the course of four years, the German economy lost yearly as a result of exhorbitant wages, high taxes, and outlay for the socially needy, 18,225 million marks. This constituted a third of the entire national income. In the course of two years, this sum was increased to 20 billions. What meaning in comparison with this has two millions for reparations?"

So that's it! Herr Spengler considers himself a "patriot", 96 proof. Spengler and the "Spenglerians," (together with Hitler and the "Hitlerites") are trying to uphold in "their" country a definite wave of the most fanatic nationalism. Their demagogic agitation against the Versailles Treaty is the most important element of all their agitation in general, of all their domestic and foreign policies. Without such fanatic nationalism there is no German fascism. Well, what then? Herr Spengler driven to forgetfullness by his hatred for "his" workers, lets slip once more a "secret" of the fascist German bourgeoisie. What a trifle is the two billions for reparations to be used by a "foreign" bourgeoisie, compared with the 20 billions "overpaid" in the use of "their own" workers!

We will not turn here to a consideration of the figures themselves, (much exaggerated, of course) nor will we stop here on the question of how true factually is the declaration of "one third of the entire national income" devoted to the "luxury rates" of the workers. We will pass over the ridiculous statement about the recent "dictatorship of the trade unions" in Germany from 1925 to 1930. We will only mention the comparison made by the philosopher Spengler: "to our own workers," it seems, "we" overpaid yearly ten times more than reparations according to the Versailles Treaty cost "us"! The conclusion from this is not difficult to make. "Foreign" capitalists, dictating the Versailles Treaty to us, dealt with "us" badly. But ten times more an enemy are "their own" workers. In general according to this formula, act the German bourgeoisie, the German fascists.

"The insanity of these luxury rates has its beginning from 1900." "The century in the course of which the cult of the worker flourished (1840-1940), is undoubtedly coming to an end. He who still continues to sing of 'the worker' does not understand the spirit of the times. Workers of physical labor will once more return to the background of our nation. The worker will cease to be the favorite, petted child—he will occupy the lowest level in the ranks of the city population."

"Wages of the colored worker will be a magnitude of a different sort and different origin than that of white workers. The rates for the colored will be dictated from above and not the result of definite demands from below."

"The bolshevism of wages" consists in the fact that the rates for colored workers will be raised to the level of the wages of the more organized and conscious levels of the white skinned. Herr Spengler adds to this a slight "correction". He "also" is opposed to such a wide discrepancy between the rates of white and colored workers, and with this aim he suggests the lowering of the rates of white workers to the level of the colored workers but with the prescription that they be "dictated from above."

III

This educated landlord does not confine himself to rolling on the floor in anger and fury because the political role of the working class has not ceased to grow. He seeks a "way out" of the difficult situation of his class. And

he finds the way out incidentally in the attempt to create a conflict of the proletariat with the peasant, of the white worker with the colonial worker.

"We will dismiss the vulgar comparison of the conditions of the workers with the conditions of the millionaires, who of course live much better. We do not speak here of people living in palaces and maintaining a whole retinue of servants. Let us better compare the means of existence which the present day industrial worker possesses, with those of the middle peasant. In 1840, the standard of living of both these classes was approximately the same. But today, the worker works considerably less than the middle peasant. Take the living conditions of the peasant—whether in Pomerania, Yorkshire, or Kansas,—that is, what he eats, how he dresses, how he lives. Compare this with the living conditions of the metal worker in the Ruhr Valley, or in Pennsylvania, and see how much he spends for living and for pleasure! The living conditions of the peasant are so pitiful that the ordinary worker would strike at once were he offered doubling his work, constant responsibility, fear of a bad harvest, indebtedness, difficult sale conditions, and so on, in return for spending such a miserable existence."

"All worker organizations are constructed hostile to the peasant; whether they admit or deny this, makes no difference."

"The high wages of the white workers rest on the miserable wages of the colored workers."

Here you have an ideological basis of contemporary fascism! Set the peasants on the workers and the workers' organizations, convince the peasants that all "workers' organizations are constructed hostile to the peasantry," prudently begin at once a systematic antagonism of the colored worker for his white brothers,—this is one of the most important component parts of fascism. To demagogically speak against "foreign" capitalists to salve the role of their own capitalists. To demagogically exclaim about the injustices done to the peasants, the small artisans, the office workers, in order to conceal the role of their exploiters and blood suckers,—their own capitalists,—and to direct the hate of the small property owner in the wrong direction,—against the workers. To demagogically "pity" the colored worker in order to conceal the underlying role of "their own" and "other" land owners and to direct the dissatisfaction of the less organized workers against the more hardened revolutionary nucleus of the European and American proletariat. To demagogically set the unemployed workers against their employed brothers, suggesting to them "that the rate of unemployment everywhere is in direct proportion to the politically high wages of the employed workers." This is exactly what the imperialist bourgeoisie need to-day, and what is at present so necessary to German fascism.

"The value" of the work of Spengler in this connection consists in that this ideologist of capitalist landlords threw aside his mask, that fearing the inevitable he speaks more openly.

"Take a closer look at the composition of the audience at these meetings, in workers' dens, at demonstrations, mobs, and riots. In one or another measure, they are all degenerates, people in whom instead of an original race you will find only hate and vengeance. In their minds are only vindictive thoughts about their unsuccessful lives. The most important part of the body they consider the tongue. They are the dregs of the big cities, the real plebs, the basic scum of society, venting a definite hate against all the great and noble in this world."

"The noble intelligent face, the slender foot, the beautiful step,—all this, you see, is in contradiction to democracy . . . Love for art, for ancient poetry, even love for the planted garden with its beautiful flowers and rare species of fruit trees, arouses only hate, and it goes so far that they destroy the gardens, make them filthy, littered, and burn them. The main enemy is culture; and this only because the masses cannot understand its creation and cannot inwardly make it a part of them. Creation of culture must be destroyed since, apparently, it does not exist 'for all'."

All this is written for "his own kind," for a bourgeois-fascist audience, for the "fashionable" bourgeois scoundrels, for the "cultured" bourgeois sons,

for the officers of the storm brigades, for the "golden" youth. But these lines are very useful to read to workers in the proletarian movement and to the widest circles of workers. Let the workers know how this "refined" representative of bourgeois-fascist "culture" speaks about them, how this "ideologist" hates the workers and maligns them because the workers want that the creation of culture exist,—oh, horrors,—"for all"!

The revolutionary movement of the working class is the enemy. The growing actions of the revolutionary movement of the working class is the "nightmare," under whose knout such ideologists of the bourgeoisie such as Spengler are wasting away.

What to say for example about the following lines in the "philosophical" work of Spengler:

"'The worker' as before is the idol of the whole world. 'The leader of the workers' is completely armored against any criticism of the bases of his acticity. One may joke about Marxism and curse it at every step, yet nevertheless in our every word we find imbedded this same Marxism. The most arrant enemies of Marxism are in reality themselves subject to it, which they themselves do not notice. Nearly every one of us is in some little corner of his heart a 'socialist' or a 'communist.'"

The leader of the workers is "completely armored from all criticism!" These words were written in fascist Germany, in that same Germany where the minister-president cried out to the working class leader, Comrade George Dimitroff, at the official trial proceedings, "Villain, you will hang," and the high prosecutor equally pleasantly exclaimed, "In one way or another, you will lose your head." Almost everyone of us in "some corner of his heart" is a Marxist! These words were written in fascist Germany,—in the country where the books of Marx are burned on the public squares, where *Capital* has become "illegal"! Nevertheless in the words of this cynic there is nothing about which to be worried. The autor of the quoted lines knows, feels, that the man of the future is the worker, the worker leader, and builder. The author of the above quoted lines "in the corner of his heart" knows that Marxism is ineradicable and unconquerable. It is for this very reason that the author of the above quoted lines so fears the worker, so hates him, gets so excited about the growing political activity of the working class, so painfully lives through the "nightmare" of the constantly strengthened revolutionary working class movement, so stupidly "exposes" the workers, so ridiculously hurls "thunder" (though in fact not thunder "from the clouds") and "lightning" at the working class.

True, it is pleasant to see an irreconcileable and furious class enemy in such a, not too intelligent, role.

IV

In speaking of the revolutionary workers movement, Spengler has in mind only and exclusively the Communists, the Bolsheviks. "Everywhere the social democratic parties, even long before, during the world war, rejected the idea of revolution, retaining only the phrases of revolution in their printed programs," writes Spengler. The leaders of the social democrats are not only not dangerous; they are "his own kind."

In this connection alone, in the center of Spengler's recent book stands the Soviet Union.

"It is time for the 'whites' (Spengler means to say the bourgeoisie) and above all Germany to understand the meaning of the rising, and following the world wars, still unfinished world revolution in order to keep in check the worst of all dangers,—the revolution of the colored skinned."

"The world revolution has not ended. It will continue to the middle of the present century, perhaps to end of the century."

"Already has begun the second and far more dangerous part of that revolution: the rising against the white (Spengler means the capitalist) world in general by all the masses of the colored population of the earth, who more and more are growing to recognize their common interests."

"But about the greatest danger of all we have not as yet spoken: what will happen if one fine day, the class struggle is joined to the race struggle, in order to once and for all finish the white world! It is included in the order of things. Neither of these revolutions will refuse to help the other only because it holds the bearers of the second revolution in contempt. Their common hatred will wipe out their mutual contempt. . . ."

"When in the United States the white proletariat will arise, the negroes of course will be with them, and following them the Indians and Japanese will await their hour. The dark skinned peoples of the French colonies in the face of such positive events will not delay in following suit and in comparison make pale the Paris scenes of 1792 and 1871."

Such being the case, the greatest danger to capitalist civilization according to Spengler, is the USSR.

"Russia trying to join all the colored peoples of the earth in the thought that a joint resistance, a joint struggle is necessary."

"Not Germany, but the West suffered a defeat in the world war, when it lost the respect of the colored world. The tremendous importance of this shift in relative political strengths was first understood in Moscow. In Western Europe it has not been understood to this day. The white peoples playing the role of the governing peoples lost this very position. Where yesterday they commanded, to-day they have to engage in conferences, and to-morrow they will have in the most humble fashion to cajole (the colored races) in order to receive the possibility of talking things over."

"In Russia in 1917," says Spengler, "both revolutions occured together, the white and the colored revolutions." In this statement there is a kernel of truth. In this form the philosopher of the bourgeoisie expresses the thought that the proletarian revolution in Russia in 1917 decided the question of nationalities. And it alone could thoroughly decide this question, i.e. decide in the spirit of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin. Spengler in great horror states how this very fact gave tremendous strength to the proletarian revolution, what mighty authority the first triumphant proletarian revolution was met with among the oppressed ("colored") peoples of the earth, how it became the magnet drawing to itself the hearts of hundreds of millions of the toiling masses, belonging to the "colored" oppressed peoples. "The Christian missionary is suspicious to the negroes because he is the representative of the ruling white races." So that's it, Herr Spengler! The Christian priest is actually "suspicious" to Negroes and other colored peoples because he is the representative and the weapon of the imperialists. The bolshevik to them is not suspicious. He is tomorrow's (and to a great extent the present day) leader and organizer of these hundreds of millions of colored peoples. That is why in the face of this outlook already the lords of Spengler are trembling. That is why they ask themselves with fear: What will be if "the race problem" coincides with the "class problem"?!

"The relations of power throughout the whole world have changed thanks to the strengthening of the United States of America and their finance capital, and thanks to the new forms which the Russian state has taken. Enemies and methods have changed completely. The present war which is being carried on by means of economic power in a short time, we may perhaps, witness as a second world war. It will bring with itself new forms of bolshevik economic attacks in the form of a five year plan."

As concerns the great capitalistic governments:

"About not one of these powers can we say today whether they will exist in their present form, say by the middle of the current century! England may be reduced to one

little island. America may disintegrate. Japan and France, who to-day alone clearly understand what is a powerful army, may be in the hands of the communist masters

And the USSR?

"The future possibilities of Russia are in part absolutely boundless."

. . . that is the only thing that this "valiant pessimist" Spengler considers it important to predict in this matter. Not much to be said, the outlook for the bourgeoisie is none too gay!

V

"The way out" of this condition he sees in fact in only one way: while it is still not too late to organize a war against the Soviet Union offering in this respect "glory and position" above all to Japan. Such in essence is the main thought of all the pompous speech of this "venerable" philosopher.

He cannot hide from his audience that which they in fact know without him: that the population

"of the largest country in the world (the USSR) is completely invulnerable from without," that "space is such a power—politically as well as military,—which at no time in history has it been possible to overcome" that "this is clearly shown in the example of Napoleon." At the same time he tries to prove to his audience that "this power (Russia) is in no condition to carry on a foreign war neither in the East nor in the West even if it be a war by means of propaganda. In order to conduct a foreign war the present system with its western European rationalistic characteristics, the inheritance of the Petersburg literary underground work, is far too artificial."

"Can one place any hope in the Red Army? Is it fit for the conduct of a war? What is the professional and moral quality of the officers staff? What is shown in Moscow of demonstrations—is only a selected portion, composed of hopeful communists, i.e. in fact, the prize guard of the present rulers. From the provinces one always hears news of squelched plots. (!!) Can the railroads, aviation, the war industry bear up under a serious test? One thing is clear that the actions of the Russians in Manchuria and their concluding non-agression pacts on the West testify to their decision to avoid any military trial whatsoever."

Such, you see, is the situation in the Soviet Union. More true, all the Spenglers and Spenglerians, all their imperialist masters, would like such to be the situation in the USSR.

What is the situation in Japan,—this present "favorite" of the world interventionist counter revolutionaries? More correct to say: how should the situation in imperialist Japan to-day agree with the desires of the "instigators" of an anti-Soviet war?

'In contradistinction to this, Japan has won a very powerful position. From the sea, she is almost invincible thanks to the chain of islands with very narrow passages, which give the possibility to Japan with the aid of mine fields, submarines, and airplanes, to guaranty herself the sea and to render it impassable for foreign fleets. The feeble attempts on the part of the bolsheviks to apply military force against the situation created by Japan to-day in Manchuria should unavoidably lead to Japan's seizing Vladivostok, Eastern Mongolia, and most likely, Pekin also. The only serious antidote would be a red revolution in China. But since the time of the lessons of the Kuomintang, all attempts at revolution have suffered setbacks due to the purchase of the generals and entire armies by one or another of the great powers."

All this is very consoling to the instigators of an anti-Soviet war. All this falls pleasantly on the ears of the prophets of imperialist "civilization."

But . . . there is nevertheless a little "but." Even Spengler cannot suppress a few doubts.

"But is Japan to-day as strong as she was during the Russo-Japanese War? At that time there were in power the old proud, venerable and valient ruling ranks of the Samurai—those ranks which were the best in the world from the point of view of 'race'. In present day Japan we hear about radical parties, strikes, bolshevik propaganda, murders of ministers, etc. The question arises, perhaps this noble state has already passed the zenith of its glory, perhaps it is already poisoned by the democratic-Marxist forms of decay now at the very moment when the struggle for the Pacific Ocean is reaching its decisive stage? (If it appears that Japan still possesses her former attacking strength it will mean that, relying on her strategic naval advantages, Japan may take care of any enemy combination. Who will be the serious opponent of Japan? In any case, not Russia."

If it appears! And if it does not appear? This idea Spengler runs away from. Who actually can compete with present day imperialistic Japan!

"In all only some twenty years ago Port Arthur, Bey-Chai-Bey and Kiao-Chao were in the hands of the enemies of Japan and the process of dividing China up into spheres of influence for the Western powers was going on at full speed. To-day England dares not realize her plans for the strengthening of Singapore which she cherished for ten years. . . : The only serious opponent of Japan is America, but is she a sufficiently strong opponent in this particular spot on the sea, notwithstanding the Panama Canal? San Francisco and Hawaii are too far off to serve as bases for a fleet against Japan. It is doubtful if the Phillipines can be of much support, and Japan may win over possible allies in Latin America against New York, and the significance of these allies is not in the least diminished by the fact that little is said about them."

Here you have the "prosaic" affairs which occupy the bourgeois philosophers of to-day, heretofore almost lost in the regions beyond the clouds. You read this "pure philosophy" and on every page you feel that it belongs not so much to a philosophical tract but to a speech written for the ring-leaders of anti-Soviet intervention.

"Who will hold the power over the colored races—Russia or Japan?"—this is how our "philosopher" formulates the dilemma. The entire "cultured" (bourgeois) world must do all in order that this delemma be resolved in favor of imperialist Japan. And there exists only one means for this—war against the USSR.

War against the USSR—this is what will save the German bourgeoisie, and all bourgeois "civilization." "Peace is a continuation of war, only by other means!"—thus Spengler rephrases Klausevitz.

"And what if Russia and America reach an agreement? This is highly impossible," says Spengler, frightening his public. "In comparison with such factors (the possibility of a rapprochement between the USSR and (America), which rightfully determine the fate of the world say for the next decade, the Romance powers have only a provincial significance. This also concerns France, whose capital is becoming all the more simply a city of note, similar to Vienna, or Florence or Athens in the time of ancient Rome." "The resemblance between America and bolshevik Russia is considerably greater than it is accustomed to think." One must hasten because to-day "in contemporary Russia the fields are barren, live stock killed off, so that only a small fraction(!!) remains, and everywhere there reigns hunger on the Asiatic style."

Only such a war can save capitalism—this is the meaning "of all philosophy."

In America also the condition of capitalism is far from secure.

"We will not speak here about the negroes, but we must not forget that in the course of the last twenty years very few Germans, Englishmen, and Scandinavians emigrated to America, nor must we forget the 15 million Poles, Russians, Czechs, Balkan Slavs, Eastern Jews, Greeks, the inhabitants of the Near East, Spaniards and Italians. The greatest part of these 15 millions have not been assimilated among the Americans, and form a foreign thinking, foreign feeling, but very fertile proletarian nucleus, the ideological center of

which is Chicago. True, as yet there is no Communist Party in America(!!)—such a party for electoral purposes did not exist even in Tsarist Russia. In America, just as in Tsarist Russia, there does exist to-day a powerful secret movement. . . . A part of these old organizations are on the type of the Italian camorra, the Spanish guerillas, the Russian nihilists before 1917, and the Russian tchekists after 1917.

"Only a few years ago, whoever spoke about a revolution in America would be considered insane, while to-day such a thought is within the order of the day. What will the masses of unemployed do,—I repeat for the most part, not hundred percent Americans,—when the sources of their existence will have definitely disappeared and government aid no longer be available?"

"The cowardice of the bourgeoisie must end." "It would be untrue to say that the revolution only threatens us. No, it is already celebrating its triumph, it has already conquered."

Here is why the only way out is—Caesarism!

"Caesarism of the future epoch will not persuade, it will conquer with arms."

"Final Caesarism is the dictatorship. But not a dictatorship of a party, but a dictatorship of one man against all parties, first of all against his own party."

. . . "Only now are they beginning to cast lots as to who will triumph over the world. This game will be played to a finish between strong men. It can hardly be that the German will be among the last?"

The reader sees before us the very "ideology" of Hitlerism. The same "word" as Hitler, Spengler somewhat shouts differently.

VI

Nevertheless in Spengler there are some disagreements with German fascism.

The Hour of Decision, was written, according to the statements of the author, and two thirds published before Hitler's coming to power. Only in the last third of his work could Spengler introduce several "refinements" after the seizing of power by the German fascists.

Spengler had certain "theoretical" differences with the German fascists. He did not agree with the "theoretical" posing of the question of a pure race.

"We must speak not about a pure race, but about a strong race," since "in the course of thousands of years all peoples and races have intermingled" and "the most warlike, that is, the healthiest generation, possessing the brightest future, has always willingly included in its ranks foreign tribes." But what particularly displeases him in fascism is "their playing with the masses." "Fascism is only a transition. It arose in the middle of the city masses as a mass party, carrying on noisy agitation and clinging to mass speeches. The tendencies of workers' socialism are not unknown to them. But as long as the dictatorship sees its 'social' honor in that it exists for the sake of the workers, as long as its defenders shout on the streets and strive for popularity, it will be transitional. Caesarism of the future will struggle only for power, only for the state, and against all kinds of parties."

"The ask is as follows: that in order to rule the world, one must be a good horseman who with the help of his spurs drives the horse on."

In brief, Spengler would like to accomplish the same results (power to the fascist dictators, set up by finance capital) without adopting some of their means (playing with the "rabble") which fascism is adopting and has been forced to adopt.

Fascist leaders rationally (from the point of view of imperialist reaction) answer him that before giving spurs to the horse, one must mount and sit on his back; before adopting "Caesarist methods" one must seize the power in the country. They rationally claim that different from all other bourgeois parties, the fascists must for some time shout out against the "slavery of the usurers," must adopt social and national demagogy, must soothe the

"lowly," because finance capital at a definite stage of its growth has to do so. Fascism in the "aristocratic" Spenglerian edition, is not suitable for this stage.

Now, when fascism is already in power and will in no sense reject "Caesarism" and "spurs," these "differences" to a considerable measure have disappeared. Notwithstanding, certain fascists to-day think it necessary to keep aloof from Spengler. They do not like that very side of his which "pleases" us: frankness. In the well known Berlin "Political Academy" of the fascists, the Hitlerite professor Alfred Beimler, before important circles, read a speech on Spengler's book from this very angle. Spengler, he says, "regards the worker as isolated, and not as a member of the nation, not as a link in the capitalist organization of bourgeois society." (we quote from the *Folkische Beobachter* of Dec, 1. 1933.) Concerning "spurs" and "Caesarism" it is not necessary to teach the fascists. But their "speciality" they want to see in playing with the "socially lowly," in the toying with the workers as members of "the national whole". They put before themselves a "higher" task: "to turn the working class to the lap of the nation," to demoralize the working class movement from within. They manage not only with the help of "spurs" but also with the axe. Today, there does not pass a single day that the fascists do not cut off the heads of the revolutionary workers. At the same time, the too open slave owning language of the Spenglers, the German bourgeoisie and the more far seeing part of the world bourgeoisie in general consider none too comfortable.

A group of Russian "Spenglerites" (Beryadev, Frank Stepun, and others) in a collection dedicated to Spengler's *Decline of the West,* ten years ago wrote that this book is "to the highest degree symptomatic and unusual". To an even greater degree is the latest book of Spengler, *The Hour of Decision"* symptomatic. This book is an underlying symptom, an original sign of the times.

A symptom of what? Of all the developing uneasiness, of all the increasing tremors, which shake the brains of the "thinkers" of imperialism in the present and by all means the last stage of capitalism. "The decline" of capitalism is being drawn before their eyes with ever greater and greater inevitability, filling their souls with the darkerst pessimism, and forcing them to resort to sensational-adventurist "Superman" leaps, which will only hasten the fall of capitalism, and "help" them break their own necks in a historically short time.

In the center of "intimate" condemnations of those who pretend to be the "brains" of imperialism, undoubtedly stands the Soviet Union of to-day. The enemy is not completely blind. He cannot help but see how assuredly, with what gigantic steps the Soviet Union is moving ahead. Those truly magnificent achievements which the Soviet Union has accomplished in the last few years both in domestic and foreign politics, has increased our strength tenfold. Slightly more than ten years ago, Lenin said that from the Russia of the NEP period will grow Socialist Russia. This is being unfolded before our eyes, before the eyes of the entire world, unfolding itself under the leadership of the great party of Bolsheviks, under the leadership of Stalin,— the great continuer of the work of Lenin.

Your "legions" are our legions of tomorrow, Herr Spengler! You yourself are forced to recognize that your army is becoming less and less dependable, that you are living through the "end of general military servitude." You yourself Herr Spengler, were forced to write that the "ruling people

(the ruling imperialists) have lost consciousness of the fact that their rule is something self-evident, and that in the face of this they do not notice that they are losing that feeling." You yourself were not able to hide your trembling before the inevitable union of all workers of colonial and semi-colonial countries around the Soviet Union. You yourself declared that the world revolutionary working class movement is Bolshevism.

We are passing through the years which decide, you say. Yes, in that you are right. Get ready to write, if only you will be able to, your next book, which you will be forced to entitle, *The Hour Which Has Decided.* And they will decide on a world wide scale in the interests of our rising class, and not in the interests of your dying one; in the interests of legions of toilers, and not in the interest of legions of "a new Caesar"; in the interests of Bolshevism, and not in the interests of Caesarism; in the interests of the great banner of Lenin and Stalin, which is being raised ever higher and higher over all the earth.

Translated from the Russian by Albert Lewis

Paul Nizan

Andre Gide Comes to Revolution

An analysis of the development of a noted French Writer

Oscar Wilde once said to André Gide:

"I don't like your lips, they are as straight as those of someone who has never told a lie . . ."

But the critics and the public, usually so ready to believe any fiction which critics invent, have taken for duplicity, what in Gide's case was merely reticence. Throughout his whole life Gide's reticence was only his unwillingness to assent to falsehoods along with everyone else. His reticence was never more than merely the effect of the prudence of a man who wants above everything to assert only those ideas and only those judgments which he is perfectly sure are not false.

"The danger," he said thirty-six years ago, "lies in expressing opinions and ideas prematurely . . ."

Thirty years later, returning from Africa, and denouncing the colonial scandals, he uttered the following words, so much misunderstood by impatient spirits:

"I wouldn't want to be misconstrued and to have this particular question of a local abuse submerged in a speculative controversy of principles and theories . . ."

But the men of the bourgeoisie are so used to accepting disguised falsehoods for sincerity that they regarded this quest for safeguards as deception. They made out of Gide the very embodiment of the sophist, the man of the ruse, when actually this reticence, this prudence, and this semblance of hidden secrets, are merely the scruples of a man who doesn't want to tell lies.

Whenever Gide does something in all sincerity, someone has turned up to denounce the "maneuvre," for example in the scandal investigation,—while Gide's only maneuvre has consisted precisely in not contemplating any maneuvre, in simply publishing the truth which he felt honor bound to adhere to, irrespective of whether this truth was a truth about himself or about an object apart from his person, whether it was *Si le grain ne meurt*, or *Voyage au Congo*. Gide has been accused of lying simply because he seemed to change from one truth to another and because the individual and localised truths which his succeeding books contain become mutually contradictory when taken all to-gether. Nothing is more reprehensible to the bourgeoisie than a man who changes. Of Conrad's heroes Gide remarked that they faithfully conform to the strange belief, "in line with the rule of Boileau, that heroes must remain from one end to the other of a drama or a novel, just what they were at the outset." How can one require of a man that he be simple and of a single conviction in a society which is made up only of contradictions and of struggles? It is barely possible then, that Gide himself has known from the start that a fuller truth would be encountered at the end of the contradictions, a truth which would rise above them.

To free man, was the task which Gide undertook. But he did not see the problem immediately in all its extent and all its implications. He approached

it, as he does every problem, with a certain slant, with certain "narrowness." Likewise he didn't even know at first that there were other angles of approach and that this problem would one day be an appropriate subject for generalisation, would demand generalisation. Gide first occupied himself with freeing the man within his own self, to reaffirm this man in all his fullness. It needed years for him to realise that this was nothing. The solitary individual of bourgeois society begins, it he reflects, by the most famous path of bourgeois thought, the very path of Descartes, looking for the answer to the question: "What am I?" Gide posed the question in a slightly different form, which was destined to lead him to an answer other than the Cartesian "I am a thing that thinks." Gide asks himself: "What am I capable of?" He questions himself less on the substance of his being than on its capacities. Enough trouble has not been taken in clarifying a definition of Gide's "Genius is the spirit of resource." To free man is to give adequate scope to "human resource."

For a young man born among the bourgeoisie, who had seen nothing of life, to occupy himself with man, could hardly mean more than to occupy himself with himself. Gide was born a member of the big bourgeoisie, he was a man of family, one of those bourgeois families of substance, of importance, and with a religion the most oppressive, the most depressing of all religions: Protestantism. In order rightly to know his own capabilities, and discover to what purpose the resources he found within himself might be applied, he had first to free himself of these dead weights. This scrapping of the world built round his shoulders needed both strength and time. Though he wanted to free himself, the very chains of his youth still retained certain charms. A man who has both leisure and means, who has no worries but "spiritual" cares, who is ignorant of the sorrows of work, of hunger, can find attraction in imaginary sorrows, can occupy his leisure in battling with angels. Time did not hurry Gide. Meditations on sin, the agonies of the flesh, long retained their worth in his eyes, his liberation was not accomplished either with violence or with force. Gide went slowly. Today he knows it and can write:

"Evolution of my thought? . . Without a preliminary Christian conception, or misconception, there couldn't have been an evolution. What rendered it so slow and difficult was my attachment to something I couldn't free myself from without regrets."

This subservience in spite of himself to something he should have detested pervades such a recital as *La Porte Etroite,* bitter history of needless sacrifice. He loved the very things from which he most wanted to free himself. A bourgeois childhood sinks strong roots. These Christian rancors, this fear of sin possessed him for a long time—these rancors of which he now says: ". . . quite as vain, quite as fantastic, quite as monstrous to me then as they seem to me now."

The Orient helped him to free himself. At first he had tried art and poetry. The youth of Gide, contemporary of Mallarmé, of Louys, of Wilde, took place in an age when many people took their art seriously. Gide followed suit. There are many elements imposed from without in the *Cahiers d'André Walter,* in the *Voyage d'Urien.* Gide's great adventure was a journey to Africa, which revealed to him his own true self, which clarified him as to his own "resource." He returned transformed. Paris and literature seemed to him stifling. He wrote *Paludes,* he was then twenty-five. He took the road which was to make André Gide out of him. *Si le grain ne meurt,* tells in moving terms the story of these years, from which his real birth must be

counted. He started on a life of patient inquiry—external events impinged little on writers at that time, the might of the bourgeoisie seemed unshakeable to its sons, who had no doubts about it, who fought against the bourgeoisie without ever dreaming of conquering. They adjusted themselves to its existence and planned their lives as though it were eternal. There was no contact between the refractory intellectuals and the revolutionary workers. There two worlds revolved in distant orbits which scarely ever converged. Real ills seemed legendary to these writers; their fight with the bourgeoisie never left the realm of culture. It was, after all, art, which opposed itself to sordid commercialism, the artist versus the Philistine.

A man like Gide can follow the solution of his personal problems peacefully; for nothing comes violently to divert him from himself. The conflict which opposes him to his class unroles itself within the very limits of his class. So far he is only battling with the highest structures, the spiritual embellishments of his class. He isn't even conscious of the fact that they have a foundation, a core. He doesn't fight it from without. Book follows book. Fame comes bit by bit, and enemies. In this way does a life take shape; it it peaceful. Gide is already aware of a certain order of truths, from which he will not, however, draw the consequences until later. He sees that present society (above all he is struck by the family and religion) stifles man. Man is not made for sacrifice, for mutilation, for sin. Man is fashioned to be happy. That question posed from the beginning: what am I capable of? receives its first answer: I am capable of being happy. This happiness is entirely individual; it is the happiness of the solitary man. It is entirely earthly, no supernatural force either helps or hinders it. This happiness is entirely an affair between the individual and the earth. Gide transposes some teachings of paganism. The ancient world, Greece, seemed to him to impart some cardinal lessons. He is freed, to himself he proclaims this necessity of, this justification for happiness as a victory over the force of religion. He will launch against his Catholic critics, against Massis or Mauriac, a phrase which attests his victory:

"What they reproach me for is my not being sorrowful."

He is freed from his Christian conflicts. He is a man assured of his place on the earth. *Nourritures terrestres, Si le grain ne meurt,* announce this deliverance.

Gide has nevertheless remained more protestant than he suspects. He feels tied to certain duties. He thinks that his life, his "success," brings with it certain object lessons. He feels himself "obligated." In the *Pages de Journal* he writes:

"I have often experienced how much an obligation, a task to accomplish helps me to attain happiness . . ."

He feels himself under a responsibility, bound to communicate his discoveries, he becomes passionately interested in Jesus, because he too is an evangelist; he has glad news to proclaim, which he must give men the benefit of. He feels therefore called on to speak, he who "is only happy when silent." He will explain happiness to men: why they are crushed by society, the family and religion. To bring himself before men, describe his experiences, offer for their emulation a certain example of a seeker after truth, following the paths of duty. But it is merely the case of a model quest, not of model results. Everyone must solve the question of his individual happiness in terms of his own resource. There is no recipe. And Gide writes in *Nourritures Terrestres:*

"And when you shall have read me, throw away the book . . ."

For Gide it was not simply a question of having solved his own problem, there was also the matter of solving at the same time the new problem, that of how to convey to man in a way that would command attention, his object lesson on "What am I?" The question of the number and quality of those who might be capable of using his experience to good advantage probably worried him less than the manner of imparting it. Here it was still necessary to guard against false statements, just as before it had been necessary to avoid self-deception in order to learn what man is capable of. It was important to present his example with complete accuracy; only accuracy could render this experience transmissible. This need for precision brought Gide the writer face to face with a series of questions about the technique of transmission, the problem of "sincerity," and lastly of writing itself. It was essential that the style should not disguise the man but should reveal him exactly as he had discovered himself. His honesty towards himself must become honesty towards the reader whom he wished to persuade. Gide always refused to use disguises; he eyed them as Christian.

"To pretend to be something one is not isn't entirely a modern imposture; to be specific, it is the characteristic imposture of Christianity."

This objective portrayal of himself, Gide wished to realise with as little vagueness as possible, sticking to facts as nearly as he could. He once said of himself that he was "first a naturalist and then an artist . ." And it is accordingly that he portrays himself and his idea of man,—naturally. The naturalist and the anti-Christian merge: for the Christian "pretends" to be other than he is, the Christian simulates. The false observer pretends that reality is other than it is. Speaking of a memorandum of Tremblay on fresh-water squids, Gide quotes these lines:

"In substance he (Réamur) applies himself to seeing things as they actually are in reality and not as he would like to see them. (I should have preferred 'as he wished that they might be') But it doesn't matter: that is perfect."

Just as his first journey to Africa had revealed to him certain aspects of his makeup which at first were shocking and later were accepted, and served as a basis for "happiness," so does his art bring to others the revelation of these aspects. *Si le grain ne meurt* is the book of this double revelation, of this two dimensional truth. Accuracy in the portrayal of himself requires much of the writer. All amplification, all abridgement is excluded, all effusion. A certain emphatic and facile tone of sincerity is only fiction: In this fashion did Rousseau and Chateaubriand do their lying. Gide avoids pathetic confessions. He has no love for romanticism: the romanticist "pretends" to be something which he isn't. One must therefore be restrained; this is the price of accuracy. Gide is fond of "classic" periods because they demand much of the writer and force him to exert himself. Gide writes:

"Art is always the result of exertion." And further:

"Honesty in art interests me only when it has been attained with difficulty. Only the tritest souls can easily achieve an honest expression of their personality . . ."

In *Nouveaux Pretextes,* Gide poses the question of the public. He poses it in a speech delivered at the Court of Weimar in 1903. This place and this date take on all their significance when one compares them to the day in 1933 and the hall in Paris where Gide delivered before two thousand workers his first political speech against fascism. But the discoveries of Gide, this "happiness" which consists in only being one's self, in not wanting, as Hegel puts it, to be anything other than one's own self, at first seemed to

him transmissible only to a few of the "elite." The writer does not publicly put himself on record except at a function of a group of privileged souls. Undoubtedly Gide long persuaded himself that the right to happiness belonged only to certain "personalities," who were after all, only those men who like himself were free from social necessities. The individualism which he exhalted was that of these "personalities." The thought of Gide long retained a certain transposition of the philosophy of Nietzsche. He was removed from the crowd, he distrusted it for what he guessed about it, he was dubious about it because it reduces all to a level. Here he condemns both the crowd and the Roman church for the same tendency, they oppress and level to the same extent. He writes:

"To sympathise with the crowd is to destroy . . ." And later:

"Catholicism has, as the reason for its existence and as its end the norm and unification, Protestantism on the contrary aims at individualization and in achieving diversity. Catholicism is therefore cast in its proper role when it plays the part of the oppressor."

What should he do for men other than those who were capable of understanding him? For men other than the people of Weimar for example? The limit for Gide, the frontier which balked him, which it took him years to cross, was in the end simply this myth of the elite invented by the bourgeoisie for the flattery of its sons. All this personal and genuine revolt of Gide against religion, the family,—"his" religion, "his" family, was a revolt reserved for certain chosen men, and the victory which might follow this revolt,—happines—was exclusively their victory. It was the lot of very few to become "personalities." The drama of the struggle and of the liberation, the victory of the individual over the bourgeois forces, all this adventure, profoundly significant for Gide who had lived through it, had very slight social consequences; it in no way imperiled the powers of oppression, which remained intact over the vast majority of human beings. Gide barely suspected it then, barely devined that this liberation, this achievement of the man in the person of the artist, only ridiculed the "philistine," but left the bourgeois unshaken. As yet Gide bothered himself only with men who might be his counterparts or equals. This resemblance required that they possess the same bourgeois advantages which Gide had himself enjoyed. The desired result could only be within bourgeois society and nowhere else. Undoubtedly there was a certain opposition between the reality of bourgeois individualism, of the bourgeois atom which had fallen back on itself, and the individualism of Gide, which preached the importance of expansion, which required of man that he at last come out himself,—but Gide was struck in a dead end; the dead of the individual who thinks he has completely realised himself in bourgeois society, but who in reality has not gotten beyond the viewpoint of bourgeois atomism, because he has not solved, nor yet even posed the problem of real contact with others, the problems of social relations.

Undoubtedly, one soon encounters, in Gide's case, some notes which announce a change in course, which today seem clear to those who know where Gide has arrived, but which were then nothing more, in their isolation, than foreshadowings, than platonic indices. Speaking of a critic who had misunderstood him, Gide wrote:

"Where I wrote crowd, he thought he read people, I think, nevertheless, that as between a crowd of the people and a crowd of bourgeoisie, my sympathy would go rather to the former . . ."

Apropos of the Normandy farmers he observes:

"A country where man does not strive solely to enrich and inebriate himself will always seem a beautiful country to me, a country which I envy . . ."

These beginnings of distinctions date from 1899.

The paths which have led Gide to the position which he occupies today among the writers of the World Revolution are by no means simple. The course of his thoughts and the pressure of events have had their effect, the history of the solitary individual has become entangled with world history.

A time came when Gide had reached the solitary state from which bourgeois society denied him any escape. Literary creation presupposes a certain amount of human interchange. The writer can never want his thoughts to go unheeded, to be of no importance to his fellow men. The theory of art for art's sake is only a blind acknowledgement of the artists isolation in bourgeois society. The writer needs some social prop. Gide is aware of this, since he says:

"Every artist can accomplish very little by himself . . ."

"What gives a society an art, is the need which this society has for art . . ."

But bourgeois society has no need of an art which is other than fashioning of things in conformity with patterns or to fit the propaganda needs of its domination. Gide finds himself caught in a contradiction, between a doctrine of "personalities" which assumed the permanence of the basic features of this society and a natural desire for expansion and companionship, to which it opposed all its barriers. He wants an individual happiness which assumes the development of real personalities, but religion and society prohibit it:

"Our modern society, our Christian morality, do all they can to hamper them. (personalities)"

Rarely do occasional strokes of good fortune allow a few men to arrive at happiness. But this happiness is not complete, since it does not bring with it wider intercourse between man and man. The writer wants to write for the elite, but decaying bourgeois society produces only sham elites. Gide demands a real elite, real individuals, whose individualism shall rule out the very solitude to which bourgeois society condemns one:

"Last evening, passed an hour at M/drano. Deeply discouraged by the ectasies of joy of the public before performance of clowns very badly played and as stupid as can be imagined. Furthermore flatly disgusting. Nothing to do, nothing to hope for from such a public. And nothing more saddening for some than to be (ah! in spite of one's self) part of an elite and hence unable to allow one's self to commune with the vast majority of humanity . . ."

A man for whom the paramount object is Man, for whom happiness involves communication with others would not know how to adjust himself to living among men who are crushed and humiliated, among men in misery. How is it possible to defend the values of happiness, of individualism in a society which excludes them? How can one be content with dreaming of this happiness, of this ideal individual? It is their actual presence which Gide demands, their living relationships and not their sterile image. It is even impossible for one to be happy when one is the only one so situated. This type of happiness was described by Gide at the beginning, on the morrow of his own victories over his family; his religion evaporated. How can one live in the midst of human sorrows even when one has merely this one scruple,

this "fear of denying happiness to others . . ." when one discovers the anathema "of a happiness which is obtained at the cost of others . . ."

Events have educated Gide. The imperialist war. Then that great experience of the Tchad, and the Congo. Gide's second journey to Africa is no less important than the first trip which revealed him to himself. The discovery of the terrible forms which bourgeois society assumes in the colonies, the indignation which possesed Gide and would not allow him to keep silent about what he had seen, had extremely far-reaching effects. No longer did capitalism manifest itself to him simply through oppression by family and religion; no longer was it simply through spiritual oppression, but through physical oppression, through hunger, through sickness, through death. Economic exploitation, the very root of all bourgeois oppression was starkly revealed in all the marvelously undisguised and scandalous extremes which it goes to in the colonies. Behind his old enemies, religion, the family, Gide perceived more formidable foes; he discovered the heaviest game of capitalism: imperialism. The importance for Gide of this experience is beyond a doubt; at last he experienced the feeling that he could no longer "be an accomplice." At first cautiously, without taking political sides. Then more and more clearly even to the point of making and proclaiming his choice of partisanship. It was impossible any more simply and peacefully to meditate on happiness, to regret that the state of men prevents the communion which would make happiness complete, impossible to number oneself any longer among those authors who adjust themselves to what is. Everything, in the end, served to distract him from literature. He wrote those moving *Pages de Journal* which earned him the hatred of the very people who had either glorified or simply tolerated him.

"The Spanish Revolution, the struggle of the Vatican with Fascism, the financial agony of Germany, and above everything the extraordinary effort of Russia . . . all this distracts me imperiously from literature . . ."

"Even the resolve to be happy seemed to me then almost impious. Too few people as yet can expect any happiness. I recalled how saddened Madame M. was on her return from her trip in Asia, after having traversed such vast countries where happiness, she said, is unknown.

"Certain people might have a soft enough heart, who lack imagination to the point of not being able to picture to themselves, even faintly, the sufferings of those who aren't right next to them . . . They think: 'what do you want me to do?' and in the assurance of their powerlessness to help, they find an excuse for rest. As for feeling themselves, in their own estimation, to a small extent the collaborators of the executioners that never occurs to them.

"Not that I feel myself any more 'human' today than I did in the time when no traces of these preoccupations could be found in my work. It was simply that I took pains to disallow their entry, deeming that they had no connection with art. But how do I dare still talk of art today. Rather would I cease to write than to silence that which above all fills my heart."

The crisis that convulses capitalism, the events which every day brings, compel one today, to this choice between the executioners and their victims. Impossible for a man like Gide to live personally at peace with the executioners without feeling himself to be their ally, their accomplice. Before, in the times when capitalism seemed stable anl enthroned as if for an eternity, the games of art and political indifference did not seem monstrous. "Misfortunes" did not reach Gide, absorbed in his meditations, his inquiries, his construction of happiness. He could write, from on high:

"Politics are disastrous because of this: the side one serves imprisons one; one cannot leave it without giving the appearance of desertion . . . I have a horror of taking sides. Imagine, for instance: a career takes on definite shape between the ages of twenty to thirty and one has been able to think about it from the ages of fifteen to twenty. What's to be done about it, for its a fatal decision. Action alone teaches you, one only learns through doing. An initial act claims you; it educates, but it is also a commitment. If one has found it disagreable one will nevertheless be forced to repreat it. Your copartisans are not to your liking? You feel out of place with them? No matter, it is necessary to continue; others are already counting on you; to change would be to betray them."

This squeamishness is dissipated. The choice is made. It was necessary to make it in order for Gide to remain faithful to the values which he had defended originally. It is impossible to keep on good terms with this decaying world, this world of "Counterfeiters," he cites the words of Fay.

"There is no fun in playing in a world where everybody cheats."

Everything that Gide had wanted, that idea of the "happy" man which he has defended from the beginning, he at length realises that these things are not possible except on condition of "freeling oneself from these frightful forces", capitalism, imperialism, the army, the church.

"It was no longer a question of restoring ruins, but of building anew on ground which should first be tested. Everything must be resubmitted to question and doubt; nothing must be accepted which is not genuine and purged of all mysticism. By mysticism I mean all forms of blind belief."

There was a period when the idea of perfection intrigued him, and simply, quite unconcernedly he noted that perfection excludes the idea of progress. But in the end it is the idea of progress which wins him and which he proclaims. In the French intellectual world, it takes courage today to pronounce the pleasant word progress; the thinkers have misgivings about the future, they are versed in fear of the morrow. The future seems to promise them nothing but ruin. Progress, which had captured the spokesmen of the bourgeoisie in the times when that class ascended toward the future with the hope of an endless development, progress now seemed accomplished to them and taboo. This forward movement, this development of history and of man, their class is no longer capable of. They do not imagine that another is yet able to assume the task, for the coming into the picture of this other class will spell their defeat and oblivion. They want to discredit the very idea of progress, they judge it simple minded and, as they put it "elementary." But already some farsighted representatives of this class prefer the future, to their own class. They prefer life with a new class to death with the bourgeoisie. Thus Gide, without fearing the attacks and jibes of the bourgeoisie, resumes on his own account, together with the revolutionaries, the progress which bourgeois intelligence has repudiated. He remembers Barres, he again repeats that dialogue with Barres which had played a big part in forming his ideas. He reads with profound irritation the *Journal* of Barres, shot through and through with the immobility of the past and of death; he writes:

"Coming in contact with these pages, I understand better to what an extent the idea of progress took hold of me, possesses me . . ."

Progress is not an impossible promise, a nature myth incapable of realisation. Progress is simply a promise which capitalism does not keep and which can be kept only if capitalism is overthrown.

A condition of humanity is possible in which the chances of happiness, the chances of the individual are something more than a hope or a dream. But it is first necessary to destroy. It is necessary to live in conformity to the rules of this "age where everything must be resubmitted to question . . ."

The U.S.S.R. provides Gide with this model of a world which affords all the human possibilities which he has spent his life clarifying and desiring, of a world where men can wish for something other than that which "has been chosen for them." It is for him the land where "man raises himself up." Gide has always placed a high value on heroism. He detests in bourgeois society a society which only permits "bankruptcies of heroism." Against Barrès he has written:

"Barrès, Barrès! You don't understand that what we need is not comfort, (and I mean comfort of the spirit) but heroism . . ."

"The young people, trained by the new morale, apply themselves with enthusiasm, eager to aid the progress which they visualise. It is a duty to be fulfilled to which they joyfully submit. Ah! how I understand their happiness!"

And still:

"What Communism offers us today is a method of struggling against war which requires of us more courage and allows for more heroism than war itself . . . New titles of nobility, new forms of saintliness, of devotion, of heroism, and not, as you put it, new comforts are what we need . . ."

The choice of Gide has been made between the universe of treachery and oppression and the new world made of loyalty and liberation. How could he have refused to give himself to this world where for the first time in history, in "a state without religion, a society without fetters," the development of the complete man is possible, is required? This development is at the very center of the revolution, this development has always been at the center of the revolution. The main utterances of Stalin at the XVII Congress of the C.P.S.U., the severe rules brought forward by Kaganovich re-echo the teachings of German philosophy on the development of the human personality. How could the writer of individualism have refused to enter into this huge movement? Bourgeois individualism was simply a falling back on oneself, the rumination of the solitary atom, which private property, bourgeois law and bourgeois politics create. The individualism which Gide dreamed of consisted entirely of expansion, of development, creative freedom, the richness of relations with other men, with the universe. It is the very individualism of the new men of the Soviet Union.

A catholic critic wrote about Gide:

"There is a declaration of love quite according to rule, and which carries with it its own justification, or at any rate its explanation. A man who considers religion and the family as the two worst enemies of progress is evidently predestined to sympathise with this monstrosity which is called bolshevism . . ."

And it is true that Gide could not follow to the end, to their ultimate consequences his criticisms of the bourgeois family, of capitalist religion without arriving at the radical position which indicts their very foundations. He could not assert the idea of man which he had conceived, without wanting to destroy the barriers, the real chains which rendered this man incapable of realisation. Its a long road which Gide has travelled to its very end. A man who bases his entire art on the honesty of the spirit and who believes that one's thoughts engage in real struggles cannot stop the development of his

thought. Such a cessation would condemn him in his own eyes. Such a cessation would be a failure, a break which would utterly destroy him.

All contradictions having been crossed and left behind, Gide takes cognisance of the final contradiction which opposes him to the whole of capitalism, of the contradiction which compels him to come out of himself and enter the struggle. The young restless writer of the poems of *André Walter* recognises his true face in the man of today, who struggles and who speaks of the Revolution. The distinguished lecturer of the Court of Weimar gives way to the man who goes to see Goebbels in Berlin to tell him, in the name of the French worker:

"You shall free Dimitrov . . ."

Translated from the French by E. Stevens

Yuri Olesha

Notes of a Writer

My first visit to the theatre was to see *Captain Grant's Children*. It was a magic world where I saw a volcano in eruption and a condor carrying off a boy. To this day I remember the words spoken during the last scene amid the ice floes:

"Here there is no captain and no sailors. Here everyone is equal before God."

It was all very wonderful. I was six years old. The colors in the theatre were purple and gold. My first impression when I entered the theatre was the roar of many voices. The theatre roared. The fans twinkled.

Up to now when I see a fan unfolding it seems to pronounce the word, theat-trr. Now, by the way, I seldom see a fan. Perhaps only in the theatre and on the stage, at that. And so the fans twinkle. But in my notebook there is the entry: the noise of the unfolding fan sounds like "theat-trr." This entry refers to the impressions accumulated in childhood. What can one do with this entry? It seems this unquestionably excellent detail is doomed to lie unused in any of my writings. If the writer sees no fans, such a detail is entirely lost to him as it makes no impression on him.

Communism explained the world to me. Up to then I lived in an unexpected world. I received impressions principally of form. Not long ago I wanted to compare a steam shovel to a giraffe. It looks something like a giraffe. But this is only a visual impression, an impression of form. And such a metaphor—a steam shovel as a giraffe—is a metaphor which speaks for the fact that the poet sees only the form and not the content. The steam shovel should be compared to a hand. It is altogether different from a giraffe—it is the extension of human hands (and with the giraffe—it is an extended neck). The steam shovel has the function of a hand reaching out. It is one of hands of the giant called labor.

Or take a bridge, for instance.

Without understanding it a bridge may be compared to a brow. And in fact a bridge at a distance looks like a brow.

But a bridge is not a brow but a leap.

A fantastically enlarged human leap.

The same giant leaps across a stream.

About form and content. Last year I suffered from a heart neurosis. The disease struck most viciously at night. Night. I am asleep. The condition of illness has already begun, but I am still asleep. And I dream that I am visiting a commission store..

The same dream always.

I am looking over some little boxes.

I want to open one, but it proves impossible because the cover proves to be painted on, a false cover. It is impossible to open the box. Then a door appears before me. I approach it. It proves also painted on, as scenery. I awake.

Thus the irregular functioning of the heart evokes a dream in which the thing whose main property is that of being opened proves impossible of being opened and this feature is stressed. The heart activity is disturbed, there is an alteration of the blood circulation, life vacillates—and instead of the essence of the thing I see only its painted form. I cannot get to the heart of it. I am ill. The true world, where form and content are joined, does not accept me. I see only form.

Thus the heart, disturbed in its regularity gives rise to a harrowing hallucination, deceit. I am myself void of a heart, and so get, instead of the full significance of a thing, only its form. It would seem my physiology, the physiology of a man, is so organized that a diseased alteration in it is immediately connected with the impossibility of cutting a thing through its essence, through its heart, and so it would seem that nature itself has imbued man with dialectics.

Fans are disappearing.

Haughtiness is also disappearing. And really that shade of human behavior which was called haughtiness is not observable here.

Speaking of the theatre I immediately recall haughtiness.

The haughtiness of the little girls in the boxes.

Rich children. I do not remember, but I think they wore coral beads on their throats. At any rate the association arises simultaneously: rich children, coral beads. They had fine throats and when the little girl, in talking, raised her face to the older person the throat moved in rings. Perhaps the impression of corals arises out of the fact that these little girls whose lives were so valuable had the doctors often examine their throats. The color of the throat. I remember in childhood the terrible word Stamoglu. It is a Greek name. The entire Stamoglu family was murdered one night by robbers admitted into the house by the servant girl. Perhaps the memory of corals is a recollection of something I did not really see but imagine? The recollection of what shocked the

imagination, the image of wax girls with their throats cut?

Such murders were frequent those years.

Stamoglu. That is why that world into which I was born was called, the world of private property. My father was a poor government official. But we had a home. There was a parlor with satin covered chairs and a picture in a gold frame. A vat of fire wood stood on the balcony. We were bourgeois and the terrible word Stamoglu hovered above us. In the evening sitting around the table at tea the talk was about murders. At night I would wake up. Silence. The door. I look at its glistening handle. Someone is on the other side of the door. Now it is going to open. Stamoglu.

Now no one shows any haughtiness.

It was a detail of the fundamental. What was fundamental was—power of man over man.

There was the haughtiness of the rich.

There was the haughtiness of superiors.

There was the haughtiness of the famous.

I was in Gorlovka recently. At the palace of culture there was a meeting of Moscow writers and Gorlovka miners.

We were sitting on the stage. Suddenly I noticed a man enter a box and his external appearance seemed remarkable to me. He was very tall. There is a height that is immediately associated with an image of a man crossing a threshold over which there is a beam which makes the man stoop.

"The shoulders are somewhat narrow," I thought, "but when a tall man has somewhat narrow shoulders it means terrible strength of arms." (I once noticed that the tiger has no shoulders. When it moves the blades rub against each other moving circularly like plates.)

The man wore a black overcoat and a black velvet cap. The box was at the very stage and when he sat down I could see the seemingly slightly made up eyes characteristic of the coal miner. All coal miners' eyes are somehow terribly beaming. That is because with long work in the coal mine the coal dust tatoos itself into the skin about the eyes.

The man was Nikita Isotov.

In other words a famous man had appeared among the public in the theatre. A man that was known all over the country. Nikita Isotov. A resounding name.

How did he conduct himself?

He could have sat down in some special way. Put his shoulder forward and placed his hand on the box barrier. He, at any rate, should have turned his face towards the public sideways because it is very important to him to know how the public regarded his appearance and at the same time he shouldn't like to show it is important to him.

That is the way Nikita Isotov would have conducted himself if there were haughtiness in our society.

Actually, however, this man known to the entire country had hardly sat down when his attention was entirely concentrated on the stage. He had hardly raised his head from stooping at the door beam and had time to sit down, when he was already looking at the stage. Sitting down he did not change the direction of his look, but sort of drew a chair under him from out of the darkness without looking back for it.

We were sitting on the stage at a long table covered with red cloth. The secretary of the Gorlovka city committee of the Party, Comrade Furer, made the introductory remarks.

From below and side Nikita Isotov was looking at us. He was all rapt attention. (He resembled Jack London). He conducted himself this way: he now took off, now put on his cap, mechanically. When he put it on he would adjust it by pulling at the visor. That is the motion by which the Russian usually expresses what in words would sound like, "that's great!"

Then Nikita Isotov was elected to the presidium.

He came up on the stage and sat down The chair broke under him. It was a chair from some play, small, with gilt legs. The public laughed. There was some applause.

I remember the haughtiness of the military. In my childhood I frequently heard stories about officers striking down civilians with their swords. Civilian. Military man. Disdain of the civilian. Now it seems funny. Even the word civilian has been forgotten

The appearance of a military officer in society would always turn out fateful. That was a terrible individualized figure.

Now upon seeing a Red Army commander I think: here is one of the most modest, polite and serious citizens of the country. It is funny, but a thought rises—how well brought up this man is. It is funny because this old fashioned expression sounds absurd when applied to a Red Army commander. The more so if the commander is from the peasantry. What bringing up!

But it is so. Actually, this peasant surprises one by the mildness of his manners. (Another old fashioned word!),

Where does it come from?

Where did he learn to be polite and balanced, this most correct person in the line at the telegraph office?

They are very handsome these commanders. Their long military capotes swing about like bells. The clean looking leather straps squeak a little. Sometimes there is a sort of naive importance in their carriage and the expression of their faces. Then they look like young scientists.

The commanders love opera.

When in the presence of a commander one has a peculiar complicated feeling. I was on a street car. Alongside stood a commander. Someone had blown an eye hole in the ice on the frozen window. Lamp-posts flew by the car. Golden rings came from them on the eye hole. I looked out. The sky was blue with the small winter moon set in it. The commander also looked out. And I had a pleasant sensation from the fact that we both did the same thing. I thought he was the much better man Somehow better. I do not know how. He carried ice skates. He held terrible cold with a glint in his hands. Very keenly, so that there was a rasping feeling in my throat, the greatness of the Soviet idea became clear to me. I looked at this clear eyed young face and thought: there is the last soldier on earth.

Recently I took part in a literary evening at the Leather Institute. We were sitting on the stage. I afterwards found out I was sitting with the background of a tremendous blackboard behind me. The literary evening took place at one of the institute's auditoriums. The blackboard was evidently cleaned just before the affair started. The traces of figures still stood out on it. In the channel below a piece of chalk lay.

The public sat in an amphitheater.

I noticed some Mongolian faces. There is such an expression: to fix one's eyes upon something. These young people, two girls and a lad, fixed their eyes upon us. The eyes were narrow ones, pulled away towards the temples. (We have learned to appreciate the beauty of the Mongolian face. When we realized it was the face of a brother, we looked at it with love. The brother proved beautiful).

My turn comes.

I begin to read a story.

Reading, I listen: are they listening? Yes. Perfect silence. I am reading a complicated thing. Do they all understand? This I do not know. But I can hear the tenseness of their attention. So they all want to understand me.

A thought arises: silence in the auditorium is the greatest sign of approval. I know that at the end I shall be rewarded by applause. But that is the reward all over the world. Even when busy eating at little tables in restaurants. And it seems to me that the true reward is this very silence during the rendering.

Such reward there is only here.

It is important to me to hear this silence applause is not always a sign of approval. Silence tells me that hundreds of minds follow the developing thought that was born in my mind. I know then that my thought is respected.

I experience that high pleasure that one experiences when explaining something to one who does not know. This is akin to the pleasure of showing a visiting friend the city which is famous and where you have been lucky enough to have lived for several years.

Respect for another's thought. That is one of the main features of our youth. When I was a student I observed among my comrades the following: fear of science. There were sciences the hate for which was transmitted from generation to generation. Such a science was Latin. It was hated. I do not know—are there any hated sciences now? There was such an attitude not only to Latin. There was generally, among the mass of students, no eagerness to master any knowledge. The main thing was: to get a diploma. That was a prize. And it was altogether immaterial how it was gotten. And then the parents would in all seriousness advise the young man to take jurisprudence because it is "easy."

I dream of the gymnasium to this very day. I see the school yard filled with acacia trees. The trees are in blossom and the petals fall on the window sill, on the page, on the bend in the elbow. But I have long graduated from there, this I know in my dream, I look out of the window and see the yard empty and know that no one will come, there is no use waiting.

I know this past was hideous, but then, looking back into it I see myself young. I remember the freshness. This recollection gives way with difficulty to the knowledge that the past in which I first learned about the world was horrible. When those that are now young lads will, in the future, look back at their past, that is our days, their recollections will be perfectly transparent. They will recollect both their own and the world's freshness. Their youth that will shine again in their memories will not have to bend the knee and beg forgiveness of their reason: I was so good when the world was so bad.

We had to learn Latin in a lying world. It was a world of lies. We tried, studied—that was the way to avoid unsatisfactory marks—and outside the windows there was the mean, lying world.,

No one explained this world to us, its falsehood. There were proud youngsters among us. The teachers painted them to us in such a light that they seemed to us bad, presuming, doomed to perish "under a fence." We were so swayed that the entire class made these lads their butt. There was a peculiar friendship then between us and the teachers. And we were elated with ourselves that we were so obedient.

Such shooting rolled over my gymnasium years, of such terrible significance, that

thinking about it now I know that sooner or later I shall have to write a story about it.

That was students shooting teachers.

It was the lads we had ridiculed breaking away from the world of lies.

I can not forgive myself that I did not then understand that the student shooting at his teacher was purer, truer, more lofty than all of us. But at home our mothers told us they were criminals. Even mother, even that beautiful figure—mother!—was distorted in that terrible world of lies.

We did not see the heart of things. Only Communist thought made this possible. We lived in a distorted world.

Marx says:

"Money turns loyalty into disloyalty; love into hate, virtue into evil, wickedness into virtue, the servant into a master, unreason into reason and reason into unreason.

"Since money as an existing and active conception of value mix and exchange all things, they—the general mixing, exchange, that is they—are a distorted world in which all natural and human values are displaced."

If the world based on money relations was a distorted world, our world, where there is no money dependence among people, is a real world.

The figure of the real man will first straighten out in the classless society. A straightening out of human values will take place. Remarkable people stand at the threshold of this society already.

The Communist told us writers—beware the word man. There is no man generally, there is a representative of a class. The world is divided not into good and bad, but into exploited and exploiters. The truth of this they demonstrated concretely. But they have themselves remained men in all their actions—in the purest and highest meaning of this word!

And I understand that Communism is the most human idea.

D. Mirsky

Dos Passos in Two Soviet Productions

Fortune Heights *on the Moscow Stage*

The fact that Dos Passos' *Fortune Heights* is running simultaneously at two Moscow theatres may seem paradoxical. The shortcomings of the play are perfectly evident. A dramatic work with such a weak and helpless conclusion is a rare thing on the stage. This very serious defect is however, balanced by the clear dramatic action in the first two acts and the wealth of characters. The characters of *Fortune Heights* are an exceptionally brilliant galaxy of types of bourgeois and petty bourgeois America, types distinctly individual and yet essentially typical. It must be confessed that, in this respect, Dos Passos stands above the young Soviet dramaturgy. The young Soviet dramatist issues from a ready, correct and verified scheme of life. He takes generalized types and builds his characters on the basis of the generalized conception of the given social category. The nature of the character is determined entirely by the place this character occupies in the contemporary class struggle. There is nothing individual about him except a few purely external traits. Needless to say that such a method is in direct contradiction of all materialism, actually the smuggling in of those very methods that Marx ridiculed so viciously in his *German Ideology* speaking of "speculative criticism." For instance, in Afinogenov's *Fear* the character Clara is constructed entirely about the "idea of an old Bolshevik," the character, Bordin—on the "idea of a specialist of the old school, alien but honest," the character of Natalka—on the "idea of Pioneers." It was the complete liberation from such methods that must have attracted both Tairov and Diki to *Fortune Heights*. Dos Passos creates concretely individualized characters and discovers in them the typical. The dialectics of his individualization distinguish his work from that of our current dramaturgy and bring him closer to Gorky, our greatest dramatist and the only one that goes from reality to generalization and not from the general to the thus unattainable reality. Noting the superiority of Dos Passos over the great majority of our dramatists in *this respect,* it must however be also noted that the class *limitedness* of his point of view *limits* his capacity for generalization from the individual. He sees the typical only from the point of view of the present of which he remains a passive (though by no means "disinterested") spectator. And, if the individual characters of his play suffer little from this limitedness, the failure of the play as a dramatic whole is inseparably bound up with its political inadequacy, with the inability to see in the present the shoots of the future.

It is only natural that neither Tairov nor Diki could rest satisfied with the end Dos Passos gave to his play. When we publish the work of a foreign writer we do not correct it or adapt it to our requirements; a theatrical performance is, however, an act creative to such an extent that the Soviet producer can by no means submit to the all too apparent limitations of a non-proletarian dramatist, cannot but correct him. From the confused rather than contradictory motifs with which Dos Passos embarrassed the end of his play both Moscow producers dropped two: the scene with the banker Stead who, after staging a bankruptcy and suicide, decides to go away to unknown parts. Stead's philosophising about liberty and so on sounds so bad that nothing can evidently be made out of this scene. They also both cut out the last scene—a pessimistic defeatist ending which sounds like "thus it has always been, thus it will always be," the scene where the lot of ruined and dispossessed Owen is bought by a couple "resembling Owen and his wife like two drops of water." But, having cut out these scenes, neither Tairov nor Diki could manage the ending. Diki's lack of success in this respect is accidental and can be changed, but Tairov's lack of success there is a consequence of the entire character of his production.

The Tairov Version

Tairov has turned the play into a succession of comedy sketches connected by identity of characters and scenery. *Fortune Heights* in the Kamerny theatre is thickly set with emphasized American atmosphere in decorations, costumes, acting, but the social content of the play is, to a great extent, cut out of it. The scenery and the acting, which is of an almost circus style, attract all the attention. The sequence of dramatic action is obscured by cuts in the text so that one that has not read the play can hardly follow it. In a number of cases the socially more important places in the text have been cut and, since the subject of the play is purely social, these places are also

dramatically important. Thus, in the second act (before the raid of the robbers on Owen's cash register), everything that shows Owen's business condition at the moment, his debts and the money owed him, is cut out. But Owen's debts is the backbone of the subject of the play. The reason why there happens to be so much ready cash in the register is also left out, and this weakens the "tragic" character of his loss. In the last act Tairov retains only the motif of the forcible dispossession of Owen for debt and the motif of the farmers gathered to prevent this dispossession. The hunger march is almost completely cut out. This could be justified inasmuch as Dos Passos shows very weakly the proletariat growing militant and the Communist leadership. In the text, however, the conversation of the hunger marchers prepare for Owen's final decision to take to the road with his wife and child to "look for the United States." Owen's exclamation, "We shall find the United States," with which Tairov ends the play is perfectly intelligible in the book (regardless of its doubtful political value): "the true United States," genuine labor democracy, where there will be no banks and dispossessions—is a slogan which is understood by the mass of the petty bourgeoisie and draws it towards the revolutionary movement. But with Tairov Owen's exclamation behind the curtain is entirely unintelligible and only increases the spectator's perplexity on account of the disconnectedness of the dramatic thought of the play.

Diki's Version

Diki's approach is the reverse of Tairov. Diki cut the text much less. He accepted its lengthiness and retained the social and dramatic clarity of the action. The American atmosphere is not overemphasized. There is no stylization—"American style." And this is undoubtedly correct: correct scenically because there is nothing more intolerable than the specificially Russian intonations of some of the actresses in the Kamerny theatre, and all the more correct ideologically, because such an approach concentrates attention not on the external features of American culture but on the essentials of the social processes reflected in the play. Such an approach broadens the social significance of the play because the process of ruin of the petty bourgeois as they are declassed which Dos Passos shows in its American form is not an exclusively American process but one that is taking place in one form or another over the entire capitalist world. The bourgeoisie and its toadies are particularly generalized without any "American style" whatever. And it is not at all bad that the prostitute and adventuress Fay resembles a Parisian manequin from among the Russian White emigres more than an American "jane."

Scene from the Diki production of Dos Passos' play in Moscow

Diki's production of *Fortune Heights* is entitled a "social tragedy," and, although it is doubtful whether this sub-title is exactly apt, those elements of social tragedy which the play does have Diki has been successful in bringing out to the full. Not only the main theme (the perishing of the illusions of the petty property owner, Owen) but also the secondary themes (like that of the "student-robbers," Buck and Babe, going as far as prison, drugs and the electric chair) are brought out with great precision. The scene just before the raid of the robbers, which Tairov has left out, where Owen returns with the money he has collected from his debtor and which he must turn over to his creditor the very next day, is magnificently rendered. The acquisitive nature of the petty property owner Owen is particularly well done when he is shown deaf and blind to everything about him as he counts the money he got. Genuine tragic power is achieved in places. The monologue of the robber and drug-fiend Babe before the bar which he is going to rob in a moment makes a profound impression.

It is too bad Diki's production is spoiled by a somewhat naive love of "pretty" effects. The middle of the stage is occupied by a stairway leading from the house to the terrace and from there to the proscenium. This stairway altogether too frequently becomes the scene of plastic groupings entirely out of joint with the realistic style of the play. The solemn march of Owen and his wife

Chicago Workers' Theatre

Presents

FORTUNE HEIGHTS

A Play in Three Acts

By JOHN DOS PASSOS

FRIDAY, SATURDAY and SUNDAY, MARCH 30, 31, APRIL

WOMAN'S CLUB THEATRE

Act I. A Filling Station in a small town in the Middle West— 1929
Act II. Same—Two years later
Act III Same—One year later

CAST

Morry Norton ..... Louis Gilbert
Owen Hunter ..... Manford Ettinger
Hitch-hiker ..... Lawrence Kelley
Ike Auerbach ..... Barrie Burns
Ellery Jones ..... Joseph Vivien
Fay Entrekin ..... May Kanevsky
Florence Hunter ..... Winifred Wahl
Mrs. Stead ..... Gertrude Gunter
Rena Meakin ..... Ann Bleckman
Old Man Meakin ..... Louis Haims
Mrs Meakin ..... Martha Koster
Buck ..... Chester Thorne
Bobe ..... George Sewell
Sheriff White ..... Lawrence Kelley
Deputy ..... William Kruck
Reporter ..... Brady Vaughn
Dick ..... Norman Bassett
Joe ..... Lewis Fallstone
Matheson ..... Samuel Bleckman
Tall Farmhand ..... Isaac Appleman
Short Farmhand ..... Jack Spencer
Agent ..... Maurice Bailen
Well Dressed Man ..... Brady Vaughn
Farmers—Workers—Deputies ..... A. Buckingham
S. Bollack, M. Ryan, F. Berg, J. Paskovich, V. Ventura, D. Schroeder, S. Carlberg.

TECHNICAL STAFF

Director ..... Harold M. Mann
Production Manager ..... Lewis Fallstone
Business Manager ..... Frank McGurk
Stage Manager ..... Carl Berg
Asst. Stage Manager ..... Blanche Stern
Scenic Department ..... Henry Simon, Mitchell Siporin, Si Gorson

Program for the Chicago Workers' Theatre production of Dos Passos' Fortune Heights, *shown a few weeks before the Moscow productions*

and child down this stairway at the end of the play is particularly in poor taste. Even worse—the scene where Rena (brilliantly acted by Yanukova) bids Morrie goodbye—with Morrie folding her hands cross-wise over her chest and she remains standing in this pose of a Christian martyr for almost a full minute. Diki is in love with these "martyr" poses generally: twice (Rena at the end of act 1 and Florence at Owen's feet in the second act) the scene of a woman killed by suffering, prone in stage center, is repeated. The same thing, with a little variation, is repeated by Florence at the end of the play. All this does not by any means heighten the tragic effect of the play.

The Ending

Another big shortcoming of Diki's production is the ending. Unlike Tairov, Diki prominently features the hunger march. The political conversation of a dubious nature, it is true, Diki cuts out, but he shows the march itself very effectively; the marchers go by group after group and the businesslike prose of the proleatrian revolution is felt in this persistent unvarnished movement. This in fact is the finale and this march is felt to be the end of the play. Unfortunately Diki did not have the courage to down curtain on this. Such an ending would of course be a sharp infringement on the "will of the author," but it would make a good ending and it would introduce that trend into the limited conception of a non-proletarian revolutionary dramatist which the Soviet producer can and should introduce. Diki did not do this. The marchers passed—and Owen with his wife and child solemnly go down the stairway to end, as in the Tairov version, with the same unfortunate "We shall find the United States." This slogan, it is true, is in Diki's version intelligible, but that only makes its inadequacy as a dramatic denoument all the more apparent. The seriousness, uncritical, unironical, with which Diki renders this scene does not in any way correspond to the author's intentions. And like from the Tairov version the spectator goes away perplexed, not because he did not understand what took place but because such an ending, canonizing an impossibly absurd point of view, neutralizes the entire play.

Regardless of the inapt conclusion, however, Diki's production is a great success, unquestionably more interesting and more correct than the Tairov version. The latter cannot be denied a high degree of theatrical culture. But this culture could in this case give only a number of successful but separate comedy effects (the tramp in the elegant overcoat in the last act is particularly well done). But this culture proved incapable of giving the social and dramatic reading of Dos Passos' play which Diki's production gave.

CHRONICLE

GERMANY

Berlin Theatre 1933-1934

Berlin a few years ago one of the liveliest theatre cities in the world is now after one year of Nationalist Socialist *kulturpolitik* a picture of theatrical stagnation and decay. It would of course be absurd to ascribe this condition entirely to the fascist regime. As in all other fields, the capitalist crisis only completed the ruin which the National Socialists covered with their pall. Now no grass grows there. With the continuous decline in the standard of living of the German people and in view of the threatening bankruptcy of the State all the fundamental economic premises for the well-being of the German disappear. The fascist methods of terrorizing opinion and the profoundly false essence of the National Socialist ideology that conflicts in every one of its words with life's realities condemn the theatre to spiritual and artistic barrenness and alienate from it the remaining interest of the public. The theatrical culture of liberal philistinism (Reinhardt, Jessner, Karl Heinz Martin) is dead. Its decease dates back to before Hitler's ascention to power due to financial anemia. The pompous, sensational review and operetta industry (Rotters, Charell) went down in the flames of bankruptcy. The first ranks of German actors (Bassermann, Forster, Korner, Pallenberg, Elizabeth Bergner, Fritzi Massary, Carola Neher, Tilla Durieux, Moissi, Granach, Deutsch) are exiled into foreign lands, some as victims of the race laws, some as voluntary exiles from cultural barbarism. The young proletarian revolutionary theatre (Piscator, Brecht, Wangenheim) was smashed, its representatives persecuted, driven out of the country or condemned to inactivity. What was left? What has free sway? What is now called German theatre?

We must differentiate between the State and the private theatres. The number of private theatres is now exceedingly small. None has a permanent cast, a definite character, a definite public or an assured existence. Except some very modest efforts at the beginning of the season (*Robinson Shall Not Die* by Forster-Burggraf at the Comedy House, an Ibsen performance at the theatre in Stresemannstrasse) none of them has any literay value or ambition. Any such ambition would be paid for immediately by financial insolvency. None makes any special effort to give to its repertoire any Nationalist Socialist or political character generally. The only plays performed at private theatres and played up by the government press as new in the National Socialist sense, as national unity plays, were *Endless Street* by Graff (Plaza theatre) and *Wreck About Jolanthe*, by Hinrich (Lessing theatre) and these are in reality successful plays of the pre-National Socialist era. *Endless Street* is a war play and had been produced at the State theatre under Bruning to the unanimous enthusiasm of all bourgeois parties from National Socialist to Social Democrats. *Wreck About Jolanthe* is a harmless theatrically effective comedy of the old—*burgerlich* peasant life which had a run of three hundred performances in Berlin and which Hitler himself saw with great pleasure three times. This play had its first German performance as far back as the Schleicher administration. The rest of the private theatres put on exclusively entertaining plays, operettas, and song and dance plays by foreign authors, military comedies of the pre-war period (*War and Peace*) and older sentimental trash (*Old Heidelberg*). The offerings are on the level of the much abused Rotters, only on a smaller scale more rough edged and without the charm of sensation which Rotters knew how to lend to his performances. What was successful was mostly Jewish-laden (Falkenstein, Wallburg, Hansen, Lucie Mannheim, Grete Mosheim and Hans Albers, who recently married a Jewess demonstratively, were the producers). Such performances were tolerated although they were heartily boycotted as the S.A. and S.S. members were forbidden to attend these performances in uniform. However, after Goebbels' new campaign which enforced the aryan laws also in the private theatres the policy was sharply changed. Recently the Deutsche Theatre which had been closed for a long time was reopened under the direction of Achaz, the son of Duisberg, the general manager of the I.G.—Farben with the considerable moral and material assistance of National Socialist organizations. For the sake of prestige they want to maintain this old private theatre, rich in traditions, as the only one of high pretensions. Whether this will be possible it is still early to judge. The repertoire up to now—a literary play *Rembrandt at Court* and a performance of Hebbel's *Nibelungen* hold forth no great promise. The "Volksbuhne" (People's Theatre) which is really no private theatre and as it has been com-

pletely absorbed in the "Deutsche Buhne" (German Theatre) union organizationally has also so far refrained from any experiments and has stuck to a repertoire of standard conventional plays principally classics.

The Goering-Goebbels Competition

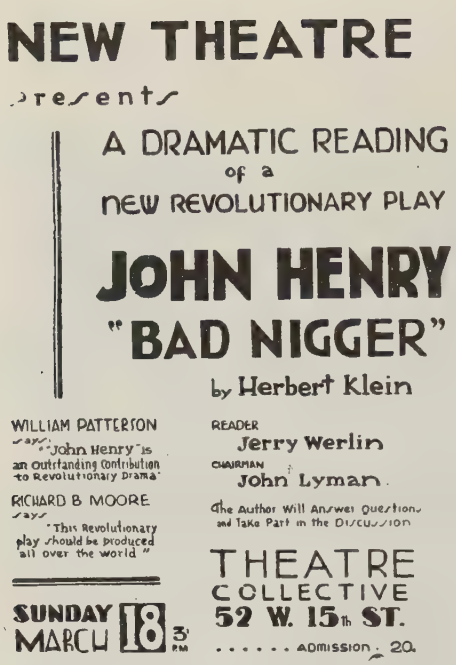
"The S.A. must march on the streets and not on the stage or the screen"—declared the State minister of propaganda, Goebbels. In fact no S.A. man or any other living political figure has appeared on the stage. The State or government theatres have also refrained from any inner or outer aggresiveness politically. They are much more an arena for the fierce competition of the two ministers, Goebbels and Goering. Goering, the Prussian Premier and Minister of the Interior has developed a flare for art and has nominated himself the patron saint of all Prussian theatres. In Berlin he has under his jurisdiction the government theatre "Prussian Theatre for Youth" and the State Opera House. Goebbels also supervises three other theatres—the "Theatre of the People," the "The Theatre of the High Schools" which after bearing this name for ten years has demonstratively changed its name into that of "Theatre of Youth" after the establishment of Goering's "Prussian Theatre of Youth," and the previous city opera which now since Berlin is unable to stand the financial strain has been turned into a State opera. The newly opened "Prussian Theatre of Youth" is by no means a creative effort of the Prussian government to give actors work as was so pompously declared. Its performances are given at the Schiller theatre which had already for many years previously been conducted as a State theatre. It was closed under Bruning. In the fall of 1933 it was reopened. It collapsed after only a few weeks on account of the miserable performances and the complete absence of any public. The money thus left available was utilized to found the "Prussian Theatre of Youth." The loud-mouthed chairman of the Prussian Theatre Union, Herr Hinkel, promised further financial assistance and with great propagandistic flourish the theatre was established as "A present of the Leader to youth." In February the funds provided by the State treasury were exhausted. Herr Hinkel failed to keep his financial promises, as he by the way, did with respect to the other Prussian theatres which had to close down in consequence as for instance, the Grenzland Theatre in Elbing. So the actors lost their salaries and the days of the theatres are numbered. A similar swindle is the "Theatre of the People." This theatre was also announced in January by the State Ministry of Propaganda as a "present of the Leader to the German workers" and opened with a great deal of social demagogy. For four weeks the astounded populace saw a free performance of a miserably poor production of Schiller's *Robbers,* at the expense of the Holiday organization "Strength Through Joy," whose principle trick consists in assigning a small part of the stolen union funds to cultural entertainments. For the second series of performances at this theatre tickets were already priced 75 pfennigs about which there was no fuss or propaganda, neither is much said about the fact that the theatre has since then been poorly attended.

It is evident that the theatres under the Goering patronage show a much higher artistic level than the Goebbels theatres. The State theatre is headed by Gustaf Grundgens, one of the most modern Berlin actors. Fehling, the last prominent Berlin producer does the staging. The "Prussian Theatre of Youth" is under the direction of Herbert Maisch, who has long been prominent as a progressive provincial director. On the other hand the Goebbel's theatre as well as the State Theatre School which is under Goebbel's direct jurisdiction are managed by Otto Laubinger, an old comedian and theatre reactionary. Thus even Goering, who really understands nothing of the theatre, and only accidentally is well advised (by Kathe Dorsch) can overshadow artistically the German State chief of culture, Goebbels!

The "Leader" on the Stage

The repertoire of the State and government theatres the past season offered, besides classics and harmless comedies, the following new plays: *Schlageter* by Johst, a play about which there is no use to expatiate as the government has prohibited it in order to avoid friction with France; *Propheten,* a ten year old play by Johst, with a masterful staging by Fehling, which also was prohibited shortly before its premiere in view of the prevailing cultural struggle, then released again but given very few performances. Johst, who now evidently does not know where he stands, has resigned from his post as dramatist of the government theatre on account of the fate of his plays. Then there were also two peasant plays shown at the State theatre which had no relation whatever to peasant life: *Man Out of Earth Created* by Griese, a mystically passionate thriller and *The Return of Mathias Bruck* by Graff, a new version of the Enoch Arden theme. Finally the government theatres gave two plays on the problem of autocratic state administration: *The King* by Botticher which shows Frederick the Great in childish fashion always at moments of his life when he is making world important decisions thanks to his God given genius. Mussolinni-Forzanos' *Hundred Days* shows

Mayakovski, great Soviet poet and artist, before a series of his posters, which are shown steadily in Moscow exhibits since his death



A leaflet for a public reading in New York of a new play by Herbert Klein, worker-dramatist, managing editor of New Theater

with grotesque nonchalance Napoleon at that point in his career when the people—horrible Menetekel for Hitler! are turning away from him. Both plays, primitive products of philistine-idealistic philosophy of history, are, in spite of the dates when they were written, thoroughly in line with National Socialist principles: the presentation of the God-sent Leader who persistently, with unshaken faith, inimitable personal gifts, fights for his Mission. This general line is most clearly shown in the play *All Against One, One for All by Forster-Burggraf* (Theatre of the People). The title itself which is equally applicable to many other new plays describes the National Socialist main tendency. The play glorifies in the person of the Swedish king Gustav Wasa, who is drawn as a parallel figure, the unerring course of a "Leader" against the people, for the people. This people, according to National Socialist basic principles, is conceived as a natural community beyond all class conflicts. The Leader is shown as a just judge who settles all possible conflicts between individual "estates" within the community. We know that the thesis of a just state administration independent of class opposition within a class society is a fraud, that it is put up to mask the dictatorship of the propertied exploiting classes. The play defends this traitorous thesis with all the means of theatrical demagogy. The following scene and the reaction of the public to it are particularly interesting. Gustav Wasa has achieved his first victory with a division of Storm Troops. He has no money to feed and clothe his troopers. A woman comes to him, a large-scale merchant, with a lot of money, representative of the bourgeoisie which is taking on Wasa in its struggle for power. She offers him a large sum of money on one condition: Wasa is to give her a monopoly on the timber trade when he achieves power. Wasa has her executed for the daring offer. This scene in which the question of ownership and economic privileges are presented in the way the majority of the German public anti-capitalistically feels gets the biggest applause of the evening. We know, that such an answer on the National Socialist stage is shameless demagogy. We know: Hitler did not have Thyssen, his money-bags executed, he gave him instead not only a monopoly on the timber trade, he gave him and his class a monopoly on the exploitation of the entire German people. Woe to you Hitler when the majority of the German public finds this out!

Also for all, although all are against him Count Zeppeli fights in the play *His Excellency the Fool* by Harald Bratt (Prussian Theatre of Youth). Here the invention of the dirigible airship which in reality was the result of a number of historical and technical developments is shown in the style of school text books as the spontaneous personal achievement of an efficient and true German. *Langemark* (Prussian Theatre of Youth) is calculated to raise the war spirits of German youth: a young machinist wounded in battle, as he dies, asks his companion in arms, a student, to put the colored ribbon of his student fraternity over his breast as a farewell; Old Heidelberg in the trenches!

That exhausts the list of this winter's new German plays as far as Berlin theatres are concerned. It might be mentioned also that Goebbels' "Theater of Youth" has dug up Wildenbruch (*Heinrich and Heinrich's Sex*) also *Totila* a play by the National Socialists chief chairman Kube, a Wildenbruchian play, and the picture is complete. The picture is staggering, especially if one considers that the average level of performance is fearfully low. There is almost no team work on the part of the cast. There is a lack of good directors that can build up team work. There are no serious cultured critics that could erect new values and new criteria. There's a lack of artistic forces and financial means for schooling fresh talent. The magnificent German theatre is going to the dogs. Thousands of actors are unemployed. Unemployment is on the increase. All promises and modest attempts of the

A scene from the production of Gorky's Yegor Bulichev *at the Artef (Jewish Workers' Theater) in New York*

past year prove nothing but bluff. Finance capital will make it clear to the deluded Kulturnazis that a capitalist dictatorship is no petty bourgeois kindergarten and that the rescuing of a sinking social system is no peaceful holiday at which one gets "strength through joy." They will not give a pfennig for such jests. And there is no receptivity on the part of the masses. The propaganda curtain of National Socialism must fall. The intellectual clowns of fascist cultural demagogy will grow pale before the elemental strength of the German workers which is growing not out of "joy" but out of want and misery towards revolutionary action.

USA

The John Reed Clubs

Alan Calmer, national secretary of the American John Reed Clubs advises of some of the latest steps in the rapid progress of these revolutionary groups of writers and artists.

New magazines continue to spring into existence. The latest is *The Cauldron,* organ of the John Reed Club of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Stanley De Graff, one of the editors who has designed covers for *The Anvil* has also designed the cover of the first issue of this new publication, also contributing a poem "Towards Freedom." The issue includes an article on the furniture industry, book reviews and editorials. It is the fifth publication of the John Reed Clubs and the twelfth printed revolutionary literary publication in the United States.

The Hartford JRC has just issued a mimeographed magazine *The Hammer.* The Boston club which formerly issued *Leftward,* also mimeographed, is now making plans for a printed magazine reflecting the class struggle in New England. The drama group of this club has produced a number of plays: *Strike, Nanking Road,* etc. These have been shown throughout Massachussetts.

The Philadelphia club has recently held an art exhibit "Social Trend in Art," highly praised by the local press.

John C. Rogers, young revolutionary writer and artist is active in organizing a John Reed Club of Washington, while M. Shulimson, contributor to the *New Masses* and other revolutionary publications is also at organization work in Buffalo, New York.

Alan Calmer writes: "As to *International Literature,* what we need here is more basic essays on the problems of Marxism and art and literature like those in the past year by Schiller."

Philip Rahv, editor of the *Partisan Review,* organ of the John Reed Club of New York, advises that "The Writers Group is at present working on the publication of two pamphlets, one an anthology of recent revolutionary poetry by the club poets and the other a pamphlet of literary critcism called *Creative Method in Proletarian Literature* in which most of the club critics will participate.

The National organization is preparing for press a pamphlet on Max Eastman, by Joshua Kunitz.

Meanwhile Phil Bard, active member of the Artists Group of the New York John Reed Club writes: "The club has grown almost unbelievably. The Leftward turn of the intellectuals is now a fullblown reality and all derision of 'propaganda in art' has been replaced by talk of 'revolution or fascism in art.' Among the artists we have unusual talent, many of whom are sure to occupy an important place soon: we have far too few newspapers and magazines in the movement to offer enough opportunities for development. As a result the artists have now turned to mural painting—and I was fortunate enough to be granted the first opportunity." (The murals by Phil Bard shown recently in New York, together with an account of them will appear in the next issue of *International Literature.)*

Philip Sterling writing in the *Daily Worker* reports the work of the John Reed Club artist shown at the exhibit of the Society of Independent Artists, which was their "most ambitious and most impressive undertaking."

"Of the 1,024 pictures in the exhibit" Sterling writes," there are many monochrome drawings of great merit, but from any viewpoint, the John Reed Club canvas *The Class Struggle* stands out for its strength in concept and execution.

"Earlier JRC exhibits in the Independent shows limited themselves to less ambitious themes. The current piece, some ten feet square is divided vertically by the arrangement of the subject matter itself.

"It deals with the Soviet Union—including Stalin, Gorky, Voroshilov and others, as well as Dimitrov." Also American revolutionary leaders. Workers engaged in the struggle against imperialist war, and "writers and artists pointing to the central crimes of capitalism." Other phases of the mural deal with the American scene.

The critic points out that the club member mainly responsible for this painting was Hideo Nota, formerly an associate of Diego Rivera in California.

The discussions being held at the New York John Reed Club continue drawing attention. Nathan Adler, writing in Michael Gold's column "Change the World!" in the *Daily Worker,* (temporarily conducted by Sender Garlin, editor of the feature section) writes:

"Lauran Gilfillan, who wrote that excellent though very limited camera study, *I Went to Pitt College,* was scheduled to speak on the "Ideologic Background of My Book." Miss Gilfillan is a dynamic and engaging personality and we expected a pleasant evening." Actually, the "John Reed Club discovered the ideal revolutionary cultural meeting."

The author took issue with a review of her book that appeared in *Partisan Review,* the John Reed Club magazine. After she spoke, Ben Field, author of the review took the floor.

"Then things began to happen. One of the characters in the book, 'Shirley,' the Young Communist League organizer, sent a note up to the chairman and asked if she could have the floor, too. A character was walking out of the pages of the book, to challenge the author, her 'creator'!"

Pat Toohey, secretary of the National Miners' Union was also there and spoke.

The author spoke of her life, her desire to learn more of Leninist theories which she was reading. "She complained that we Communists sometimes showed too much fervor and not enough tact or appreciation for the psychological problems the individual was faced with."

Adler reports, "We were not approaching Gilfillan harshly. We were not unfriendly. We appreciated her honesty and talent. Her problem to a great extent, was the problem of the comrades in the John Reed Club, too. We too were grappling with our past."

A New Novel The Shadow Before

Nathan Adler, young American writer, in the New York *Daily Worker* writes of a new novel which has received high praise from both bourgeois and revolutionary critics. He says:

"William Rollins, who reported the Gastonia trial for the *New Masses* has written a revolutionary novel on the struggle of the textile workers that can easily take its place beside the outstanding works of American literature.

"*The Shadow Before*" Adler continues, "creates with a vivid and dramatic impact the class forces and characters that were thrown into a bitter struggle when the textile mills of Fullerton, the typical New England mill town, disgorged their workers for a six months' strike. So easily does this novel outdistance anything previously done in American revolutionary literature, that I for one, would vote to award it the Gorky prize of 1934.

"Though the outstanding qualities of the book merit superlatives," the critic contiues, "there are deficiencies too. Even though Rollins has worked in the mills both as ripper and bobbin boy, his insight into proletarian character remains vague and indistinct. . . But if Rolins' knowledge of the *specific* stuff of the class struggle is somewhat hazy, he more than makes up for his deficiency in his gallery of bourgeois

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NATIONAL OFFICE, JOHN REED CLUBS

U. S. SECTION OF INTERNATIONAL UNION OF REVOLUTIONARY WRITERS AND ARTISTS

430 SIXTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY 5¢

DURING FEBRUARY an acting national secretariat of the John Reed Clubs, consisting of Joshua Kunitz, Joseph Freeman, Phil Bard, William Siegel, and Alan Calmer was formed.

This secretariat has prepared a nation-wide plan of work calling for a national bulletin, lecture tours, a JRC anthology, a volume of translations of Marxist literary criticism, a pamphlet on John Reed, a national convention before the fall, etc. It also indicated the necessity of developing worker-writers, of penetrating the Negro cultural movement, of affiliating isolated writers, and of forming fraternal relations with cultural groups throughout the country—as well as establishing regular contacts with other sections of the IURW.

At the meeting of the national executive board early in March the plan of work was approved. The members of the board stressed the necessity of using all methods of acquainting a wide audience with the work of the JRC publications. This bulletin will contain reviews of these magazines. The first, by a member of the New York club and a contributor to New York periodicals, is printed below.

JRC MAGAZINES

Left Front, Nos. 1-3 Chicago, Ill
The Partisan, Nos. 1-4. Hollywood, Cal
Partisan Review, No. 1 New York City
Left Review (Red Pen), Nos. 1, 2 Phila., Pa.

THE VERY fact that four John Reed Club regional magazines have appeared and are scheduled to appear with some regularity in different parts of the country is reason for new confidence in the future of American revolutionary literature. At present the magazines may not be altogether as we would wish them—and in some respects these are not—but they provide mediums of communication for writers in different sections, and make possible a broad background of literary experience which is indispensable for the growth of any real and vital proletarian culture.

Of the four magazines, "Left Front," the organ of the John Reed Clubs of the Middle West, is the oldest and since its first issue has shown remarkable maturity. "The South Side Sees Red," by Edith Margo in the first issue, is a model of wear and effective reporting. The story, "We Is Brothers," by J. S. Balch, has intensity of vision and original use of vernacular. Later issues have some excellent prose sketches. The critical reviews, while very uneven, are on the whole more than acceptable.

The Partisan," published in Hollywood, has done an excellent job covering the news of the Far West in reportage and sketches. The pieces on the movies, Upton Sinclair, the Imperial Valley strikes, etc., are all excellent, and one sketch in particular, on Edwin Markham, by Walker Winslow, a brilliant piece of writing. The stories and the poetry, though often interesting, are not up to the level of the reporting.

Partisan Review" reaches a fairly high level as a literary magazine in its first issue. The reviews, particularly Obed Brooks' piece on Archibald MacLeish, are distinguished; the poetry—especially Edwin Rolfe's long poem—good. The stories are well written, but lack clarity of focus. This is not true, of course, of Grace Lumpkin's searing sketches.

"Left Front" (to return to it) has some sins of omission—for instance, almost no space is given to the Chicago teachers' demonstrations, though these offer most startling and dramatic examples, surely, of the effects of capitalistic crisis in the field of culture. Also, the Chicago Exposition was not dealt with—except in a small drawing—in the June issue, which appeared approximately at the time the fair opened (though it was covered in the next issue).

We have left mention of the "Left Review" to the last, because while it shows vigor and promise, the first issues are rather confused and uncertain. There is some able writing, and a notable piece on the "C.W.A. and the Artists."

—Clinton Simpson.

First issue of the national bulletin of the American John Reed Clubs

portraits. Here Rollins has demonstrated once again the solution to a problem that has concerned certain of our more sectarian writers. In his portrait of the son of a mill-owner, he has shown us that it is possible to write a story solely about the bourgeoisie and still remain an excellent revolutionary writer. Here is a new and unforgettable character in the galleries of literature; he incarnates the inevitable doom of the bourgeoisie."

Mary Heaton Vorse, author of *Strike*, the first of the six American Novels about the Gastonia strike, reviewing *The Shadow Before* in the *New Masses*, calls this book the best of them all.

New Book by Dos Passos

A reviewer in the *New York Times Book* Review is not pleased with *In All Countries*, latest book by John Dos Passos.

"Mr. John Dos Passos, in the travels through Russia, Spain, Mexico and the United States, which are described in this collection of essays, seems to have been animated by two impulses: a profound sympathy for the oppressed and a hatred for hyphens. . . This is literary Hitlerism and nothing else.

"The fact may be colored by Mr. Dos Passos' tendency to regard members of the proletariat as creatures of singular nobility, while the oppressing capitalists are not only not noble but usually not even as good-looking as the proletariat."

The review continues: "In short, Mr. Dos Passos is a radical and these sketches are primarily radical propaganda. He sees the world through doctrinal spectacles and to that extent does not see it in an objective or realistic manner."

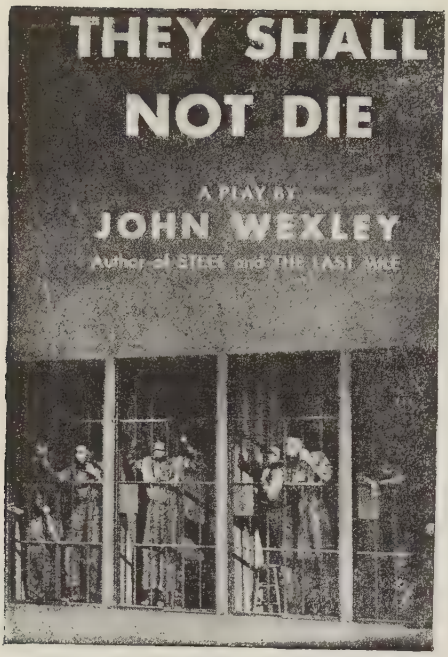
Two Revolutionary Plays

Michael Gold, best known American revolutionary writer, author of *Jews Without Money*, found John Wexley's new play *They Shall Not Die!"* a "most moving experience."

He writes: "John Wexley has won one of the most difficult victories any playwright has ever accomplished in managing to put the Scottsboro case into a play. He chose for a theme a current issue, which is handicap enough. He presented for a liberal audience (in one of New Yorks most prominent theaters—*ed.*) the revolutionary aspect, which needed courage and delicacy. And he has actually had to understate—the facts of the Scottsboro case are so brutally unbelievable that a playwright who presented them in the raw would be accused of caricature."

While Gold also finds flaws in the play he asks, "But who has written the perfect

Jacket for the new book of lithographs by Hugo Gellert which has attracted wide attention



Jacket of the new play on the Scottsboro case which has been published recently

play in America? As yet nobody. John Wexley has come as near as anyone, and what is more, has shown a high and noble passion in his effort to state the case of the Southern Negro."

About the new production of *Stevedore,* by Paul Peters and George Sklar, given by the newly formed Theater Union, Gold writes that it is "one of the best, if not the best, revolutionary drama that has yet appeared in this country."

About the same play, Brooks Atkinson, dramatic critic of the *New York Times* says: "Having laid away *Peace on Earth* after a run of about four months, the militant Theater Union has turned its attention to *Stevedore.* . . It is a highly exciting, workmanlike drama of race riots in the South. . . it is a sound, mettlesome piece of dramatic writing. There is a ring of authenticity about the story and characterization.

"But *Stevedore* is remarkable chiefly for the lithographic color of its scenes and the broadness and keenness of its characterization. . . Although it has propaganda implications, it does not hamstring its characters with classroom ideas. The characters are as real and rich as the earth."

About the same play, writing in the Negro magazine *Opportunity,* John Lyman says:

"Where John Wexley's play *They Shall Not Die!,* while presenting an unforgettable picture of frame-up and injustice against the Negro in the Southern courts only hinted at the force of mass-pressure and the political forces behind the Scottsboro defense, *Stevedore* throughout voices in stirring dramatic terms the call for organization, direct action, active resistance against the powers of exploitation and oppression, and touches directly upon some of the major motives behind race-prejudice and persecution. Certainly, no previous play has depicted so clearly the unmistakable corelation between Negro oppression and the economic causes for that oppression."

All critics point out that the success of this play was due greatly to the Negro actors. George Sklar, a co-author of the play writes in the *Daily Worker:*

"When the Theater Union started its casting of Negro actors for *Stevedore* it was warned repeatedly by those "who knew" that it would have its hands full. The usual bromides about Negroes were mouthed again. "Negroes were inferior actors; they couldn't learn their lines, they were slow in setting their stage business; they couldn't do anything unless they were told; they were unreliable. . . . ."

They found that "from the very first day of rehearsal when the script was read to the cast by the director, Michael Blankfort, the Negroes threw themselves heart and soul into the rehearsals, they determined to make it a success. They could believe in this play."

National Theater Festival

Mark Marvin, writing in a May issue of the weekly *New Masses* says:

"The revolutionary theatres of the United States held their second National Theatre Festival and Convention in Chicago in April. Delegates representing many of the four hundred-odd workers' theatres in this country assembled to discuss problems of the revolutionary theatre and each others' work. Despite great handicaps delegates came from both coasts and from important centers throughout this country and Canada.

"The productions and conferences achieved by the League of Workers Theatres testify once again to the impressive vitality and strength of revolutionary culture. Today the workers' theatres have definitely become a part of the cultural life of vast masses of workers and farmers and intellectuals."

The reporter continues: "The subjects of the plays produced at the Chicago Festival are indicative of the universal appeal of the workers' theatre its ability to interpret and portray the social reality. It is many-tongued because of our large foreign-born population. It is widely diversified because of its

size.' It is artistically and technically advanced because it is guided by two of the best sources of threatrical theory and criticism: the magazines *International Theatre,* published in Moscow, and the *New Theatre,* published in New York City.

"The winners of first and second place in the competition were *Newsboy* (based on the poem by V. J. Jerome) by the Workers Laboratory Theatre of New York, and *Oh, Yeah!* by the Ukrainian Workers' Drama Circle of New York."

Other productions, especially of the Chicago Workers Theatre and the Gary Workers' Theatre were effective. The reviewer concludes:

"The second Theatre Festival is an historic occasion in the American revolutionary movement. It consolidates and vitalizes the national organization of the workers' theatres."

USSR

Art in the USSR

The *Bulletin* of the International Union of Revolutionary Artists advises of the progress being made in this field in the USSR. Zamoshkin writes of the Moscow Regional Union of Soviet Artists: that in addition to frequent exhibits, work in the newspapers etc., there is:

"The journal *Art,* organ of the Union (MRUSA) which plays a great role in the life of the Union. An illustrated fortnightly journal *Creation* is also published."

There are travelling exhibits arranged. Discussions. Close co-operation between the Union and the publishers. Landscape painting, textile designing and theatrical work also occupies the Union's attention.

The writer advises: "that in 1928 two houses were built specially for the artists, beginning the 'artists' colony." These include studios, library, kindergartens, dining rooms, laundry, etc. Over a hundred artists live here and meanwhile two more blocks of houses are being provided. These will hold about 120 studios and 60 apartments. Next year a large exhibition hall will be built.

Many other measures of providing for the artist are being taken not only in Moscow but also in Leningrad and other cities. This extends to the far regions of the Soviet Union.

It applies to the Ukraine. While before the revolution there was not a single high school of art here, there are now three institutes of graphic art, one each in Kiev, Odessa and Kharkov.,

Even in the far off Kirkhiz Autonomous Republic art is an important part of the cultural development of this minority people. Exhibitions are held here now and among the prominent artists are Obrastov, Chuikov (who has been working for several years on the cycle of paintings "The Colonial Past of Kirghizia") and others.

Georgia has previously had a well developed culture. Nevertheless this was "ideologically hostile." Gradually the artists of Georgia swung to Soviet power and the frequent art exhibitions speak for the even greater development of art in this section.

The best artists of the older generation, such as the Peoples' Artist Cabashvili, Honoured Artist Mervshvili (who died this year), Mose Toidze, Tsimakuridze and others showed a new lease of life under Soviet rule. New worker artists have been developed among them Okroporidze, Semenov, Makharoblidze and others.

In Moscow one exhibition follows another. Both national and international. Moscow in fact is becoming a great art center of the world.

The notes here do not begin to touch the great number of activities in Soviet art, nor of the Soviet artists of other sections, of White Russia, Tartaria, Uzbekistan, Crimea, and other republics, including the work of the State Art Publishing House, the All-Russian Art Co-operative Society and other sections and organizations.

International Composers Competition

To stimulate the work of revolutionary composers in competitions for workers' choruses of three or more voices, the Music Bureau of the International Union of Revolutionary Theaters has opened an international contest which offers to winners a first prize of 1,500 rubles—equal to three weeks tour through the Soviet Union (all expenses paid but not including fares to and from the border) and two second prizes of 750 rubles each, equal to ten days stay in the Soviet Union.

Foreign composers winning in the contest, can also choose a music-library equal to the amount of the prizes.

Among the judges will be representatives of leading Soviet musical, trade union and other organizations.

There are no restrictions as to the form and size of the compositions. They must however, deal with themes about the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat—against capitalism, against fascism, the danger of imperialist war, for the liberation of oppressed peoples, and for the defense of the Soviet Union.

Other rules of the competition include the fact that all entries be anonymous, the composers' name to be enclosed in a separate envelope, or indicated by a slogan.

All contributions are to be addressed to the International Music League, Petrovka 10, room 69, Moscow.

Noted Soviet authors gather in a Soviet factory to study latest results: 1—Boris Lapin; 2—L. Leonov; 3—K. Zelinsky; 4—D. Mirsky; 5—E. Zozula; 6—V. Lidin

Children Write to Gorky

C. Marshak, noted children's poet and writer, in a recent article in *Pravda,* advises of a report on children's literature to be submitted to the All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers.

This report, the writer advises, will be based on some 2,000 letters which children have sent to Maxim Gorky in reply to his letter to make known their likes and dislikes in books.

These letters came from all sections of the Soviet Union. They wanted to know why books did not answer their innumerable "whys." Why fish bite and whom they bite, what makes the moon and the stars and why they sometimes shine and sometimes don't.

While many ask for stories on technical subjects, they insist that this literature be attractive. Humorous books are also in demand.

70,000 Writers

Writing in the *Moscow Daily News,* Ed. Falkowski reports that a book written by the workers who are building the Moscow subway will appear "on the first day the first train rolls."

He writes that: Few professional writers are engaged on this project. "Engineers, foremen, brigaders, udarniks, Komsomols, Bashkir peasants, Donbas coal-heavers, Ural metallurgists, red-kerchiefed girls who compelled obdurate foremen to hire them, foreign workers, specialists—a medley of workers have volunteered to collaborate in the project. Makers of history, they are its writers too."

The call for this book was issued by L. M. Kaganovich, secretary of the Central and Moscow Party Committees and Maxim Gorky.

The completed book will be "an epic of 70,000 men and women. It will be a mounmental story of a monumental achievement."

FRANCE

Science in the USSR

Academician Jean Baptiste Perrin, leader of a delegation of French scientists which recently visited the USSR, says of his trip:

"Before coming to the Soviet Union I feared that Soviet scientific work was for most part being directed along purely practical lines. True, my son, Professor Perrin, assured me that in his opinion this was far from the case. It was with the heartiest satisfaction that I convinced myself, both in Moscow and in Kharkov, that the Soviet government has laid a firm foundation for the development of theoretical scientific thought."

The delegation headed by the Academician Perrin, was impressed by not only the work of the older scientists, many of whose results are well known abroad, but also with the great numbers of younger men in the laboratories.

Andre Gide in the Soviet Union

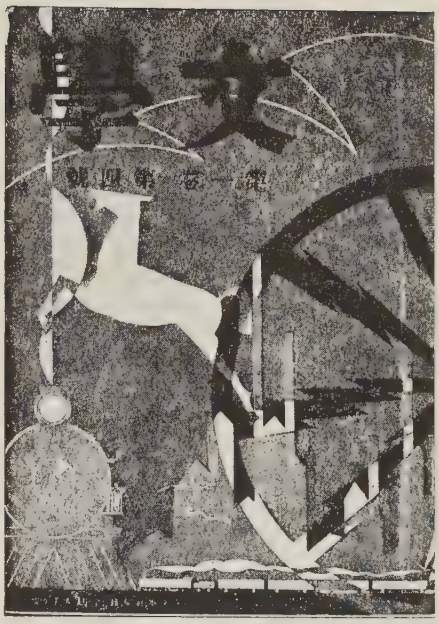
Andre Gide, noted French writer, has written to *Vremya* (Time) Publishing House at Leningrad, giving it monopoly rights on his collected works in the Russian language. He enclosed a preface to the Russian edition of his works, in which he writes:

"It is not without fear that I see my books in your hands, young people of new Russia. They are burdened with old questions which you no longer have to worry about. We here have to struggle with phantoms, bogies, conventions and all kinds of lies from which you have liberated yourselves.

"The thicket through which I had to grope has for you lost its significance. But you will perhaps come to feel in my books how I have always believed in man; how I have been convinced that much more can be obtained from him, that he is still at the beginning of his path, at the foot of the mountain; that under the favorable conditions of a better social order, perspectives as yet unsuspected will open before his eyes.

"Young people of the USSR, keep staunch! Do not rest half-way. Do not allow yourselves to be tempted. To be a beacon over far distances, your courage must be exemplary at this side of the frontier. You have not yet finished conquering and struggling. Thanks to you, our hopes have become stronger.

"Comrades of the USSR, my fraternal heart greets you with joy."



Cower of Literature, *Left Chinese monthly*

JUGOSLAVIA

About The Native's Return

Louis Adamic's book *The Native's Return,* published in America by Harper & Brothers, has been officially banned in Yugoslavia, the country with which it deals, by a special decree issued by King Alexander's government in March. Any Jugoslav subject residing in Yugoslavia who is caught possessing a copy is liable to imprisonment for two years, while any Yugoslav subject guilty of bringing the book into the country or circulating it there exposes himself to a prison term of from five to ten years. No newspaper or review published in Yugoslavia is permitted to mention the book or in any way recognize its existence.

"Health 'Smithy"—design for a fresco by Bela Uitz, noted Hungarian painter for a Sanatorium at Dul-Ber in the Crimea

STATUTES OF THE UNION OF SOVIET WRITERS OF THE USSR

I

The great victories of the working class in the struggle for Socialism have assured exceptional possibilities for the development of literature, art, science, and for the growth of culture on the whole.

The turn of the non-Party writers to the side of Soviet Rule, and the tremendous growth of proletarian literature, peremtorily dictate the necessity to unite the literary forces, both Party and non-Party, into a single organization of writers.

The historic Decision of the CC CPSU of April 22nd, 1932, indicated the creation of a single Union of Soviet Writers as the organizational form of such unification. At the same time it mapped out also the ideological and creative paths for the growth of the Soviet literature.

The decisive condition for the growth of literature, of its artistic craftsmanship, of its ideological and political impregnation, and of its practical efficacy, consists in a close and immediate connection of the literary movement with actual problems of Party politics and Soviet rule, the writers joining in active work of socialist construction while attentively and deeply studying the concrete realities.

During the years of Proletarian Dictatorship Soviet literature and Soviet literary criticism marching in line with the working class and led by the Communist Party, have worked out their own new creative principles. These creative principles, being the composite results of a critical assimilation of the literary heritage of the past on the one hand, and based upon the study of the victorious building up of Socialism and the growth of Socialist Culture on the other hand, have found their chief expression in the principles of SOCIALIST REALISM.

Socialist Realism, being the basic method of Soviet literature and of Soviet literary criticism, requires from writers truthful, historically-concrete portrayal of the realities in their revolutionary development. At the same time the veracity and historical concreteness of artistic portrayal should be combined with the tasks of the ideological remoulding and education of toiling people in the spirit of Socialism.

Socialist Realism assures to artistic creation exceptional opportunity for the manifestation of creative initiative, the selection of various forms, methods, and genres. The triumph of Socialism, the stormy growth of the forces of production unprecedented in the history of mankind, the growing process of the abolition of classes, of the elimination of any possibility of exploitation of man by man, the wiping out of the contrasting difference between urban and rural life, and lastly, the unparalleled successes of the growth of science, technique, and culture,—create unlimited possibilities for both qualitative and quantitative growth of the creative forces and for the flourishing of all the forms of art and literature.

II

The Writers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, standing upon the firm foundation of Soviet Rule, and wishing to take active part by their creation in the class struggle of the proletariat and in the building up of Socialism, have resolved to unite into a single Union of Soviet Writers.

The aims and purposes of the Union of Soviet Writers are:—1. Active participation of Soviet writers in socialist construction by their art creation; defence of the interests of the working class and strengthening of the Soviet Union by means of truthful portrayal of the history of the class struggle of the proletariat and of the building up of Socialism in our country, by means of educating the broad toiling masses in the socialist spirit.

2. Education of new writers from among factory workers, collective farmers, and soldiers of the Red Army, by means of propaganda for artistic creation among the broad masses of the people, of imparting to young writers the creative experience of qualified writers and critics, of joint activity with trade unions, Komsomol organizations, and political departments of the Red Army, in working with literary circles of factory workers, collective farmers, and Redarmists.

3. Development of creative competion among writers, mutual aid to each other in order to foster the most successful growth of the creative forces and ever-deeper and more thoroughgoing development on the basis of Socialist Realism of forms and methods, of genres and subjects of artistic creation, depending on individual talents and creative interests of writers.

4. Fostering in every way the development of fraternal national literatures by means of rendering mutual aid, exchanging creative experience of writers and critics of the several fraternal Republics, organizing translations of artistic works from the language of one nationality into the languages of the other nationalities.

5. International education of writers by means of studying the international signifi-

cance of the victory of Socialism in the USSR, of studying the international revolutionary movement and the contemporary culture of the world, of participation by Soviet writers in the international revolutionary movement through reflecting in art creation the heroic struggle of the toilers of the capitalist and colonial countries.

6. Further theoretical elaboration of problems of Socialist Realism by means of creating special scientific literature, of organizing scientific discussions and debates, of concrete study of the creations of individual writers, and of critical analysis of their works.

7. *The Union of Soviet Writers sets before itself the general aim of fostering the production of works of high artistic significance impregnated with the heroic struggle of the international proletariat and with the enthusiasm of the triumph of Socialism, and reflecting the great wisdom and heroism of the Communist Party. The Union of Soviet Writers makes it its purpose to create artistic works worthy of the great epoch of Socialism.*

III

1. The Union of Soviet Writers constitutes a voluntary organization uniting writers and critics throughout the whole territory of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

2. Eligible for membership in the Union of Soviet Writers are those writers (of belles-lettres, poetry, dramaturgy, and literary criticism) who stand upon the platform of Soviet Rule and take part in socialist construction, who systematically engage in literary work, who possess artistic or critical works published either in separate editions or in art-literary and critical magazines (also dramatic works produced upon the stage either by professional actors or by clubs) AND WHICH POSSESS INTRINSIC ARTISTIC OR SCIENTIFIC (in the case of critical essays) SIGNIFICANCE.

3. Enrolment of members of the Union of Soviet Writers is effected on the basis of: a) filing an application with the Board of the local branch of the Union, and b) supplementing the application with all the data characterizing the literary-artistic and public activity of the applicant.

Acceptance of members into the Union of Soviet Writers is passed upon in every individual case on the basis of a petition supported by the local branch of the Union, by the Board of the Republic's or USSR Union of Soviet Writers.

4. Persons admitted to membership of the Union of Soviet Writers pay initiation fees to the amount of ten (10) rubles and monthly dues in the amount to be fixed by the Board of the Union of Soviet Writers of USSR, and get the uniform Membership Card of the Union of Soviet Writers.

5. Expulsion of members of the Union of Soviet Writers is effected by decision of the Secretariat of the Board of the respective Republic's Union of Soviet Writers in the case of:—

a) legal deprivation of a member of the Union of electoral rights;

b) contradiction of the activity of a member of the Union to the interests of socialist construction and to the tasks of the Union of Soviet Writers;

c) discontinuance of literary-artistic and literary-critical activity during a whole number of years;

d) non-payment of dues in due course, and

e) by voluntary resignation of a member of the Union.

The decisions of respective organs concerning expulsion from the Union of Soviet Writers may be appealed against before the higher organs of the Union.

IV

1. The highest leading organ of the Union of Soviet Writers of USSR is the All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers, held not less often than biennially.

2. The executive organ of the All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers is the Board of the Union of Soviet Writers elected by the Congress and constituting, during intervals between the Congresses, the highest leading organ of the Union of Soviet Writers.

3. The Plenum of the Board of the Union of Soviet Writers elect from among themselves: the Chairman, Vice-chairman, and Secretary of the Union, and also the Presidium and Secretariat of the Board.

The Plenum of the Board of the Union is convened not less often than thrice annually. Extraordinary sessions of the Plenum are convened upon request by not less than one-half of the members of the Board of the Union, or upon requisition by the Boards of the Unions of Writers of two or more Republics of the USSR, or upon decision by the Presidium of the Board.

4. In the constituent and autonomous republics, regions, and provinces, the respective republic, regional, and provincial Unions of the Soviet Writers are created (the periods for the holding of congresses of republic, regional, and provincial Unions being the same as for those of the Writers' Union of the USSR).

The republic, regional, and provincial Boards of the Unions of Soviet Writers lead the activities of the branches of the Union upon the territory of the respective republics, regions, and provinces.

The decisions of the All-Union Congresses of Soviet Writers, and of the Board and

the Secretariat of the Union, are obligatory for all the Republic, regional, and provincial Unions of Writers.

5. The Board of the All-Union of Soviet Writers give account of their activity before the All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers; the boards of Republic, regional, and provincial Unions give account of their activity before the respective Congresses of Republic, regional, and provincial Unions of Writers, as well as before the Board of the All-Union Union of Soviet Writers.

6. The All-Union Republic, regional and provincial Congresses of Writers elect Auditing Committees of the respective Unions of Writers (not from among members of the respective boards) whose duties are: a) to watch over the conformity of the whole activity of the respective board of the Union with the decisions of the respective Congress of the Union of Soviet Writers and with the rules laid down in these Statutes; b) to check up the financial and material management activity of the administration offices of the respective boards of the Union, and of all the enterprises run by boards of Writers' Unions.

The Auditing Committees are elected for the same terms as the Boards of the Unions, and give account before the respective Republic, regional, and provincial Congresses of the Unions of Soviet Writers.

V

1. The Union of Soviet Writers enjoys the rights of a legal person with all the consequences arising therefrom upon the grounds of respective governmental legislation (possession and acquisition of property, signing of agreements, suing and answering lawsuits in courts, etc.).

2. The Board of the Union of Soviet Writers has the right to organize a series of subsidiary enterprises (acting by virtue of separate statutes and rules drawn up in regard to them) in order to give cultural and material services to writers (writers' houses, clubs, rest homes, restaurants, museums, libraries, reading-rooms, bookshops, exhibitions, contests, publishing houses, journals, etc.).

3. At the Board of the Union is created an organization independent in the economic respect (while generally responsible before the Board of the Union), to wit, the *"Litfund"*—Literary Fund—which unites the whole of the administrative and economic work of giving services to writers. The Managing Board of the "Litfund" is elected at a special conference of writers convened for the purpose.

4. The Union of Soviet Writers is exempted from all State and local taxes, rates, levies, and imposts; the local tax is not levied from performances, concerts, and entertainments organized by the Union of Soviet Writers.

5. The Board of the Union of Soviet Writers takes upon itself the defence of the copywright of authors within the USSR as well as abroad through the respective Soviet organs; it also takes the necessary steps to protect other rights of writers who are members of the union, organizes legal aid for them, and represents them before Soviet and public bodies.

6. The funds of the Union of Soviet Writers are made up of: a) initiation fees and membership monthly dues; subsidies from Soviet institutions and public bodies; income from properties owned by the Writers' Union; d) revenues entering into the Literary Fund, and e) from all activities provided for in these Statutes.

VI

The Union of Soviet Writers of USSR may be liquidated pursuant to a decision by the All-Union Congress of Writers, or by order of the Government.

THE ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE OF THE UNION OF SOVIET WRITERS

DECISION OF PRESIDIUM OF ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE OF UNION OF SOVIET WRITERS OF USSR

1. The Presidium of the Organization Committee herewith publishes the "Statutes of the Union of Soviet Writers" that were approved in their basic parts by the Third Plenum of the Org-Committee as Temporary and subject to final confirmation by the All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers to be held June 25th of this year.

2. The Presidium of the All-Union Org. Committee proposes to all the organization committees Republic, regional, and provincial) to be guided by these Statutes in all their activities pending the Congress of the Soviet Writers of USSR.

3. All Org. Committees of the U.S.W. are advised forthwith to take up the work of enrolling members of the U.S.W. on the basis of the Statutes herewith published.

Editor-in-chief SERGEI DINAMOV

INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

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Editorial Assistant WALT CARMON